Daily Current Affairs



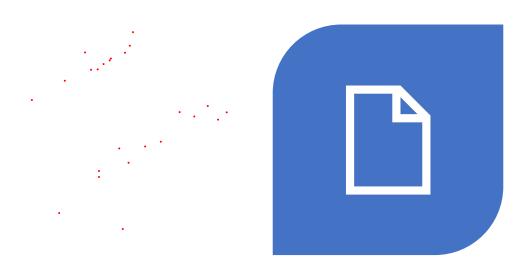








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PDF

10 MCQ QUIZ



"No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader."

Robert Frost



for first time in 2 years

Tariffs on India for buying Russian oil

regetatric orn



Nepal bans 26 social media platforms

Should remarks on digital media be regulated? SC says influencers often cross the line



Plucky India rallies to get past Malaysia

INSTITUTE

Israeli attacks kill at least 44, Gaza toll tops 64,000

HARA CITY

Gaza's civil defence agency saut braeft furers killed at leas said Screet fures withed at heat 47 people on Thursday, including 28 in Case City where the military has increased bombasdments shead of a planned offersive. The death toll in the Gaza Strip has now crossed 64,000 p. PAGE 14

Pak., China are to expand economic corridor project

DILAMARAD

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Palaistan Prime Intiniser
Sheritaz Shaoff on Thursday
met Chruser Fremins Li Qiang
in Busjang and agreed to
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Auto, pharma hail GST revamp; airlines upset

Auto-makers expect tax cut to boost demand;

Poor, neo middle-class, mid-dle-class women, students.

farmers, youth,, everyone will benefit

Small entrepreneurs say the 12% to 18% GST levy on labour charges would hit them hard

corrected for the fertilizer and man-made textiles industries.

The increase in the GST rate for labour charges, from 12% to 18%, has also led to some resistance, with small entrepreneurs saying that they would be lait hard by the change.

Mixed response
While the testile industry
has welcomed the revision
of GST rates for looth manmade fibre and cotton sectors, it has also expressed
its disappointment over

oil producers called for the resolution of the inverted duty structure on edible cits, which means that the CST rate on raw materials in their industry is higher I PAGE than the rate on the for-ished product.
This mismatch was so-mething that the Council

the HPs dury for garments priced above \$2,800 each. The Cloth Manufacturers Association of India pointed out that such gar-ments are also consumed in large numbers by the common man, especially in the form of woolkers, wedding wear, traditional clothing, handloome, and enthroidered clothes. Charging live corr on these will make them agnifican-ly more costly, it and

Textile industry disappointed over the 18%

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try-level and mid-segment cars priced up to 114 labb will see a tax reduction of up to 13 percentage points, while high-end cars with engines above 1200 cc too

engines above 1290 sc too are act to see an 8 to 10 per-centage point cut in their Auto dealers, however, have voiced aone worries they voiced aone worries ing their purchases until leptomber 22, when the new state come into force, and have called for greater clarity on what happens to the costs m vehicles they

renewable energy compo-nents from 12% to 5% as a energy transition by lower-ing costs for critical tech-nologies such as solar cells and other renewable ener

makers were also upleat about the EST rate cuts, saying they would boost demand, especially in the run-up to the feative

Season. (With inputs from Sha-ral Raghavan, Jagrill Chan-dro, M. Koundariya Presiba, Lalatenda Mishra, Saprapariso Cibods, and Bindu Shajan Perappadan)

makers were abou

Centre and Manipur + govt. ink peace pact with Kuki-Zo groups

The Union Home Ministry and the Manipur govern-ment signed a Suspension of Operations (SoS) pact with the Kuki-Zo insurgent groups on Wednesday with "re-negotiated terms and conditions or ground rules", the Ministry said on Thursday. The develop-ment comes days shead of Prime Minister Narendra Prime Minister Narondre Modi's expected visit to Mantpur on September 15, its first visit aims ethnic violence between the Kuki-Ze and Metini project on May 3, 2023.

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and. A senior government official said that once iden-ified, the foreign nationals would be deposted. The re-vised ground rules retur-ate territorial integrity of Manipur and relocation of camps run by insurgent groups. Prior to May 3, 2023, the

Prier to May 3, 2023, the SoO groups demanded au-tonomous territorial cour-sistence of the second of the post-violence the demands changed. If the SoO groups Added if the SoO groups Added the SoO groups institution of Union Turitor-ty with a legislature, Sellen it National Organisation (KNO), once of the signato-tics, told The Hindia. Though the agreement speaks about territorial integrity of Manipur, it also mentions political settlementions political settle-ment within the Constitue to maintain poace along to to maintain poace along to the country.

The E2C, however, said that the highway has never a political settlement within Cansitution of In-thic is a new mentalism in the in a new mentalism in the constitution of in-thic is a new mentalism.

Core pact

Likes & distikes

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the agreement as it was not there in the 200k fest when the demand was for Manipus.

The Stake-50 Council in COCO, a conglomerate of agreed to open the National Highway-2 (Inghab) mapar) passing through for investment of semma-ters and excential goods", the Ministry said.

KZC has given commit-ment to cooperate with Security Forces deployed by Government of India (GoD)



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changes authorised by the

GST Council on Wednes-day night brought cheer to the auto, insurance, connumer appliances, phar-nuccentrals, and renewa-

tile energy sectors, among

others, some of that was tinged with reproach. A few sectors are ourright upset with the tax changes.

The stock market, too, reflected this mixed response on Thursday, initially reacting positively but studing the day nearly flat, with the Senses up just 0.2% from the previous

the airlines slammed the higher GST on non-economy seats, Vegetable

dark mode: A security official keeps watch as the Beas river flows as spate following in

SC expresses concern over avalanche of illegally felled trees washed up by floods

Krishnadas Rajagopal NEW DELID

counting to media visuals of large numbers of logs floating in floodwaters, the Supreme Court on Thurs-

Supreme Gourt on Thursday approximation of Himaday American Company and American Americ deaths caused by natural limanters. "This is a very serious is:

sue. Logs are seen flowing with the flowal waters. If this gives on, we will not have any forests left. In Punjab, entire villages are mundated. Development is

ment Secretary on the same day. The Secretary would get in teach with the Chief Secretaries of these

Mr. Mehta, who was pre-sent in the courtroom for the next case, intervened after the Bench, also com-prising Justice Vined Chan-

prising Justice Vined satur-dran, asked him to.
The top law officer agreed with the court that the situation cannot be al-

notice to the National High-way Authority of India (NHAD after the petitioner, Anamika Rana, represent-ed by advicute Akash Vashishtha, said there were 14 turnels between Clundigarb, and Manali that nam into death traps during floods.

'Payback from nature' Payback from nature?
The petitioner's counsel said at least 300 people were stranded recently during the floods inside the tunnel.

"Therefore, we have is used notice to the NHAL,"

Chief Justice Govat ad-dressed later. Mr. Mehta said the natural disasters were payback rom nature.
"We are interfering with nature so much that nature

giving back, he tarked. The CH reiterated that the curt was seriously concerned with the repeti-tive securience of land-slides and floods in these

ecologically sensitive areas. It listed the case in two weeks. The petition has sought the immediate intervers the immediate interven-tion of the apex court to constitute action plans, a Special Investigation Team enquiry and geological, geo-technical and ecologi-

cal tovestigation to prevent future disasters and save

the pristine, fragile Ecolo-gy of the Himalayan States. "The Central and State governments, inspite of having dedicated dissister having dedicated disaster authorities, have no plan in place to prevent or mit-gate the losses due to these disasters, whose frequency has increased alarmingly of late," the petition said.

IIT-M tops NIRF rankings: Minister criticises its 'peer + perception' parameter

For the accents straight year, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras claimed the top overall po-sition in the higher education rankings announced by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) on Thursday, it also remained the country's

ONEP on Thursday, it also remained the country to been engineering college temperature of the country to be engineering college. The Nill's methodology, however, came in for aome criticion from business and the control that in the presented the trials. Araking 2025 awards, the was especially a second to the control to t

After the 2024 rankings, States and State-run educa-tional institutions had altional institutions had al-leged that the cankings re-flected "regional blas" as metropolium edoestion in attuitions score higher on the 'peer percepiton' crite-ria, in comparison to sub-urban or state-run higher education terminates.

education inetheticus.

The other parameters that the NIRF currently considers for the overall category are teaching, learning, and resources; research and professional practice; graduation out-comes; and research and inclusivity.
Mr. Pradhan said he was

Mr. Fraithin said he was confident that the NRP would evolve into one of the best accreditation fra-moverks by including more parameters such as entreprenous created by an institution, involving

OURSE & SAFEDNAL POTENCEPONAL RANGERO PROFESSION

more sategories and insti-tutions in the fature. In the lenth oddion of the NIRP cankings, awards were given in it cutsgories and more institutions have joined in the process, te-porand in the process, te-tal grewth of mr higher education sector? Mr. education sector," Mr. Feathan said, materialising that the challenge is to in-crease the mumber of stu-dents and the quality of education in the higher education sector. "Very

education sector. Very soon, a new mechanism for institutional ranking will be placed. We will go by the theory of one na-tion, one data, 'he nexed. The top 100 institutions in the overall category comprised 24 Kinte univer-sities, '22 private desired universities, 19 private desired universities, 19 private desired universities, 19 private the USCA, into to the control. (HSc), nine private univer-sities, eight National Insti-tutes of Technology, seven Central universities, five medical institutions, four Indian Institutes of Science

Education and Research, one college, and the Indian Agriculture Research The IINC, bengalura topped the Universities ca-tegory for the tenth con-secutive year and also stood first in the Resistant Instituteurs category for the RRh consecutive year. IIM Ahmedabad was the host institution for Man

agement studies for the sixth consecutive year. The All India Institute of Medi-cal Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi occupied the top slot among Medical institutions for the eighth consecutive year.

year.
Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi is the best place for studying Placemacy and IIT Roorkee retained its top position in Architecture and Planning, Hindu Col-lege in Delhi secured the first rank among Colleges for the second consecutive year, replacing Miranda House. The National Law School of India University, Bengaluru retained its first position in Law for the eighth consecutive year.

righth consecutive year.

In the Universities category, the conked first, followed by Jawaharlal Nehru
University, New Delhi, Maand University of Delhi, Delhi, Jadavpur University, Kolkata was declared the best among State Public Universities, followed by

thapuram.
The Indira Gandhi Na-tional Open University (IG-NOU), New Delhi was the best among Open Universi-

Auto, pharma hail GST revamp; airlines upset

Auto-makers expect tax cut to boost demand; airlines slam higher GST on non-economy seats

Small entrepreneurs say the 12% to 18% GST levy on labour charges would hit them hard Textile industry disappointed over the 18% duty for garments priced above ₹2,500

Likes & dislikes

The new GST rates were largely welcomed by most sectors, but there were also some discontents



Auto Insurance sector: manufacturers: Good for consumers. Lower tax will but could eat into boost

profits of insurers demand Apparel makers: Pharma: Will Higher GST on

make medicines more affordable

Consumer appliance firms: Will lower prices ahead of the festive season

negative Automobile dealers:

expensive clothes a

Though lower taxes are welcome, there are concerns about potential delays in purchases

Micro and cottage entrepreneurs: Increase in rate on labour charges will increase costs for **MSMEs**

non-economy tickets

more expensive.

potentially making

some routes unviable

Vegetable oil makers:

Inverted duty structure

should be removed for

vegetable oils

makes premium travel

Poor, neo middle-class, middle-class women, students. farmers, youth... everyone will benefit

NARENDRA MODI

Prime Minister

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

y hile the goods services changes authorised by the GST Council on Wednesday night brought cheer to the auto, insurance, consumer appliances, pharmaceuticals, and renewable energy sectors, among others, some of that was tinged with reproach. A few sectors are outright upset with the tax changes.

The stock market, too, reflected this mixed response on Thursday, initially reacting positively but ending the day nearly flat, with the Sensex up just 0.2% from the previous day.

The airlines slammed the higher GST on noneconomy seats. Vegetable

oil producers called for the resolution of the inverted duty structure on edible oils, which means that the GST rate on raw materials in their industry is higher than the rate on the finished product.

This mismatch was something that the Council corrected for the fertilizer and man-made textiles industries.

The increase in the GST rate for labour charges, from 12% to 18%, has also led to some resistance. with small entrepreneurs saying that they would be hit hard by the change.

Mixed response

While the textile industry has welcomed the revision of GST rates for both manmade fibre and cotton sectors, it has also expressed its disappointment over

INSIDE

GST 2.0 is a double dose of support and growth, says PM » PAGE 6

Congress demands States be compensated for five years » PAGE 6

Festive sales to hit top gear » PAGE 5

the 18% duty for garments priced above ₹2,500 each.

The Cloth Manufacturers Association of India pointed out that such garments are also consumed in large numbers by the common man, especially in the form of woollens, wedding wear, traditional clothing, handlooms, and embroidered clothes. Charging 18% GST on these will make them significantly more costly, it said.

This nuanced cheer can be seen in the auto sector as well.

Auto manufacturers have welcomed the rate rationalisation for the sector, along with the removal of the GST Compensation Cess applicable on cars.

As per the new rates, entry-level and mid-segment cars priced up to ₹14 lakh will see a tax reduction of up to 13 percentage points. while high-end cars with engines above 1200 cc too are set to see an 8 to 10 percentage point cut in their tax rate.

Auto dealers, however, have voiced some worries about consumers postponing their purchases until September 22, when the new rates come into force. and have called for greater clarity on what happens to the cess on vehicles they

have already bought from manufacturers but not vet sold to customers.

The renewable energy sector, too, has praised the decision to reduce taxes on renewable energy components from 12% to 5% as a progressive step towards accelerating India's clean energy transition by lowering costs for critical technologies such as solar cells and other renewable energy devices.

Consumer appliance makers were also upbeat about the GST rate cuts, saving they would boost demand, especially in the run-up to the festive season.

(With inputs from Sharad Raghavan, Jagriti Chan-Soundariya Preetha, Lalatendu Mishra, Saptaparno Ghosh, and Bindu Shajan Perappadan)

Positive Responses

Auto sector

- Lower tax will boost demand, especially for entry-level and mid-segment cars (up to ₹14 lakh).
- High-end cars (>1200cc) will also see tax reduction (8–10%).
- Removal of GST compensation cess praised.

Pharma sector

Medicines to become more affordable.

Consumer appliances

Lower prices expected ahead of festive demand.

Renewable energy sector

• Reduction of GST on solar panels and renewable components (12% \rightarrow 5%) welcomed.

- Mixed Reactions
- Insurance sector
 - GST cut good for consumers, but profitability of insurance firms may fall.
- Apparel industry
 - Higher GST (18%) on garments above ₹2,500 disappoints textile sector.
- Auto dealers
 - Worried about purchase postponement until new rates effective

Negative Reactions

Airlines

- 18% GST on non-economy class tickets criticised.
- Makes premium travel more expensive, may reduce demand.

Vegetable oil industry

Wanted inverted duty structure on edible oils corrected.

MSMEs & Labourintensive sectors

• Increase in GST from 12% to 18% on labour charges will hit small entrepreneurs

UNCHANGED RATES

Gold & silver at

3%

Articles of apparel and clothing accessories, knitted or crocheted, of sale value not exceeding ₹2,500 per piece at

5%

Electric vehicles at

5%

Footwear of sale value exceeding ₹2,500 per pair at

18%





Major reductions in GST revamp

A category-wise list of items whose prices are set to change. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the decisions would come into effect from Sept. 22 for most items



FOOD

Item	Existing New GST rate rate	
Ultra-high temperature (UHT) milk	5%	0%
Butter, ghee, cheese, and dairy spreads	12%	5%
Dates, mangoes, citrus and other fruits	12%	5%
Vegetable products	18%	5%
Fish fats and oils	12%	5%
Refined sugar goods	12%	5%
Chocolates and cocoa products	18%	5%

Item	Existing GST rate	New rate
Cornflakes and cereal	18%	5%
Pastry, biscuits, and cakes	18%	5%
Nuts	12%	5%
Coffee and coffee extracts	18%	5%
Ice cream and other edible ice	18%	5%
Paratha, parotta and other Indian breads	18%	0%
Pan masala*	28%	40%
Soya milk drinks	12%	5%



AUTOMOBILE

Item	Existing GST rate	New rate
Motor vehicles	28%	18%
Motorcycles of engine capacity exceeding 350 cc	28%	40%
Bicycles and other cycles	12%	5%



CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

Item	Existing GST rate	New rate
Air conditioners, dishwashers, televisions sets, monitors	28%	18%

HEALTHCARE

Item	Existing GST rate	New rate
All drugs and medicines intended for personal use	12%	5%
Medical apparatus	18%	5%



PERSONAL CARE

Item	Existing GST rate	New rate
Talcum powder, hair oil, shampoo, toothbrushes	18%	5%
Combs, diapers, napkins	12%	5%



EDUCATION

Item	Existing GST rate	New rate
Mathematical boxes, geometry boxes and colour boxes	12%	5%
Maps, charts, and globes	12%	0%
Stationery products	12%	0%



Item	Existing GST rate	
Tables, paper products, cotton and jute handbags, tools	12%	5%

mid-level segment as over 1,500 cc engines, and engines will invite a higher new rates comes into effect

Narinder Mittal.



TOBACCO

Item	Existing GST rate	New rate
Cigars, cigarettes, and nicotine- based substitutes	28%	40%
Beedis	28%	18%



Item	Existing GST rate	New rate
Sewing thread, twine, textile materials, fabrics, carpets	12%	5%
Quilted textile materials	12%	18%



RENEWABLE ENERGY

Item	Existing GST rate	New rate
All solar-power based devices such as cookers, water-heaters, lanterns	12%	5%
Windmills	12%	5%
Bio gas plants	12%	5%



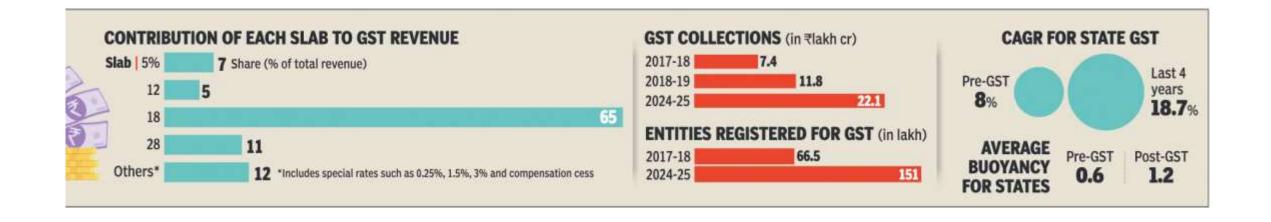
SPORTS & TOYS

Item	Existing GST rate	New rate
Sports gloves, tricycles, dolls, playing cards	12%	5%



*Input Tax Credit

Item	Existing GST rate	New rate	
All individual health insurance, along with reinsurance thereof	18%		
Air transport of passengers in other than economy class	12% with ITC*	18% with	
Hotel accommodation (₹7,500 or below)	12% with ITC	5% with ITC	
Admission to casinos, race clubs, any place having casinos or race clubs, or sporting events like the IPL	28% with ITC	40% with	



IIT-M tops NIRF rankings; Minister criticises its 'peer + perception' parameter

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

For the seventh straight year, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras claimed the top overall position in the higher education rankings announced by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) on Thursday, it also remained the country's best engineering college for the 10th straight year.

The NIRF's methodology, however, came in for some criticism from Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who presented the India Rankings 2025 awards. He was especially sceptical about the 'peer perception' parameter, that carries 10% of marks for the ranking, and suggested that the NIRF should ensure that government-funded institutions do not fall behind because of this yardstick.

After the 2024 rankings, States and State-run educational institutions had alflected "regional bias" as metropolitan education institutions score higher on the 'peer perception' criteria, in comparison to suburban or State-run higher education institutions.

The other parameters that the NIRF currently considers for the overall category are teaching, learning, and resources; research and professional practice; graduation outcomes: and research and inclusivity.

Mr. Pradhan said he was confident that the NIRF would evolve into one of the best accreditation frameworks by including more parameters such as entrepreneurs created by an institution, involving more data-driven ap-



more categories and institutions in the future.

In the tenth edition of the NIRF rankings, awards were given in 17 categories and more institutions have joined in the process, he said. "This shows the stable growth of our higher education sector," Mr. Pradhan said, maintaining that the challenge is to increase the number of students and the quality of education in the higher education sector. "Very soon, a new mechanism for institutional ranking will be placed. We will go leged that the rankings re- by the theory of one nation, one data," he noted.

The top 100 institutions in the overall category comprised 24 State universities, 22 private deemed universities, 19 IIT's and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), nine private universities, eight National Institutes of Technology, seven Central universities, five medical institutions, four Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, one college, and the Indian Agriculture Research Institute.

The IISc, Bengaluru topped the Universities category for the tenth consecutive year and also stood first in the Research Institutions category for the fifth consecutive year. IIM Ahmedabad was the proaches, and including best institution for Man-ties.

agement studies for the sixth consecutive year. The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi occupied the top slot among Medical institutions for the eighth consecutive

Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi is the best place for studying Pharmacy and IIT Roorkee retained its top position in Architecture and Planning, Hindu College in Delhi secured the first rank among Colleges for the second consecutive year, replacing Miranda House. The National Law School of India University, Bengaluru retained its first position in Law for the eighth consecutive year.

In the Universities cate gory, IISc ranked first, followed by Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal; lamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi: and University of Delhi, Delhi, Jadavpur University, Kolkata was declared the best among State Public Universities, followed by Anna University, Chennai; Panjab University, Chandigarh: Andhra University. Visakhapatnam; and Kerala University, Thiruvananthapuram.

The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IG-NOU), New Delhi was the best among Open Universi-

JNU, JAMIA & DU AMONG TOP 5

5

3

OVERALL	2025	2024
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras	1	1
Indian Institute of Science	2	2
Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay	3	3
Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi	4	4 5
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur	5	
Colleges	2025	2024
Hindu College	1	1
Miranda House	2	2
Hans Raj College	3	12

Kirori Mal College

St Stephens's College

University	2025	2024
ACCURATE STORM AND THE ENGINEER ACCOUNTS AND ACCURATE ACCURATE OF THE ACCURATE	1	1
Indian Institute of Science	-	
Jawaharlal Nehru University	2	2
La consiste especial de la constantina en la constantina de la constantina de la constantina de la constantina		2
Jawaharlal Nehru University	2	100

- NIRF 2025 Rankings
- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras ranked No. 1 overall for the 7th consecutive year.
- It also retained the title of best engineering college for the 10th straight year.
- IISc Bengaluru topped the Universities category for the 10th year in a row.
- 2. Criticism by Union Education Minister
- Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan raised concerns about the 'peer perception' parameter:
 - Contributes 10% weightage in rankings.
 - Alleged regional bias in favor of metropolitan institutions.
 - Suggested that government-funded & rural institutions should not fall behind due to this.

3. NIRF Methodology Parameters

- Teaching, Learning & Resources (TLR).
- Research & Professional Practice (RP).
- Graduation Outcomes (GO).
- Outreach & Inclusivity (OI).
- Perception (PR).

4. Top 10 Institutions (Overall)

- 1. IIT Madras
- 2. IISc Bengaluru
- 3. IIT Bombay
- 4. IIT Delhi
- 5. IIT Kanpur
- 6. IIT Kharagpur
- 7. IIT Roorkee
- 8. AIIMS Delhi
- 9. JNU Delhi
- 10. Banaras Hindu University (BHU)

5. Category Leaders

- Medical: AIIMS, Delhi (8th consecutive year).
- Pharmacy: Jamia Hamdard, Delhi.
- Architecture & Planning: IIT Roorkee.
- Law: NLSIU Bengaluru.
- Colleges: Hindu College, Delhi.
- Open University: IGNOU, Delhi.

6. Government's View

- NIRF may expand into more categories and become a national-level accreditation system.
- Emphasis on increasing student numbers, quality of education, and data-driven institutional evaluation.

Centre and Manipur + govt. ink peace pact with Kuki-Zo groups

Vijaita Singh NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry and the Manipur government signed a Suspension of Operations (SoO) pact with the Kuki-Zo insurgent groups on Wednesday with "re-negotiated terms and conditions or ground rules", the Ministry said on Thursday. The development comes days ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's expected visit to Manipur on September 13, his first visit since ethnic violence between the Kuki-Zo and Meitel people erupted in the State on May 3, 2023.

Security forces will conduct verification of cadres and de-list foreign nationals, if any, the Ministry said. A senior government official said that once identified, the foreign nationals would be deported. The revised ground rules reiterate territorial integrity of Manipur and relocation of camps run by insurgent groups.

Prior to May 3, 2023, the SoO groups demanded autonomous territorial councils within Manipur, but post-violence the demands changed.

Asked if the SoO groups have given up their demand for a separate administration or Union Territory with a legislature, Seilen Haokip, spokesperson Kuki National Organisation (KNO), one of the signatories, told The Hindu, "Though the agreement speaks about territorial integrity of Manipur, it also mentions political settlement within the Constitution of India. The Constitution speaks about the integrity of the country, not a district or a State."

He added that "negotiated political settlement

Core pact

The agreement was signed with 'ne-negotiated terms and conditions or ground rules'

- The revised ground rules reiterate territorial integrity: of Manipur and relocation of camps rum by Insurgent groups
- The rules also stress need for a negotiated solution to bring lasting peace and stability to the State

the agreement as it was not there in the 2008 text when the demand was for territorial councils in Manipur.

The Kuki-Zo Council (KZC), a conglomerate of civil society organisations, agreed to open the National Highway-2 (Imphal-Dimapur) passing through Kangpokpi district "for the free movement of commuters and essential goods", the Ministry said.

Highway shut

The highway, key to connect the Imphal Valley, where the Meitei people live, to Nagaland and Assam, and critical for the supply of essentials and other commodities, has been shut for the past two years for the movement of the Meitei people.

"The decision came after a series of meetings between officials of MHA and a delegation of KZC in the last few days at New Delhi. KZC has given commitment to cooperate with Security Forces deployed by Government of India (GoI) to maintain peace along NH-02," the government

The KZC, however, said that the highway has never been blocked and remained open for commuwithin Constitution of In-ters and for transportation dia" is a new inclusion in of essential goods.

- The Union Home Ministry and Manipur Government signed a Suspension of Operations (SoO) pact with Kuki-Zo insurgent groups.
- The pact comes ahead of **PM Narendra Modi's visit to Manipur** on Sept 13, his first since the **May 3, 2023 ethnic violence** between Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities.
- Key Provisions of the Revised Pact
- Re-negotiated terms and ground rules were agreed upon.
- **Security verification** of cadres and **de-listing of foreign nationals** (if any). Identified foreigners would be deported.
- Territorial integrity of Manipur reaffirmed.
- Relocation of insurgent camps mandated.

Earlier Demands

- Before May 2023, SoO groups demanded autonomous territorial councils within Manipur.
- Post-violence, demands changed but groups now appear to accept solutions within the framework of the Indian Constitution.
- Role of Kuki-Zo Council (KZC)
- A conglomerate of civil society organisations.
- Agreed to open the National Highway-2 (Imphal-Dimapur) passing through Kangpokpi district for free movement of goods and people.
- Highway was blocked for 2 years due to tensions, disrupting supply of essentials.

Historical

- Ethnic tensions in Manipur trace back decades between Kuki, Naga, and Meitei groups.
- Earlier SoO agreements were signed in 2008, but implementation was weak.

Geographical

- National Highway-2 is critical as a lifeline for the Imphal Valley, connecting Manipur to Nagaland and Assam.
- Manipur is part of India's Northeast insurgency belt, strategically sensitive due to proximity to Myanmar.

Political

- The pact aligns with Centre's approach of peace accords with insurgent groups in the Northeast (e.g., Bodo Accord, Naga talks).
- Reflects federal cooperation between Union and State governments in handling internal security.

Economic

- Opening of NH-2 is crucial for economic recovery, ensuring uninterrupted flow of goods and essentials.
- Stability may encourage development and investments in the region.

After adverse weather, four radars to be set up in J&K

Jacob Koahy

Union Science Minister B-tendra Singh on Thursday and that the India Meteor-ological Department (MID) would be installing four ad-ditional radars under Mis-sion Mausam in Jammu and Kaultrile for more ac-curate weather forceasts and salitime for more ac-curate weather forecasts and early warnings. Well-positioned radars are use-ful in improving the lead time in warning of sudden can bring intense rainfall

Three operational dars operational in the Un-

the precise locations or a the precise locations or a timeline for setting up the radars has been unnounced.

Home Minister Amit shah had constituted an inter-Ministerial Commit-tee to assess the damage

and ensure coordinated as-alstance, Dr. Singh and, The three monsoon line with what the IMD had



9,000 people rescued as floods affect three districts in Kashmir

Floodwaters entered agen-Floodwaters emered sever-al urban pockets in three districts of Janumu and Kashmir on Thursday as the Jueham breached an

the Bredom breestied at embankment, forsing the authorities in evacuate around 0,1000 people. An embankment of the provious administration for too measures to mitgaste floud threat in Kashmil Valley, Hundreds of civilions in the Ladam, noticing, Nowgam, Vyethpora, colpros, Tadahahi Hagh, and Mekloornagar areas of Pulwanna. Budgam, and

Srinagar. Officials said the fhelium river, which was flowing above the danger mark, breached at Shalina in Budgam district. Flood-waters entered hundreds of houses in Zoombers and adjacent puckets of feer-bagh, Summerbugh, and

bogh, Summerbugh, and Lasjan.

Revised SoO pact tightens norms for Kuki-Zo groups

The new pact says stipend will be paid only through Aadhaar-linked bank accounts to cadres: the agreement will be followed by a 'tripartite dialogue for a negotiated political settlement'

he revised Suspen-sion of Operations signed between the Mini-sy of Force Affair, Mani-par government and 26 Kuki-25 Insurgent groups or Thursday logs down the mechanism to some the nechanism to monitor activities of cadres, and repaires them to obtain And

against them to obtain And-haar cards.
According to the 2008
800 pact, signed in the af-800 pact, signed in the af-signed in the 10980s, around 2,200 cadres under the undwella of the Ku-king and the 100 pack, and the 100 pack, and the 100 pack, and 1

year and says stipend will be paid only through Aad-



becurity forces recently recovered a cache of weapons and ammunition from various tripurgent groups in Manipur, an

have linked bank accounts to those members who are present in camps during imspection. Photo identity cards shall be provided by the Manipur Police, it says.

Six camps each.
The agreement states that
the IONO and UFF six that
have six camps each, for
stead of the 14 they operate
presently, and the camps
shall not be located slose. to populated areas, National Highways and within

sreas voluerable to con-flict. The camps are to be the comparate to the table from the Myanmar border as well.

A complete list of the the government with the government with name, date of high, and other decalls along with lat-nationals, if any, shall be deleted from the list of deferred from the list of The preamble of the

past states that II was mu-tually agreed to review the implementation of the UPF shall "completely ab-pare the pash of violen-ton of fulls, lowe of the grity of stanipart," "soof agreement shall be fol-lowed by tripartine dia-ton the complete of the party of the past of powe the way for a negotiated political settlement under the Constitution of India in a time-bound

dis in a time-board manner, it says, a groups The past bars groups The past bars groups with any other armed group, within the country or satisfie, from securiting out offensive operations against security forces, the country of the country blic. The Army Assum Bi-les, Central Armed Police Forces and the the Mate Forces and the the Mate process and the the Mate process and the security of the process of the country of the country of the process and the the Mate erations against the groups
"as long as they abide" by
the agreement,
be wrose.

Rahul asks Minister to look at FRA violations

The Hindu Bureau

Congress leader and Lead-er of Opposition in the Lob Sabha Rabul Gandhi has written to Union Tribal Af-lates Miles Act violations in the forest clearance granted to the aire project.

in August, the Tribut Council of Little and Great Nicobar highlighted these violations in a letter to Mc made a false representa-

Mr. Candhi urwed Mr. Mr. Gandhi urged Mr. Oran on Wednesday to esamine the Council's con-ceron. 'I am writing to ex-pense my deep concerns regarding the violation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in the grant of cleanones for the Great Nicobar Pro-ject... Any development in that'ree must be grounded in our constitutional values.

'India's birth rate down. first dip in TFR in 2 years'

India's Crude Birth Bate (CBR), the number of dist-dren born per 1,000 peo-ple in the population in a year, has declined 0.7-points from 19.1 in 2022 to 16.4 in 2023. The country's Total Fertility Rate (FFR) has fallen for the first time in two years to 1.0 in 2023, according to the latest Sample Registration Sur-vey Statistical Report for 2023, in 2021 and 2022, india's TFR remained con-

stant at 2.0.

The report, released by the Office of the Registrar General of India this week, revealed that the highest CMR was in Bihar at 25.8, and the bissest was in Ta-mil Nada: at 12. Bihar re-ported the highest TPR (2.6) among the bigger States and Union Territo-ries (UTD), and Delhi re-ported the lowest (1.2). The latest data was sourced from Sample Registration Survey Statistical Report

reported a TFR of below the replacement level TFR of 2.1. Replacement level TFR denotes the average TFR denotes the average number of children each woman needs to give birth for one generation to re-place the other. The RGI released the Gi-

The RGI released the CS-vill Registration System CG15, Sample Registration CG15, Sample Registration Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD) reports for Death (MCCD) at a control of CG15 and a contr Census website. The SRS 2023 datasets

showed that the propor-tion of the elderly in the country typeople affects (60) ruise by 0,7 percentage points in a year to 9,7% of the propinter. Verals by he population. Rerala has he highest proportion of elderly population at 19%. Assum (7.0%), Delhi (7.7%), and Burkhand (7.6%) reported the lowest propor-tion of their respective populations to be above

The TER data, which denotes the average number of children expected to be born per woman during her entire span of repro-ductive period, forther showed that all States reshowed that all States re-porting TFR that is higher than replacement level were in northern India Bi-har (2-8), Uttar Peadesh (2-6), Madhya Fradesh (2-4), Rajasthan (2-3), and Chattisgarth (2-2). The Status and UTs reporting the lowest TFR included Delhi (1-2), West Bengal (L3), Turnil Nadu (L3), and Maharashtra (L4).

Bihar bandh call given by NDA turns into a BJP show

The five-hour-long Bihar bandh called by the ruling National Democratic Al-lance (NUA) on Thursday n protest against objec-ionable remarks on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother normed into a Bil

Senior party leaders, in-Senior party leaders, inclusting Ministers, M.A.
MLLs, and lither State preparticipated in the bandls,
sparticipated in the bandls,
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sparticipated in the sparticipate
in a post on 'X', he said,
"Did Prime Minister Modiorder IRP members to inard disaphers of filther and

and daughters of lithar and Biharis today? Should Guj-aratis take filinaris so light-by? This is Blurr..." In Jehandhad, a woman

teacher was assaulted by RIP workers, and passers by were besten up by breal party workers. In Paina district, an ambulance car-rying a pregnant woman to a hospital was stopped. Similarly, in Robtas dis-trict, schoolchildren were

forced to return home In Bhagalpur, local You-Tubers and photographers were beaten, and their mirophones were broker

crophonas were broken when they were thrown on the road by MJP workers. It was the state of the

ii Party (Ram Vilas) were

Singapore backs India on patrolling Malacca Straits

Singapore on Thursday acknowledged Irelin's plans to patroi the strategi-cally important Malacca Strain. The discussion was part of the agencia when Prime Minister Navendra Modi met Singaporear Prime Minister Lawrence Worse at Hyderabad House where the two sides signed ive agreements, including ne to export green energy om India to Singapore

from todia to Singapore through declicated jestra.

"Todia, we have chart-reduced to the control of the control laboration," said Mr. Modi-welcoming his Singapo-

Two weeks on, Parliament



rean counterpart who paid a three-day visit to India. A joint statement said the statement said defense technology com-eration in "quantum com-puting, Al, automation and umanufed vassels". Both umanufed vassels". Both umanufed vassels "is the "ando-Pacific" and the in-"indo-Pacific" and the in-the, said the statement. tive, said the statement, adding that "Singapore

acknowledges with appre-ciation india's interest in Secretary Glant, Minis-try of External Affairs, B. Kumara and India is in-terested in parcelling the to the Antaman Sea and said that talks are on, Ma-laysia, indonesia, Thailand and Singapore parrel the ling some kind of presence ing some kind of synergy among member countries.

After SC caution, Centre says talks on with States for special NIA courts

The Union government on Thursday informed the Su-prome Court that it has reached out to several States with a deal to set up-"exclusive and special" Na-tional Intelligence Agency (NEA) courts.
The Centre's overture to

the States was in response to a direct caution from the Supreme Court in July 2025 that the judiciary would have no other choice but to retouse NIA undertrials on ball if there

undertrials on ball if there were not enough contrib for timely completion of trial. Appearing before a second contribution of the second contribution of th



The Bench was bearing a plea for ball filed by Kai-lash Bamchandani, an accused arrested by the NiA in a case under the Unlaw-ful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). His counsel,

Act (UAPA). His coursel, service advocate Trisleep Pais, has argued that Mr. Ramchandan had been incarcerated for six years owing to delay in trial.

The top court has repositely referred to the sheer burden on trial judges who have to multilest, how ordinary criminal cases while search to try es while sparing time to try turror and hemous offenc-es. Delays in trial leave undertrials languishing in

Additional work Oncing the previous hear-ing in July, the top court had highlighted that trials failed to take off or re-

mained stagnant mainly because existing courts had to double up as NtA and special courts.

"Designation of an existing NIA cases. ing court or entrustment of exclusive trials under the NIA Act to such designated courts would incontrover-tility be at the cost of other court cases including hun-dreds of undertrials who are insignishing in jail, se-nior citizens, marginalized in the property of the country in the purpose of conducting the country of the country of the the country would invaria-bly be left with no alterna-tive but release the undercourt-cases including hun-

trials on ball. After all, for how long can such indivi-duals be kept in indefinite custody when no effective mechanism exists to en

aure the timely conclusion of their trials?" Justice Kan had asked the Centre. On Thursday, Ms. Bhati said that out of a little over 50 designated courts, only three were exclusively try-

hatec kant responded that time-bound trials, particularly in helmona offensicularly in helmona control service of the control o

yet to form Joint Committee on Bills to remove PM. CMs Trinamool Congress. Samajwadi Party, and Shiy Sena (URT) have declared their intent to not join the panel

tute the Joint Committee that will review the three Bills on the removal of the Prime Minister, Chief Misters, and Ministers ar ested on serious criminal Amendment) Bill, 2028; the Jammu and Kashmir

harges for 30 days.
The Lok Subha had passed the resolution to refer the Bills to the panel Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2025; and the Government of Union Ter-ritories (Amendment) Bill. 2028 in the Lok Sabba or Congress undecided While the Congress, which is the single largest Opposi-tion party in the Lok Sab-ha, is yet to take a decision on joining the panel, the Trinamool Congress, the Samajwadi Party, and the Samajwadi Party, and the clared their intent to keep away.

2028 in the Left Solidie on August 20. Conigress lead-er on Thursday said the de-crition on whether to join the panel or not was under active consideration. (1970) in learning towards not being part of the com-made similar arguments. "These Bills are slearly aimed to therabelise elect-ary arguments of the con-made similar arguments, and the similar arguments and the con-traction of the con-traction of the con-made similar arguments, and the similar arguments are selected at the con-traction of the con-traction of the con-traction of the con-made similar arguments and the con-traction of the con-traction of the con-sistence of the con-traction of the con-tr

ice. Our presence in the pa-nel is unlikely to have a significant impact on the sum and substance of the legislation," Rajys Sabha mem-ber and SP leader Javed Alt

Khan said. Dravida Munnetra Kaz-Dravida Mumeria Kai-hagam's Rajya Sabha fioor leader Tiruchi Siva said his party was working with others to decide on the is-sase. "We will take a united siand on the issue. We are discussing with others all relevant aspects," Mr. Siva said.

EC notice to Khera's wife for dual voter registration

Khera's wife was served a notice on Thursday for be-ing registerest as a voter in tion Officer of the New Del tu assembly constituency ra's wife, Bota Neellines. "As you may be aware, that be ing registered in the electoral roll of more than one stand on the issue. We are discussing with others all relevant aspects," Mr. Aiva "There is also a counterargument that participation's objections. Many in the Opposition
Many in the Opposition
have a legal significance
have a legal significance
and can be riched in count, if
the Opposition decides to
challenges the file.

'India's birth rate down, first dip in TFR in 2 years'

Abhinay Lakshman

NEW DELHI

India's Crude Birth Rate (CBR), the number of children born per 1,000 people in the population in a year, has declined 0.7points from 19.1 in 2022 to 18.4 in 2023. The country's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has fallen for the first time in two years to 1.9 in 2023, according to the latest Sample Registration Survey Statistical Report for 2023. In 2021 and 2022, India's TFR remained constant at 2.0.

The report, released by the Office of the Registrar General of India this week, revealed that the highest CBR was in Bihar at 25.8, and the lowest was in Tamil Nadu at 12. Bihar reported the highest TFR (2.8) among the bigger States and Union Territories (UTs), and Delhi reported the lowest (1.2).

The report pointed out that 18 States and UTs had The latest data was sourced from Sample Registration Survey Statistical Report released this week

reported a TFR of below the replacement level TFR of 2.1. Replacement level TFR denotes the average number of children each woman needs to give birth for one generation to replace the other.

The RGI released the Civil Registration System (CRS), Sample Registration System (SRS), and Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD) reports for 2021 after a four-year delay in May this year, and in June, the SRS, CRS, and MCCD data for 2022 were released. While the SRS for 2023 has been made public, the corresponding CRS and MCCD datasets are yet to appear on the Census website.

The SRS 2023 datasets

showed that the proportion of the elderly in the country (people above 60) rose by 0.7 percentage points in a year to 9.7% of the population. Kerala has the highest proportion of elderly population at 15%. Assam (7.6%), Delhi (7.7%), and Jharkhand (7.6%) reported the lowest proportion of their respective populations to be above 60.

The TFR data, which denotes the average number of children expected to be born per woman during her entire span of reproductive period, further showed that all States reporting TFR that is higher than replacement level were in northern India - Bihar (2.8), Uttar Pradesh (2.6), Madhya Pradesh (2.4), Rajasthan (2.3), and Chhattisgarh (2.2). The States and UTs reporting the lowest TFR included Delhi (1.2), West Bengal (1.3), Tamil Nadu (1.3), and Maharashtra (1.4).

1. Key Statistical Findings

- Crude Birth Rate (CBR):
 - Declined from 19.1 in 2022 to 18.4 in 2023.
 - Bihar reported the highest CBR (25.8), while Tamil Nadu recorded the lowest (12).
- Total Fertility Rate (TFR):
 - Fell to 1.9 in 2023, below the replacement level of 2.1.
 - First dip after two years of being constant at 2.0.
- Elderly Population:
 - Proportion of people above 60 years increased to 9.7% in 2023.
 - Kerala has the highest elderly population (15%), while Assam, Delhi, and Jharkhand (all 7.6–7.7%) reported the lowest.
- High TFR States:
 - Bihar (2.8), Uttar Pradesh (2.6), Madhya Pradesh (2.4), Rajasthan (2.3), and Chhattisgarh (2.2).
- Low TFR States:
 - Delhi (1.2), West Bengal (1.3), Tamil Nadu (1.3), and Maharashtra (1.4).

- India's fertility rate has been on a steady decline for decades, driven by urbanization, literacy, family planning, and women's workforce participation.
- In the 1970s, India's TFR was above 5 children per woman.
- The National Population Policy, 2000 aimed at achieving a TFR of 2.1 by 2010, but the milestone
 was only reached in recent years.

3. Economic Implications

- Demographic Dividend:
 - Declining fertility can slow down India's working-age population growth, possibly reducing the demographic dividend period.
- Rising Elderly Dependency:
 - Higher elderly population (9.7%) will strain pension, healthcare, and social security systems.
- Regional Variations:
 - Northern states with higher TFR may face resource pressure (education, jobs, health).
 - Southern states with low TFR face an ageing population challenge.

4. Political and Policy Relevance

Population Policy Debates:

 Some states (e.g., Uttar Pradesh, Assam) have proposed population control measures linking welfare schemes to family size.

Electoral Politics:

 Fertility discussions often enter debates on religion and demography, influencing political narratives.

Census & Data Collection:

The report relies on Sample Registration Survey (SRS) 2023 and Civil Registration System
 (CRS) data, highlighting delays in Census 2021 release.

5. Geographical Perspective

North-South Divide:

- Northern states (Bihar, UP, MP) remain above replacement fertility, driving population growth.
- Southern states (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka) have achieved below-replacement fertility, moving towards ageing societies.

Urban-Rural Divide:

 Urban areas show lower fertility due to better healthcare, education, and employment opportunities.

Texas lawmakers pass legislation to curb mailing of abortion pills



who mail abortion sills into the Republican but U.S. State, clearing the way for the fill to be signed into law. The move is the latest in coss after the U.S. Supremy Court evertished the 1973 floor v Wade ruling, Art

Chinese Navy says it conducted



'routine patrol' in South China Sea

hone's Many constructed a "routine patrol" in the South China Sea on Wadnesday, a spokesperson for its Southern Theatre Communities and Thursday. The statement came as the Philippines conducted on Wednesday joint mantime exercises with Australia. Canada, and the U.S. in the Bouth China See, equipme

New clause bars candidates from contesting Bangladesh elections



a new clause in the International Crimes (Tillsanal) Act 1973 to lisqualify a candidate from contesting an election if a chargesheet is Fibril against the person for committing crimes against humanity The law will also apply to those applying for go-

Italian fashion icon and luxury king Giorgio Armani dead at 91



talian luxury king Giorgin Armani, head of a high and lifewyle empire and one of fashion's most farmous names, has died agod its. sparking tributes to a legeral. The best becown conte name to the top of the industry and going on to does the stars, an

Nepal bans Facebook, X, YouTube, and 23 other social media platforms

K.P. Sharma Olfs govt, cites the companies' non-compliance with registration rules as reason behind decision: free speech

Thursday decided media platforms, including Fucebook, X (formerly Twitter), instagram, and YouTube, citing their fai-ture to meet the deadline to comply with registration requirements in Nepal. Issuing a public notice, ations and information Fechnology said it "has or dered the Nepal Telecom munication Authority to make inactive all non-regis-tered social media sites un-



register in Negal haid expired on Wednesday might, strockneyts

platforms to register in Ne-pal. That deadline expired

apokeaperson for the Mi-nistry, said that the govern-ment was hopeful social media companies would approach them before midnight. If they did not, he said, the government would act accordingly. As none approached, a most-ing on Thursday then made the decision to en-force the ban.

Free speech advocates have objected to the move, saying it is less about regu-lation and more about atlation and more about al-lencing dissenting voices. They believe the govern-ment's registration condi-tions, which include atrin-gest oversight and control deemed unrealistic and in-trusive by many social me-dia companies, likely prompting their refusal to

the sites on a recent Su-preme Court ruling and its own Directives Relating to the Regulation for Usage of Social Media. This is not the first time Nepal has banned a social media plat-form. In November 2023, the then Pushpa Kamal Da hal government blocked TikTok for nine months,

Tariffs on India are for buying Russian oil, Trump tells court

The Yearns administration has told the U.S. Supreme Court that it imposed ta-riffs against india for purchasing Russian energy products "to deal with a pressisting national emergency regarding Russia's war in Ukraine" and as a "crucial aspect" of the Pre-sident's push for peace in

sident's push for peace in the country.

Mr. Trump has imposed startle on the transport territory of the transport territory of the transport of Russian est, bringing the total duties imposed on india to 20%, or a 25t-page appeal to the Supreme Court, startle on Westersday, the Trump administration and



that "the President recentthat "the President recently authorised IEEE/A Order-national Knuergeney Eco-nornic Powers Act) turiffs against India for purchasing Russian energy pro-ducts, to deal with a presch-lating stational sensegoncy regarding Russia's war in therains, as a crucial aspect of his push for peace in that war torn country. It said that due to BEEPA tariffs, six major trading partners and the 27-nation European Union have al-ready entered into frame-work deals with the U.S., accepting tariff arrange-ments heavily recalibrated in America's favour and arresing to make asserted. agreeing to make approxi-mately \$2 trillion of pur chases and investment b

the U.S. economy.
Last week, the U.S.
Court of Appeals for the Pederal Circuit in Weshing, ton, in a 7-to-4 ruling, said the excepting farills im-posed by Mr. Trump or countries around the world are illegal. However, tion time till October 14 to file a petition for a writ of certiozari in the Supreme

At least 44 killed in Israeli fire as Gaza death toll tops 64,000

Agence France Presse. Associated Press. GAZA CITY/DEB AL-BALAH

ciasa's civil defence agency said israeli forces killad at least 44 people on 'Thurs-day, including 25 in Gaza Gity where the military has increased hombardments ahead of a planned

offensive.
Nearly two years into
the decounting conflict, larael has built up its forces
in recent days, with troops
apporating on the outsiliris

organising on the outsides of Gaza City, the Palesti-tion territory's largest ur-ban centre. The United Nations esti-mates that nearly one mil-lion people live in and around Gasa City in the tur-strong continuous in the

Israel has built up its forces in recent days, with troops operating on the outskirts of Gaza City

declared famine. More than 64,000 Pai estintans have been killed in the Gasa Strip, local health officials said on health officials said on Thursday, Gaza's Health Ministry said that 64,255 Palestinians have been killed since the start of the killed since the start or the war. The latest update in cludes around 400 who were proximed missing but whose deaths it says have been confirmed. It doesn't say how many of those killed in the war

Little relief



An Afghas boy injured in the 6.0 magnitude earthquake that struck eastern Afgharistan on bunday, occives treatment at a hospital in Jalababad on Wednesday. The tell from the quake sharply rose to 3,200 making it the deadliest in decades to hit the country. An

26 allies have pledged _ troops for Ukraine after war, says Macron

Associated Press

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thurs-day that 26 of Ukraine's al-lies have pledged to deploy

lish have pledged to deploy troops as a "veasurance force" for the warstern country once fighting such a peaking after a meeting of the "coalition of the willing" in Paris, Mr. Ma. cron and the countries had countries had to the peaking a presence an land, at ass, or in the air countries will be a country's security of the country's security of the country's security of the case of the country's security of the country's security of the first country is security of the first country o



raintan President Volody-myr Zelemskys and the the U.S. envoy for peace talks, Steve Witkoff, to discuss ways of ensuring long-term mulitary support and conti-nued U.S. backing for Uk-

Rights body takes note of Sri Lanka mass graves

Press Trust of India

The Human Bights Comminuten of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) said there exists a reasonable likelihood that

the burials at the Chemma-in mass grave in the north-were unfawful and a result of extragolistical hillings. In the control of the control of the likelihood that the listrate is the correspondent of the north-port issued on Wednesday following their visit to the star on August 3 and 4. Borly this year, at Chim-routing of the control of the routing of the control of the development. routine development work, over 200 skeletal re-

Xi, Kim vow deeper ties between China and North Korea

Agence France-Presse

Chinese Precident SI Jing-ing and Novith Korean lead-er Kim Jongson pledged with Jongson pledged hanced cooperation dur-ing talks in Beijing on the adelines of Beisbridge con-sidents of Beisbridge Con-Second World War, state Second World War, state results said on Thoraday, along with top officials from their countries, met from their countries, met the Petigle a day ofter Mr. Kim attended a Chinese military perade alongoide staining Rousin President Chinese President XI ling-

trip ourside North Korea. Mr. Xi highlighted the "traditional friendship" between China and North

Korea and pledged to con solidate and leous rela tions.
"This position will not

change regardless of how the international situation evolves," Mr. XI told Mr. evolvess." Mr. St. told Mr. Sim.

China has been North
Kotoa's biggest trading
though questions have finguest about the strength of
their tiliateral relationship.
Mr. Kim said North Korea was ready to become as
the strength of the strength of
their said very the
tradition of their said to be the
tradition of the strength of
the strength of the strength of
the strength of the strength of

chaling Russian President bevels and "deepen contrad-ly beneficial economic and trade cooperation".

Pak., China agree to work closely on economic corridor as Sharif meets Xi

Press Trust of tudia

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbae Sharif Thursday met Chinese Premier Li Quong in Beijing and the

two sales reaffirmed their resolve to further streng-then their iron-clad, all weather strategic coopera-tions are supported to continue the strength of the two sides also agreed to continue working classify graded. China-Pakishy graded China-Pakishy (20), which includes five new corridors, state-run leader pakish includes five new corridors, state-run



tisfaction at the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Chi-nu relations," it said. Prime Minister Shartf expressed Positive Irajectory

"During their warm and friendly meeting, the two louders aspreased their astonders aspreased their astonders aspreased their astonders aspreased their as-

and socio-economic development," it said.
Lauding China's impressive transformation under President N. Enpirely visionary leadership, Mr. Sharif said that Pichiston wanted to emulate China's accessors and build a

stronger and closer Pakis-tan-China community with a shared future. Mr. Sharif highlighted

the significant contribu-tion of the China Pakistan sion of the China-Pakhitani Economic Corridor — a Bagustay project of Mr. XI's nell and Road Initiative-ment of the Carlo economic development in the past decade, and stressed the need for early implementation of the Main Line t subway project and Karakorum Highway and Karakorum Highway tomain the control of the tomaination of the Cwadar Port,

Port. The Pakistan Prime Mi-The Pakatan Prime Mi inter identified agricul-internation of the prime of the prime of the leastless, inclusival sector and IT as priority areas for mutually beneficial sector somic collaboration. When the priority is never promic collaboration and the party, "the Ministry spo-somic collaboration and the prime of the prime of the keeperson said.

China denies claims about conspiring against U.S.

Agence France Presse

China defended on Thurs day its decision to invite the teaders of ituata and North Korea to the second World War commemora-

World War commemora-tions, which Prosident Ho-nald Trump accused them of using to compine against a telling's Paretyn Minis-try said on Thursday fo-reign guests' had been in-vited to commemorate 80 years since the end of World War II.

ROME

Italian fashion icon and luxury king Giorgio Armani dead at 91



REUTERS

Italian luxury king Giorgio Armani, head of a high-end lifestyle empire and one of fashion's most famous names, has died aged 91, sparking tributes to a legend. The best-known contemporary designer, Armani opened his fashion house in Milan in 1975, quickly rising to the top of the industry and going on to dress the stars. AFP

- Giorgio Armani, legendary Italian fashion designer, passed away at age 91.
- Known as the "master of the power suit", he revolutionized men's and women's fashion by softening traditional tailoring.
- His company, Armani Group, confirmed his death.

2. Contributions to Fashion

- Redefined Men's Fashion:
 - Removed shoulder pads & heavy linings from suits.
 - Created a softer, body-revealing structure, leading to the rise of the power suit.
- For Women: Offered an alternative to traditional feminine wear, giving women a sense of authority in the workplace (esp. 1980s corporate culture).
- Popularized androgynous yet luxurious fashion.

4. Personal Life

- Born July 11, 1934, Piacenza, Italy.
- Worked during WWII as a clerk in Fascist offices.
- Movies were his first love; wanted to become a director.
- Maintained low profile, focused on design rather than flamboyance.

5. Historical & Economic Context

- Armani's rise in 1970s-80s coincided with global changes:
 - Expansion of consumer capitalism and Hollywood celebrity culture.
 - Italy's strong fashion dominance (Milan, Florence).
- Armani's suits became symbols of corporate power in neoliberal economies.
- His designs mirrored social shifts women entering corporate roles in large numbers.

- Famous Italian Fashion Brands
- **Gucci** Known for luxury handbags, clothing, and accessories.
- **Prada** Minimalist style, luxury bags, and shoes.
- Versace Bold prints, glamorous dresses, and statement designs.
- Dolce & Gabbana (D&G) Italian heritage-inspired fashion.
- Valentino Haute couture and elegant evening gowns.
- Armani (Giorgio Armani) Classic formal wear and suits.
- **Bottega Veneta** Famous for its leather craftsmanship.
- **Fendi** Iconic "Baguette Bag," fur, and luxury wear.
- Moschino Playful, quirky, and bold fashion.
- Salvatore Ferragamo High-end shoes and leather goods.

- Famous French Fashion Brands
- Louis Vuitton (LV) World's most iconic luxury bags.
- **Chanel** Timeless fashion, handbags, and perfumes.
- **Dior** Haute couture, perfumes, and elegant gowns.
- Hermès Birkin & Kelly bags, silk scarves, and leather.
- Saint Laurent (YSL) Modern edgy fashion and bags.
- Givenchy Chic clothing, accessories, and perfumes.
- **Balmain** Luxury ready-to-wear fashion.
- **Celine** Minimalist luxury fashion.
- Lanvin One of the oldest French couture houses.
- Jean Paul Gaultier Avant-garde designs and fragrances.

Top 10 Global Fashion Brands by Brand Value

Rank	Brand	Country	Brand Value (Approx.)
1	Chanel	France	US \$37.9 billion
2	Louis Vuitton	France	~US \$32-41 billion (est.)
3	Nike	USA	~US \$30 billion
4	Hermès	France	~US \$16.7 billion
5	Zara (Inditex)	Spain	~US \$16.3 billion
6	Gucci	Italy (via Kering)	~US \$14.9 billion
7	Dior	France	~US \$14.7 billion
8	Adidas	Germany	~US \$14.4 billion
9	Rolex	Switzerland	~US \$13.8 billion
10	Cartier	France	~US \$13.6 billion

Nepal bans Facebook, X, YouTube, and 23 other social media platforms

K.P. Sharma Oli's govt. cites the companies' non-compliance with registration rules as reason behind decision; free speech advocates say the move is less about regulation and more about silencing dissent and tightening control over online speech

Sanjeev Satgainya

KATHMANDU

he K.P. Sharma Oli government on Thursday decided to ban as many as 26 social media platforms, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and YouTube, citing their failure to meet the deadline to comply with registration requirements in Nepal.

Issuing a public notice, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology said it "has ordered the Nepal Telecommunication Authority to make inactive all non-registered social media sites un-



Time up: A seven-day deadline set for social media platforms to register in Nepal had expired on Wednesday night. ISTOCKPHOTO

til they are registered."

After repeated requests, the government again, on August 28, set a seven-day deadline for social media platforms to register in Nepal. That deadline expired on Wednesday night.

On Wednesday afternoon, Gajendra Thakur, spokesperson for the Ministry, said that the government was hopeful social media companies would approach them before midnight. If they did not, he said, the government would act accordingly. As none approached, a meeting on Thursday then made the decision to enforce the ban.

Free speech advocates have objected to the move, saying it is less about regulation and more about silencing dissenting voices. They believe the government's registration conditions, which include stringent oversight and control measures, may have been

deemed unrealistic and intrusive by many social media companies, likely prompting their refusal to register.

The government has based its decision to ban the sites on a recent Supreme Court ruling and its own Directives Relating to the Regulation for Usage of Social Media. This is not the first time Nepal has banned a social media platform. In November 2023, the then Pushpa Kamal Dahal government blocked TikTok for nine months, prompting criticism.

(Sanjeev Satgainya is an independent journalist based in Kathmandu)

- **Decision by Nepal govt**: K.P. Sharma Oli's government banned 26 social media platforms, including Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, and YouTube.
- Reason given: Non-compliance with Nepal's registration requirements.
- **Action taken**: Nepal Telecommunication Authority ordered all non-registered sites to be made inactive.
- 2. Legal & Administrative Context
- **Notice & deadline**: On August 28, a 7-day deadline was set for compliance (expired Sept 4).
- No compliance: None of the companies registered; ban enforced Sept 5.
- **Legal basis**: Directive issued in line with a recent Supreme Court ruling and Nepal's *Directives Relating to the Regulation for Usage of Social Media*.

Government Justification

- Claimed move ensures **registration**, **oversight**, **and accountability** of foreign tech platforms.
- Stated aim: protect national interests, regulate digital space, and ensure taxation.
- 4. Criticism & Concerns
- Free speech groups: Called it a move to silence dissent and tighten control over online speech.
- **Registration norms**: Seen as too stringent and intrusive, discouraging companies from registering.
- **History**: Not the first instance TikTok was banned for 9 months in Nov 2023 under Pushpa Kamal Dahal govt.

Acanthamoeba

- The Kerala Health Department fears that **Acanthamoeba** could be much more widely present in the **State's waterbodies than was thought before.**
- Acanthamoeba
- Acanthamoeba are free-living protozoan amoebae (single-celled organisms) found widely in the environment (soil, air, dust, freshwater, seawater, contact lens cases, swimming pools, hospital equipment).
- They are **not true parasites**, because they **can complete their life cycle without infecting** humans or animals.

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- Pathogenic Infections caused by Acanthamoeba:
 - Acanthamoeba keratitis (AK):
 - Eye infection, usually in contact lens users.
 - **Symptoms:** severe pain, redness, blurred vision, photophobia, corneal ulceration.
 - **Risk factors:** improper contact lens hygiene, exposure to contaminated water while wearing lenses.

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Granulomatous Amoebic Encephalitis (GAE):

- Rare but usually fatal brain infection.
- Occurs mainly in immunocompromised persons (HIV/AIDS, transplant, cancer patients).
- Symptoms: headache, fever, seizures, confusion, neurological deficits.

Disseminated Acanthamoeba infection:

- Can spread to skin, lungs, sinuses in immunocompromised patients.
- Causes chronic ulcers, abscesses, or nodules.

Treatment remains difficult: Overall, therapeutic outcomes are mixed due to diagnostic delays and underlying patient vulnerabilities.

Excess Rainfall Threatens Karnataka's Coffee Plantations

India's coffee heartland, Chikmagaluru, Coorg, and Hassan districts of Karnataka, has been hit by incessant rains, extreme cold, and lack of sunlight.

Geographical Condition for Coffee production

Climate: Coffee grows well in tropical climates. It requires a **warm, humid climate with mild winters**. Shade is essential for healthy growth, and coffee is often grown under tree cover.

Soil: Requires well-drained, fertile soils, rich in humus and organic matter.

• Soil should be slightly acidic, with a pH of **6.0–6.5**.

Temperature: Ideal annual temperature ranges between 15°C and 28°C.

• Frost is harmful to coffee plants, and extreme hot or dry conditions also reduce yield.

Precipitation: Coffee thrives in hilly regions with elevations of **600–1,600** metres above sea <u>level</u>.

• Sloping terrain ensures proper drainage and prevents waterlogging.

- Major Coffee producing states are Karnataka (largest producer, contributes nearly 70% of India's coffee), Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.
 - Other emerging states are: Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and the North-Eastern region (mainly Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Meghalaya).

Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation, in partnership with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and with support from the European Union has officially released the Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Feasibility Study for India.
 - The feasibility study assesses the potential for producing and utilizing dropin Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) in India.
 - India's readiness to become self-sufficient in SAF production: India is targeting 1% blending by 2027, 2% by 2028 and 5% by 2030 in line with the CORSIA mandate.

- Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)
- **SAF** is an **alternative fuel** made from **non-petroleum feedstocks** that reduces emissions from air transportation.
- SAF can be blended at different levels with limits between 10% and 50%, depending on the feedstock and how the fuel is produced.
- Need for SAF:
 - Worldwide, aviation accounts for 2% of all carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and 12% of all CO2 emissions from transportation.
 - ICAO's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) caps net CO2 aviation emissions at 2020 levels through 2035.
 - The international aviation industry has set an aspirational goal to reach net zero carbon by 2050.
 - SAF presents the best near-term opportunity to meet these goals.

Benefits

- •Engine and infrastructure compatibility: SAF blended with conventional Jet A can be used in existing aircraft infrastructure.
- •Fewer emissions: Compared with conventional jet fuel, 100% SAF has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 94% depending on feedstock and technology pathway.
- •More flexibility: SAF is a replacement for conventional jet jet fuel, allowing for multiple products from various feedstocks and production technologies.

Cancer Incidence and Trends in India 2025 Report

- Recent data from 43 cancer registries in India show a lifetime cancer risk of 11%. In 2024, an estimated 15.6 lakh new cancer cases and 8.74 lakh deaths were recorded.
- These registries cover 10% to 18% of the population across 23 states and Union Territories.
- The findings reveal important trends in cancer types, regional variations, and risk factors that inform policy and healthcare strategies.

Cancer Burden in India

Cancer cases in India show gender difference. Women account for 51.1% of cases but only 45% of deaths. This is largely due to the types of cancers common in women, such as breast and cervical cancer, which are easier to detect early and treat effectively. Men face more deadly cancers like lung and gastric cancer, which are harder to diagnose early.

Shift in Common Cancer Types

Oral cancer has become the most common cancer in Indian men, surpassing lung cancer. This rise occurs despite a decline in tobacco use from 34.6% to 28.6% between 2009-10 and 2016-17. The long latency period of cancer and other risk factors such as alcohol consumption contribute to this trend. Alcohol increases the risk of several cancers and combined use with tobacco further compounds this risk.

Regional Variations and Risk Factors

The Northeast region shows the highest cancer incidence, including cervical, lung (in women), and oral cancers. High tobacco use, unique dietary habits like fermented pork fat and smoked meats, and consumption of very spicy foods and hot beverages contribute to this pattern.

State-wise Cancer Risk

Mizoram has the highest lifetime cancer risk in India, with 21.1% in men and 18.9% in women, far above the national average. Other regions also show varying incidences of specific cancers such as breast, cervical, lung, oral, and prostate cancers, reflecting diverse environmental and lifestyle factors.

Word of the day

Squeamish:

excessively fastidious and easily disgusted

Synonyms: dainty, nice, prissy

Usage: He was so squeamish he would only touch the handle with his elbow.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/ squeamishpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈskwiːmɪʃ/

