

# Daily Current Affairs





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**The Hindu**



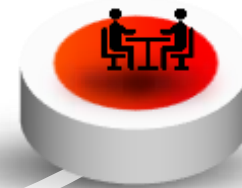
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Sabalenka knocks out champion Swiatek  
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INSIDE



**Had a 'positive' call with Xi, says Donald Trump**

WASHINGTON President Donald Trump said on Thursday that his first call with Chinese leader Xi Jinping since returning to office, which lasted an hour and a half, was "very positive," announcing that the two countries would trade talks in hopes of breaking an impasse over tariffs and global supplies of rare earth minerals. » PAGE 14

**Envoy explains history of Pak. links with terror**

The multi-party delegation led by Congress's Shashi Tharoor began its official engagements in Washington DC with a visit to Capitol Hill to meet U.S. Senators and Representatives, to explain India's experience of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, especially the April 22 blasphemy attack and India's retaliatory strikes Operation Sindoor. » PAGE 6

**Israel is carrying out premeditated genocide: Lula**

PARIS Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva accused Israel on Thursday of carrying out premeditated genocide in the occupied Palestinian territory of Gaza. "It is a premeditated genocide from a far-right government that is waging a war, including against the interests of its own people," he said at a joint press conference in Paris. » PAGE 18

**Trump revives travel ban against 12 countries**

**Arrives France-Prime**

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump signed a new travel ban targeting 12 countries that comes into effect on Monday, reviving one of the most controversial measures from his first term. The move bans all travel to the U.S. by nationals of Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, Niger, Haiti, Cuba, Iran, Laos, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, according to the White House.

Mr. Trump said on Wednesday that the measure was spurred by a recent flamethrower attack on a Jewish protest in Colorado that U.S. authorities blamed on an Egyptian man they said was in the country illegally.

However, Egypt was notably not on the list of countries facing travel restrictions. Mr. Trump also imposed a partial ban on travellers



**Gates closed**

The U.S. President's revival of immigration policy from his first term bans citizens of 12 countries from travelling to the U.S., while entry restrictions are imposed on those from 7 countries.

Who applicable to citizens of:  
• Afghanistan • Myanmar • Chad • The Republic of Cuba • Iran • Laos • Somalia • Sudan • Syria • Yemen

Partial entry restrictions in other nations from:  
• Bangladesh • Cuba • Iran • Iraq • Jordan • Lebanon • Libya • Mexico • Myanmar • Niger • Pakistan • Somalia • Sudan • Syria • Yemen

from seven other countries: Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Haiti, Iran, Laos, Liberia, Myanmar, Niger, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, according to the White House. Some temporary visa visas from those countries will be allowed. Mr. Trump said on Wednesday that the measure was spurred by a recent flamethrower attack on a Jewish protest in Colorado that U.S. authorities blamed on an Egyptian man they said was in the country illegally. However, Egypt was notably not on the list of countries facing travel restrictions. Mr. Trump also imposed a partial ban on travellers

are set to begin attending Harvard University, ramping up his crackdown on what he regards as a host of liberalisation. With seven of the 12 countries banned being from Africa, the African Union said the move would harm "people-to-people ties, education exchange, commercial engagement, and broader diplomatic relations" and urged "constructive dialogue". Chad's Foreign Minister Aboudou Salou Fako said that the government was "surprised" by the ban and said it "completely disregards" Nijem's commitment to tackling terror. Venezuela said the United States ban was a "discriminatory, racist, and downright cruel" move. Myanmar, one student affected by the ban, only got her U.S. study visa two days ago and said it would hit many young people's dreams of escaping oppression. "We don't really have life here, and people want to escape to a country where we can breathe, we can walk, we can study," she said from Yangon. The ban could yet face legal challenges, as have many of the drastic measures Mr. Trump has taken since his whitehouse return to office in January. Mr. Trump gave specific reasons for each country in his proclamation. The U.S. President said after 2020 that the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and war-torn Libya, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen lacked "competent" central authorities for processing passports and visas. Iran, with which the United States is in negotiations on a possible nuclear deal, was included because it is a "state sponsor of terrorism," the order said.

**CRACKDOWN ON HARVARD**  
» PAGE 14

**Valley gets closer**



All set: The Chavali Bridge, the world's tallest railway bridge, is set to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district on Friday. The bridge is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link, which will provide direct connectivity to the Kashmir Valley. (PTI/ANSA/REUTERS) » PAGE 41

**Delimitation will address concerns of southern States: Centre**

Vijaya Singh  
NEW DELHI

The delimitation exercise will take care of the concerns expressed by southern States, and discussions will be held with all stakeholders at the appropriate time, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said on Thursday.

In a post on X, a day after it announced that the Census exercise will be concluded by March 1, 2027, the Ministry said that Home Minister Anshu Shah has "clarified on many occasions that in delimitation exercise, concerns of southern states will be taken care of and discussed with all concerned at an appropriate time".

**'Questionable timing'**  
On Wednesday, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K.K. Stalin had questioned the timing of the Census, saying that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had deliberately delayed the exercise to 2027, "making their plan clear to reduce Tamil Nadu's political representation".

The southern States have been opposing the population-based criteria for the redrawing of constituencies, which was last done on the basis of 1971 Census data. As per constitutional norms, the Census held after 2026 can be used as the basis to redraw Lok Sabha constituencies. In a series of posts on X, the MHA added that the exercise to redraw the constituencies was originally planned to be conducted in 2021, but it was postponed due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic across the country. It is a "state sponsor of terrorism," the order said.

**'QUICKER DATA'**  
» PAGE 6

**Senior Maoist killed in Bijapur encounter**

Facing the heat

Bodies of 186 Maoist cadres have been recovered in the Bastar Range in 2023 so far, according to a police statement

**Major encounters in three**  
February to 11 months killed in Chhattisgarh

March 26: 20 Maoists killed in two encounters in Bastar

April-May: 17 Maoists killed in 23 encounters in Bastar

May 21: 27 Maoists, including Bastar Range, after Baramulla, the general secretary of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), killed in an encounter in Chhattisgarh

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# Bengaluru police chief out; FIR names RCB

Siddaramaiah suspends all jurisdictional police officials over stampede during victory celebration

Chief Minister orders a judicial probe by a one-man commission headed by former Karnataka HC judge

FIR filed against State Cricket Association, event management company for culpable homicide

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

A day after a stampede claimed the lives of 11 and left 56 injured at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here during revelry to celebrate the victory of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in IPL-2025, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced on Thursday that Bengaluru Police Commissioner B. Dayananda and all police officials responsible for the jurisdiction where the stadium is, have been suspended, pending inquiry.

The Chief Minister also announced a judicial inquiry by a one-man commission headed by former Karnataka High Court judge Michael D'Cunha.

The State government also told the High Court that the probe into the case would be handed over to a Special Investigation Team (SIT) in the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

Earlier in the day, the city police registered an FIR against RCB franchise; DNA Entertainment Pvt. Ltd., an event management company; and the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) for culpable homicide, illegal assembly, and other serious charges.

## 'Dereliction of duty'

Addressing a press conference after a special meeting of senior Ministers, Mr. Siddaramaiah said that "prima facie dereliction of duty and negligence of police officials were noted and



Damaged fences at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Thursday after the RCB Victory celebration. SUDHAKARA JAIN

a decision to suspend them was taken." He also said police officials had been directed to take stringent action and arrest representatives of RCB, the KSCA, and DNA Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.

According to a com-

plaint filed by Girish A.K., police inspector of Cubbon Park station, the KSCA had approached the police on June 3, even before the tournament final was held, seeking permission to hold a celebratory event at the stadium on June 4 evening

## HC poses nine questions to govt. on stampede

BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka on Thursday directed the State government to come out with answers for nine questions on the cause of the stampede outside the M. Chinnaswamy stadium in Bengaluru on Wednesday which left 11 dead and 56 injured. » PAGE 3

if RCB won the match.

The complaint said that RCB team management "unilaterally" announced a victory parade around the stadium on social media on Wednesday morning, despite the city police turning down permission,

which led to large crowds gathering on the streets.

The police claimed that they denied permission citing concerns over large crowds and security concerns. It further claimed that KSCA was, however, insistent on holding the event.

Following this, the police made arrangements for adequate security. According to the complaint, the police had made elaborate security in and around the stadium on Tuesday (June 3) night where thousands of fans gathered to celebrate the RCB victory in the final match.

## Crowding, stampede

"Lakhs of people gathered at the stadium for the programme and the crowd became uncontrollable due

to the confusion of organisers on how to allow the people into the stadium which has a seating capacity of around 35,000. The stampede incident and chaos occurred at gate no. 2, 2A, 6, 7, 15, 17, 18, 20, and 21, resulting in the death of 11 people and injuring 56. The gathering of lakhs of people outside the stadium is due to the RCB announcement at their official website about the free entry pass distribution, leading to the incident," the complainant stated.

Senior IPS officer Seemanth Kumar Singh was posted as Bengaluru Police Commissioner until further orders, an official notification said.

**EDITORIAL**  
» PAGE 6

- **Police Commissioner B. Dayananda suspended** along with all jurisdictional police officers.
- **CM Siddaramaiah ordered:**
  - 🔍 A **judicial probe** by a one-man commission (headed by ex-Karnataka HC Judge Michael D'Cunha).
  - 🚔 A **Special Investigation Team (SIT)** under **CID** to investigate.
  - FIRs registered against:
    - 🏏 RCB Franchise
    - 📅 DNA Entertainment Pvt. Ltd. (event manager)
    - 🏟️ Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA)
  - Charges: **Culpable homicide, illegal assembly, dereliction of duty**



### ◆ 3. Legal and Judicial Developments

- Karnataka High Court raised **9 specific questions** to the government about the causes and lapses behind the incident.
  - Complaint by a police inspector mentions:
    - KSCA had **sought permission** in advance.
    - Police had denied permission due to security concerns.
    - RCB **"unilaterally announced"** the parade on social media despite the denial.
- 

### ◆ 4. Security & Crowd Control Lapses

- Stadium capacity: **~35,000**, but **lakhs gathered**.
- Free entry pass distribution by RCB caused crowd surge.
- Stampede occurred at gates: 2, 2A, 6, 7, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21.
- RCB's **online announcement without coordination** cited as a major trigger.

- Similar crowd tragedies in India:
    - **2013 Allahabad Kumbh Mela stampede** – 36 deaths
    - **2008 Jodhpur temple stampede** – 224 deaths
    - **2022 Morbi bridge collapse** – 135 deaths
  - Highlights repeated **failure in crowd management** in Indian public events.
-



- **Q. With reference to urban disaster management in India, consider the following statements:**
- A judicial probe can be initiated by the State Government without the involvement of Parliament.
- Culpable homicide not amounting to murder falls under Section 304 of the IPC.
- The Karnataka High Court has no authority to intervene in administrative decisions of the police.
- **Which of the statements is/are correct?**
  - A. 1 and 2 only
  - B. 2 and 3 only
  - C. 1 and 3 only
  - D. All three

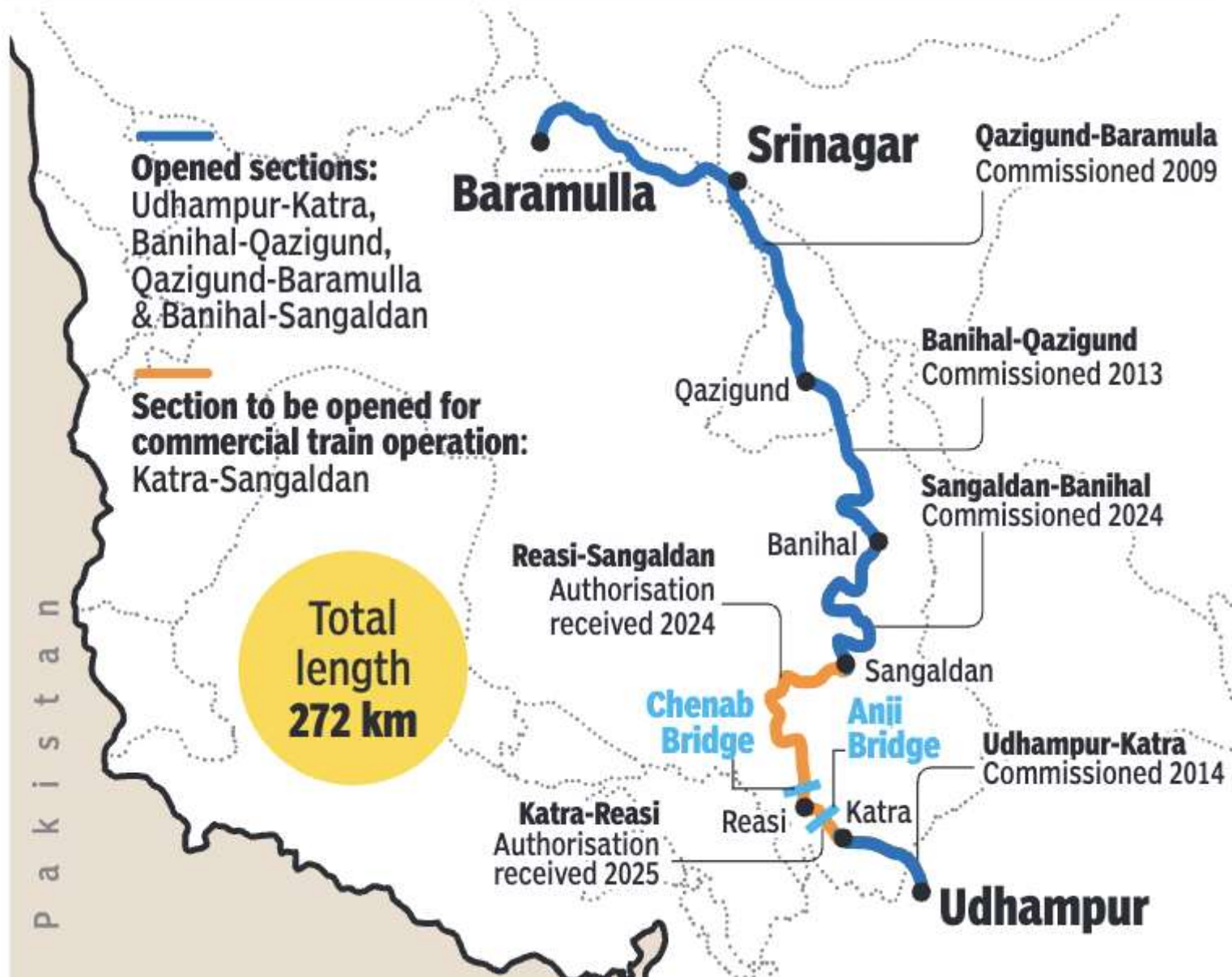
## *Valley gets closer*



**All set:** The Chenab Bridge, the world's tallest railway bridge, is set to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Friday. The bridge is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link, which will provide direct connectivity to the Kashmir Valley. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT (REPORT: PAGE 4)



# The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Route





# World's Highest Railway Bridge

Over Chenab River

Life of bridge  
**120 yrs**

**29,880 tonne**  
of steel used

Designed to withstand  
wind speed of **266 kmph**

Length of bridge  
**1.3km**

One pylon of  
cable at  
**127m**, higher than  
Qutab Minar (72m)

Single arch  
span  
**467m**

Bridge deck  
height above  
river bed  
**359m**

Apart from the Chenab bridge (pictured), the Srinagar rail link also features the Anji Khad bridge, India's first cable-stayed bridge



# Trump revives travel ban against 12 countries

**Agence France-Presse**  
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump signed a new travel ban targeting 12 countries that comes into effect on Monday, reviving one of the most controversial measures from his first term. The move bans all travel to the U.S. by nationals of Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen, according to the White House.

Mr. Trump said on Wednesday that the measure was spurred by a makeshift flamethrower attack on a Jewish protest in Colorado that U.S. authorities blamed on an Egyptian man they said was in the country illegally.

However, Egypt was notably not on the list of countries facing travel restrictions.

Mr. Trump also imposed a partial ban on travellers



**Gates closed**

The U.S. President's revival of immigration policy from his first term bans citizens of 12 countries from travelling to the U.S., while entry restrictions are imposed on those from 7 countries

**Ban applicable to citizens of:**

- Afghanistan ■ Myanmar ■ Chad ■ The Republic of Congo ■ Equatorial Guinea ■ Eritrea ■ Haiti ■ Iran ■ Libya ■ Somalia ■ Sudan ■ Yemen

<b>Partial entry restrictions to affect nationals from:</b>	<b>Countries affected by the 2017 restrictions:</b>
■ Burundi ■ Cuba ■ Laos ■ Sierra Leone ■ Togo ■ Turkmenistan ■ Venezuela	■ Iraq ■ Syria ■ Iran ■ Sudan ■ Libya ■ Somalia ■ Yemen

from seven other countries: Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela. Some temporary work visas from those countries will be allowed.

## Olympics excluded

The ban will not apply to athletes competing in the 2026 FIFA World Cup, which the U.S. is co-hosting with Canada and Mexico, as well as the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, Mr. Trump's order said.

Diplomats from the targeted countries will also be

excluded from the ban, according to the spokesman of the secretary-general of the United Nations headquartered in New York.

"The recent terror attack in Boulder, Colorado, has underscored the extreme dangers posed to our country by the entry of foreign nationals who are not properly vetted," Mr. Trump said in a video message from the Oval Office. "We don't want them."

Mr. Trump also announced separately on Wednesday a ban on visas for foreign students who

are set to begin attending Harvard University, ramping up his crackdown on what he regards as a bastion of liberalism.

With seven of the 12 countries banned being from Africa, the African Union said the move would harm "people-to-people ties, education exchange, commercial engagement, and broader diplomatic relations" and urged "constructive dialogue".

Chad's Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Sabre Fadoul said that the government was "surprised" by the ban and said it "completely disregards" N'Djamena's commitment to tackling terror.

Venezuela said the United States itself was a dangerous destination, while Amnesty International USA called the ban "discriminatory, racist, and downright cruel."

In Myanmar, one student affected by the ban only got her U.S. study visa two days ago and said it

would hit many young people's dreams of escaping oppression.

"We don't really have life here, and people want to escape to a country where we can breathe, we can walk, we can study," she said from Yangon.

The ban could yet face legal challenges, as have many of the drastic measures Mr. Trump has taken since his whirlwind return to office in January.

Mr. Trump gave specific reasons for each country in his proclamation.

The U.S. President said Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and war-torn Libya, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen lacked "competent" central authorities for processing passports and vetting.

Iran, with which the United States is in negotiations on a possible nuclear deal, was included because it is a "state sponsor of terrorism," the order said.


**CRACKDOWN ON HARVARD**

» PAGE 14





## ◆ 1. Key Provisions of the Ban

- **Full travel ban** imposed on **12 countries**.
    - Includes: **Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen**
  - **Partial entry restrictions** (e.g., student/work visas) on nationals from:
    - **Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan, Venezuela**
- 

### ◆ 3. Diplomatic Exemptions

- **Athletes** from banned nations can compete in:
    - **2026 FIFA World Cup** (co-hosted by US, Canada, Mexico)
    - **2028 Los Angeles Olympics**
- 

### ◆ 4. Countries' Reaction

- **African Union:** Ban harms people-to-people ties, education exchange, and diplomacy.
- **Chad:** "Surprised" and called the move "disregards efforts".
- **Venezuela:** Criticized as discriminatory.
- **Myanmar:** Local youth expressed despair over lost dreams.



## ◆ A. Historical Context

- **Post-9/11 era** saw an increase in U.S. border security and suspicion toward Middle Eastern and African nations.
  - In **2017**, Trump signed the first travel ban citing national security — widely criticized for religious discrimination.
- 

## ◆ B. Political Angle

- **Domestic politics:** Plays to Trump's voter base who favor strict immigration.
- **Foreign policy tool:** Pressures countries like Iran and Venezuela by isolating them diplomatically.
- **Election campaign strategy:** Reassertion of "America First" policy to showcase toughness on immigration.

## ◆ C. Economic Impact

- **Educational sector hit:** Bans on student visas from affected countries harm U.S. universities reliant on foreign admissions.
  - **Technology & healthcare:** Many skilled professionals from these nations work in these sectors; the ban may cause brain drain or labor shortages.
- 

## ◆ D. Geographical Aspects

- Majority of countries lie in:
  - **Africa (7 countries):** e.g., Chad, Sudan, Eritrea
  - **Middle East and Central Asia:** e.g., Iran, Afghanistan
  - **Latin America:** e.g., Venezuela, Cuba
- Many are **conflict zones or politically unstable**, e.g., Libya, Afghanistan.



- **Q. Consider the following countries:**
- Venezuela
- Myanmar
- Iran
- Egypt
- Which of the above were included in the 2025 U.S. travel ban revived by President Trump?
- **A. 1, 2, and 3 only**
- **B. 1 and 4 only**
- **C. All four**
- **D. 2, 3, and 4 only**

# WHAT HAS HAPPENED

Trump signs travel ban that **prohibits citizens of 12 countries** from entering the US, but there are some exceptions to the expansive order

➤ People from some countries are on a restricted list, and they cannot come to the US permanently or get tourist or student visas

■ Travel Banned

■ Travel Restricted

The ban goes into effect on Monday



**WHAT WAS THE TRIGGER** | It is the latest move in Trump's sweeping crackdown on immigration, but the decision comes days after an **Egyptian man** in Colorado was **arrested and charged** with carrying out an **attack on a group honouring Israeli hostages** being held in Gaza







*Egypt was not on the list of banned countries*



## How Many People Come To US From These Countries?

**L**ast year, the state department issued **about 170,000 total visas to the 12 countries** on the ban list. For most countries, the vast majority of those were non-immigrant visitor visas for tourism, business or study. But for **Afghans, Yemenis and Somalians, most were immigrant visas**, typically allocated to immediate relatives of US citizens or to skilled workers who are sponsored by their employers

## IN BRIEF

Producers of Malayalam film *Manjunath Boys* summoned

The Maradu police in Kerala have reportedly issued notices to the producers of the Malayalam hit movie *Manjunath Boys*, summoning them to appear for interrogation in a case registered in connection with the alleged denial of the principal amount and profit share to an investor in the movie. The police registered the case on April 23, 2024, against producers of the movie, Parava Films and its partner Shawn Antony, actor producer and partner of Parava Films, Soorin Shahar and his father, Babu Shahar. It is learnt that all three have been summoned for questioning.

## 7 killed as truck overturns on autorickshaw in M.P.'s Rewa

Seven persons, including four minors, were killed in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district on Thursday after a truck overturned on an autorickshaw, police officers said. Additional Superintendent of Police, Rewa, Nivik Lal said the incident occurred around 2.45 p.m. in the Sohag valley area near the U.P. boundary. A truck carrying cement sheets overturned after the driver lost control of the vehicle, collapsing onto the autorickshaw. According to the district administration, the autorickshaw was carrying 11 passengers — residents of Maunang district — who were returning after taking a dip in the Ganges in Prayagraj. The deceased include four children aged between seven and 12, two men, and a woman.

## Rape-murder of Dalit girl: Bihar sanctions ex gratia, pension, house for family

Amrit Bhasari  
PATNA

The Bihar government on Thursday sanctioned a compensation of ₹8.25 lakh to the family members of an 11-year-old Dalit girl who died on June 1 after she was raped and brutally assaulted.

The State also announced monthly pension of ₹7,000 and allotment of a house under the Mukhya-Mantri Awas Yojana for the family.

According to officials, the injured girl, who was shifted from Muzaffarpur, had to wait in an ambulance for nearly five hours outside the Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH) as a bed was not allotted promptly.

The compensation was given under the scheduled Castes and the Scheduled

First instalment of ₹4.12-500 given to victim's mother, says Muzaffarpur District Magistrate

Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

District Magistrate Subrat Kumar Sen made the announcement at a press briefing at the Muzaffarpur Collectorate. "There is a provision under the 2022 Act that if any member of a SC/ST person takes place, then a compensation of ₹8.25 lakh is given. Based on the FIR and post-mortem report, we have given the first instalment of ₹4.12,500 to the mother of the girl," Mr. Sen said.

I have instructed the Block Development Officer to ensure that the house is built. In 2011-12, the family

received a house under the Indira Awas Yojana but could not construct it. In this special case, we have taken the decision to provide ₹1.20 lakh for construction and ₹12,000 for a toilet," he said.

The sanctionary amount of ₹8.25 lakh is given. Based on the FIR and post-mortem report, we have given the first instalment of ₹4.12,500 to the mother of the girl," Mr. Sen said.

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Lawyer for Manoj Kumar in Bihar's West Champaran district is seen planting a sapling in the presence of Manoj Kumar in Bihar's West Champaran district. (UPI/ANIL KUMAR)

son of World Environment Day on Thursday during the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Patna.

Union Minister, Department of Environment, Forest, and Climate

change development has deteriorated the quality of soil, water, and air and also disturbed the balance in natural ecosystems. Nowadays, several ecosystems are in great danger, which has created an alarming situation for the survival of a number of organisms," Mr. Manoj said in his address in Zoology, told *The Hindu*.

He said, "Considering major challenges and issues in ecology, I started campaigns about the importance of planting trees from 2007 as a case study to protect the environment in the public domain."

From a middle-class family, Mr. Manoj has two daughters and a son. While

one daughter is doing computer science from NIT Patna, the second one is preparing for competitive exams. Drawing inspiration from him, his children motivate their friends to plant saplings.

Despite drawing a meagre salary, he started planting trees. His wife Rani Barai initially discouraged him, only to understand its value. When his salary did not suffice, he used to withdraw his PF to sustain his passion.

"I try my level best to create awareness about the importance of planting trees, water, soil, and air. I am not alone now and several people have joined the concept of '3Ps', that is Plant, Planet, and Plan-

et," Mr. Manoj said.

Emotional attachment His team insists on people planting saplings with their own hands as they might get emotionally attached to plants and not damage it.

While actively involved in public places such as schools, colleges, and public parks, he also visits rural areas, particularly in the vicinity of the Patna Tiger Reserve, and in neighbourhoods.

"We have a mission and vision to make India green, with 33% of forest area when we celebrate the 75th anniversary of India's independence in 2027," Mr. Manoj asserted.

Many of the saplings he had planted are now full-fledged plants.

## Tamil Nadu government notifies greater flamingo sanctuary at Dhanushkodi

It spans over 500 hectares and is part of the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve; the move aims at preserving a critical stopover point along the Central Asian Flyway for migratory wetland birds

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has officially declared a greater flamingo sanctuary at Dhanushkodi in Ramanathapuram district.

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurated the sanctuary via video conferencing at an event organised by the Departments of Environment, Climate Change and Forests in Chennai on Thursday to celebrate World Environment Day.

Thangam Thennarasu, holding additional charge as Minister for Environment, B.S. Rajakannan, Minister for Forests and Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary to Government of Environment, Climate Change, and Forests, participated in the event.

Rich biodiversity The move aims to preserve a critical stopover point along the Central Asian Flyway for thousands of migratory wetland birds.

The sanctuary spans 524.7 hectares and encompasses both revenue and forest lands within Ra-



Sals seen in flamingos in Dhanushkodi, Ramanathapuram district. As per the latest bird survey, Dhanushkodi region has over 10,700 wetland birds, representing 128 species. (I. RAJAKANNAN)

manthapuram taluk.

The designated area, part of the ecologically sensitive Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve, is a rich biodiversity system, including mangroves, sand dunes, mudflats, and marshes.

These unique features support a rich biodiversity. From migratory birds and marine life to nesting sea turtles.

A Government Order (G.O.) issued on June 4, by Ms. Sahu, notified the ac-

cording to the recent 2023-2024 Wetland Bird Survey, the Dhanushkodi region recorded over 10,700 wetland birds, representing 128 species, including migratory birds, egrets, sandpipers, and lesser flamingos.

Ecologically crucial Mangrove species such as *Avicennia* and *Rhizophora* dominate the Dhanushkodi lagoon, providing essential breeding grounds and natural defences against

coastal erosion. The sanctuary status is expected to encourage responsible ecotourism, generate local employment, and raise public awareness in wetland conservation, the G.O. said.

T.M. Anbarasan, Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, S. Siva Reddy, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force), Ravi Kumar Dogra, Chief Wildlife Warden, also participated.

## Flood situation in the Northeast eases; two more dead in Assam

The Hindu Bureau  
GUWAHATI

The flood situation in Assam eased on Thursday but left two more people dead. The trend was similar in other parts of the northeastern region, specifically Manipur's Imphal Valley, where officials said the rivers were in receding mode.

According to the flood bulletin provided by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASD-MA), two people died in Barak Valley — a boy in Hailakandi and a man in the Subhant district — taking the death toll due to inundation and landslides to 21 since the last week of May.

Assam recorded the most fatalities, followed by 42 in Arunachal Pradesh, three in Meghalaya and Mizoram, three in Sikkim, two in Tripura, and one each in Manipur and Nagaland. A total of 52 people have died in flood-affected districts in the region so far.

The ASDMA bulletin said the number of affected districts in Assam came down from 21 to 10 over the last 24 hours. The number of flood-affected people also reduced from 6.7 lakh to 5.6 lakh during this period.

However, the number of people dependent on a total of 365 relief camps and relief distribution centres, also increased by almost a lakh.



Arikshawa pull taking people through a flooded street in Dibrugarh.

to 2.83 lakh. The Department of Relief and Disaster Management in Manipur also reported the easing of the flood situation, although 1.66 lakh people, mostly in the Imphal Valley, remain affected.

"So far, 28,384 houses — 42 in the last 24 hours — have been damaged by floods and landslides, while 4,167 people have been evacuated from vulnerable places. We are currently operating 74 relief camps for the flood-hit," an official of the department said.

In Sikkim, Chief Minister Pema Singh Tamang also expressed "misinformation" about large-scale infrastructure damage across the State. "Northern Sikkim, where disaster has been declared, is affected, but the rest of the State has no issues for tourism," he told journalists on Thursday.

## 'Sacked' non-teaching staff of Bengal schools meet officials, demand clarity on future

Maxine Sam  
KOLKATA

Handfuls of "unsatisfied and sacked" non-teaching staff from West Bengal schools met officials of Bhidhanagar on Thursday and met the Education Department officials, demanding their reinstatement and disbursement of the promised interim honorarium, which they had allegedly not received.

On Thursday, the protesting staff recruited in 2016 by the West Bengal School Service Commission owing to irregularities in the selection process.

However, shortly after this, the State government announced temporary allowance of ₹28,000 and ₹20,000 respectively for the sacked



Employees of Bengal schools marching to Education Department headquarters in Salt Lake, Kolkata, on Thursday. (DIBYANU JENJANI)

Group C and Group D staff till a verdict is pronounced by the National Court on the State's review petition.

On Thursday, the protesting "unsatisfied" Group C and Group D staff carried out a march from Karanampore to the State Education Department headquarters at Bhidhanagar.

"We wanted to meet the Education Minister, but could not. We met the Education Department off-

icials, but they could not offer any satisfactory answers. The government issued a notification for a fresh selection process for teachers, but has offered no clarity on their plans for the affected non-teaching staff," Amit Mondal, a Group C staffer, told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Mondal added that during their meeting, the officials said they will try to clear the pending monthly payment.

## Kaziranga National Park to be expanded to promote tourism

The Hindu Bureau  
GUWAHATI

The Assam Cabinet, headed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, approved the expansion of the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve on Wednesday.

Kaziranga, home to an estimated 2,613 one-horned rhinos and an estimated 32.64 tigers per 100 sq. km, currently has an area of 1,302 sq. km. A statement from the Chief Minister's Office said an area of 47,406.33 hectares will be added as the sixth addition of the na-

tional park. "This move aims to strengthen biodiversity conservation efforts and promote sustainable tourism at the UNESCO World Heritage Site," the statement said, adding that the Cabinet had decided on the expansion on May 21.

Villages excluded The statement also said 10 villages will be excluded from the expansion plan. These include the villages of Gauri, Bishwanath, Ghat, Gohiribhat, Gontapara, Goral Jorai, Haimura, Jole, Nighat, Thate Chapri, and Umamant.



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Thangam Thennarasu, holding additional charge as Minister for Environment; R.S. Rajakannapan, Minister for Forests; and Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary to Departments of Environment, Climate Change, and Forests, participated in the event.

## **Rich biodiversity**

The move aims to preserve a critical stopover point along the Central Asian Flyway for thousands of migratory wetland birds.

The sanctuary spans 524.7 hectares and encompasses both revenue and forest lands within Ra-



**Safe zone:** Flamingos in Dhanushkodi, Ramanathapuram district. As per the latest bird survey, Dhanushkodi region has over 10,700 wetland birds, representing 128 species. L. BALACHANDAR

meshwaram taluk.

The designated area, part of the ecologically sensitive Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve, is home to a variety of ecosystems, including mangroves, sand dunes, mudflats, and marshes.

These unique features support a rich biodiversity, from migratory birds and marine life to nesting sea turtles.

A Government Order (G.O.) issued on June 4, by Ms. Sahu, noted that ac-

cording to the recent 2023-2024 Wetland Bird Survey, the Dhanushkodi region recorded over 10,700 wetland birds, representing 128 species, including herons, egrets, sandpipers, and both greater and lesser flamingos.

## **Ecologically crucial**

Mangrove species such as *Avicennia* and *Rhizophora* dominate the Dhanushkodi lagoon, providing essential breeding grounds and natural defenses against

coastal erosion. The sanctuary status is expected to encourage responsible ecotourism, generate local employment, and raise public awareness about wetland conservation, the G.O. said.

T.M. Anbarasan, Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Srinivas Reddy, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force), Rakesh Kumar Dogra, Chief Wildlife Warden, also participated.





- **Part of Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve:**
    - Includes **mangroves, sand dunes, mudflats, marshes.**
  - Serves as a **critical stopover on Central Asian Flyway** for migratory birds.
  - Report (2023-24 Wetland Bird Survey):
    - Over **10,700 wetland birds** observed.
    - **128 species**, including:
      - **Hérons**
      - **Egrets**
      - **Sandpipers**
      - **Greater and Lesser Flamingos**
-

### ◆ 3. Biodiversity Benefits

- Key for:
    - Migratory birds 🐦
    - Marine life 🐢 (nesting sea turtles)
    - Coastal protection 🌊 (against erosion)
  - Dominated by **Avicennia** and **Rhizophora** mangrove species.
- 


### ◆ 4. Socio-economic Impact

- Promotes **ecotourism** and **responsible tourism**.
- Boosts **local employment**.
- Enhances **wetland awareness** and **conservation**.

- 
- **Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary** – oldest in Tamil Nadu.
  - **Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary** – also on CAF route.
  - **Chilika Lake (Odisha)** – another major CAF wetland zone.
  - **Nalsarovar (Gujarat)** – migratory bird haven.
- 



Category	Details
Largest Bird Sanctuary	Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary (Keoladeo Ghana), Rajasthan – ~29 sq.km
Smallest Bird Sanctuary	Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu – ~0.3 sq.km
Oldest Bird Sanctuary	Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu – established in 1936
State with Most Bird Sanctuaries	Maharashtra – 12 sanctuaries
State with Second Most	Tamil Nadu – 11 sanctuaries
Union Territory with Bird Sanctuary	Delhi (Okhla Bird Sanctuary) and Chandigarh (Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary)
Highest Avian Biodiversity	Keoladeo Ghana, Rajasthan (over 370 species recorded)
Popular Migratory Bird Sites	Chilika (Odisha), Sultanpur (Haryana), Harike (Punjab), Pong (Himachal Pradesh)

Sanctuary Name	State	Key Feature	
Keoladeo Ghana (Bharatpur)	Rajasthan	UNESCO World Heritage Site, major migratory hub	
Chilika Lake Birds Island	Odisha	Asia's largest brackish water lagoon	
Vedanthangal	Tamil Nadu	Oldest and smallest, attracts 40,000+ birds	
Nal Sarovar	Gujarat	Major freshwater wetland for flamingos	
Ranganathittu	Karnataka	Popular for riverine birds and crocodiles	
Sultanpur	Haryana	Close to Delhi, popular winter migratory site	
Mayani Bird Sanctuary	Maharashtra	Noted for diversity in wetland bird species	
Harike Wetland	Punjab	Confluence of Beas and Sutlej, Ramsar site	

WAIVER LIKELY FOR SMALL TRANSFERS

# MDR fee on UPI coming; call on threshold soon

● Govt feels need to compensate banks for tech infra spend

PRASANTA SAHU  
New Delhi, June 5

AFTER MONTHS OF dithering, the government may allow banks to levy merchant discount rate (MDR) charges on UPI transactions beyond a threshold. The move follows the realisation that banks and payment service providers need to be compensated for their operational costs and investments in technology to ensure a secure payment infrastructure.

Various options are being looked at, and a transaction threshold would need to be fixed, above which the charges could apply, sources told *FE*. Currently, a threshold anywhere in a rather wide range of ₹2,000-5,000 is being considered, with the notion of exempting small-ticket transactions by common people, the sources added.

"While deciding on the MDR fee above a threshold, the government will take care of small merchants and common people," an official said. Three-to-four rounds of discussions have been held on the issue within the government, the person added. "We have to ensure the cost is recovered, there is no disincentive for small merchants for the use of UPI and they (banks & payment service providers) do not be make any undue profit," another official said, adding a decision will be based on these three pillars.

## COST CONCERN

■ Government removed MDR on UPI transactions in 2020 to promote digital payments



■ UPI now dominates with an **80%** share in cashless transactions

■ India accounted for **49%** of global real-time transactions in 2023: ACI Report

■ UPI transaction values have grown from ₹21.3 lakh cr in FY20 to ₹260.56 lakh cr by March 2025

■ In FY25, government paid **0.15%** subsidy on UPI transactions below ₹2,000. Industry said it was insufficient

Sources said while bigger merchants can absorb the MDR charges or pass these on to customers, there are concerns that small merchants won't be able to absorb the charges, thereby creating an uneven field for them. MDR is a fee that businesses pay to banks and payment service providers for handling transactions.

In FY25, the government paid 0.15% subsidy on UPI transactions below ₹2,000.

Continued on Page 7



- The Indian government is considering allowing banks to levy **Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)** on **UPI transactions**.
  - Charges may be **applied above a certain threshold** (likely ₹2,000–₹5,000).
  - Aim: To compensate **banks and payment service providers (PSPs)** for operational and technology infrastructure costs.
- 

## ◆ 2. Current MDR Policy

- In **2020**, the government **waived MDR** on UPI to promote **digital payments**.
- This led to **zero revenue** for banks and PSPs despite handling massive UPI volumes.
- In **FY25**, the govt paid **0.15% subsidy** on UPI transactions below ₹2,000 — **deemed insufficient** by the industry.

### ◆ 3. Government's 3-Pronged Strategy

- Recover infrastructure costs
  - Protect small merchants and common users
  - Prevent banks and PSPs from making undue profit
- 

### ◆ 4. Options Being Considered

- MDR to be levied only **above** a fixed threshold.
- **Small-ticket** transactions likely to remain exempt.
- Final decision after 3–4 rounds of internal discussions.

## ◆ 5. Why is this Important?

- UPI now accounts for:
  - **80% of cashless transactions** in India.
  - **49% of global real-time payments** (2023, ACI report).
- UPI transaction value grew from **₹21.3 lakh crore (FY20)** to **₹260.56 lakh crore (expected by FY25)**.
- Industry calls for sustainable **revenue model** to maintain and upgrade digital payment infrastructure.



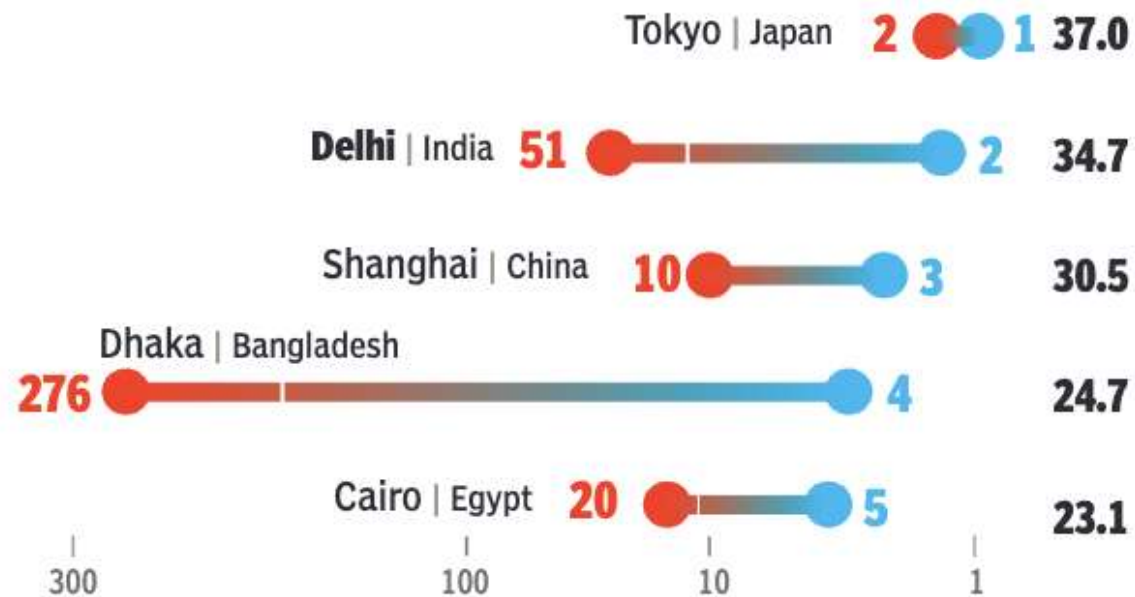
# Dhaka's Record-Breaking Jump

Bangladesh's capital catapulted 272 spots over 75 years to become the world's fourth largest metropolitan area in 2025. New York was at the top in 1950, but has slid to the 10th rank

## World's largest megacities in 2025

Rank ● 1950 ● 2025

Population  
in UAs\*  
2025 (mn)



Source: UN projections

\*An urban agglomeration (UA) refers to a continuous urban sprawl like Noida, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad, and Faridabad are part of the Delhi UA.

# India's annual mean temp up from 25.05°C in 2001 to 25.74°C in 2024, hottest on record

**Vishwa.Mohan**  
@timesofindia.com

**New Delhi:** Showing a warming trend in sync with the overall global temperature rise, India's annual mean temperature increased from 25.05°C in 2001 to 25.74°C in 2024, as per a compilation of updated environmental data released by the govt on World Environment Day Thursday. The year 2024 was the hottest in India since nationwide records began in 1901. Even globally, 2024 was the warmest year in the 175-year observational record.

The compilation — Envi-Stats India 2025: Environment Statistics — showed that the annual minimum (night) and maximum (day) temperature rose from 19.32°C to 20.24°C and from 30.78°C to 31.25°C, respectively, during 2021-24.

It also showed that electricity generation from renewable energy sources in the country has increased more than three times in the past 10 years — from 65,520 gigawatt-hour (GWh) to 2,25,835 GWh during 2013-14 to 2023-24 — whereas thermal power generation has increased

from 7,92,053 GWh to 13,26,549 GWh during the period.

The data presented in the publication, released by the ministry of statistics and programme implementation, is compiled based on data sourced from various central ministries and departments.

It showed that globally, there are 2,47,605 marine faunal species, which include 20,613 from India. The country has 9,436 freshwater species, 5,023 species in its mangrove system, 3,383 species in estuarine ecosystem, and 22,404 species in its soil ecosystem.

- **Annual Mean Temperature (India):**
  - 2001: 25.05°C
  - 2024: 25.74°C (Highest since records began in 1901)
- **Global Comparison:**
  - 2024 is also the **warmest year globally** in **175 years** of observ
- **Min/Max Temp Rise (2021–24):**
  - **Night (min):** 19.32°C → 20.24°C
  - **Day (max):** 30.78°C → 31.25°C



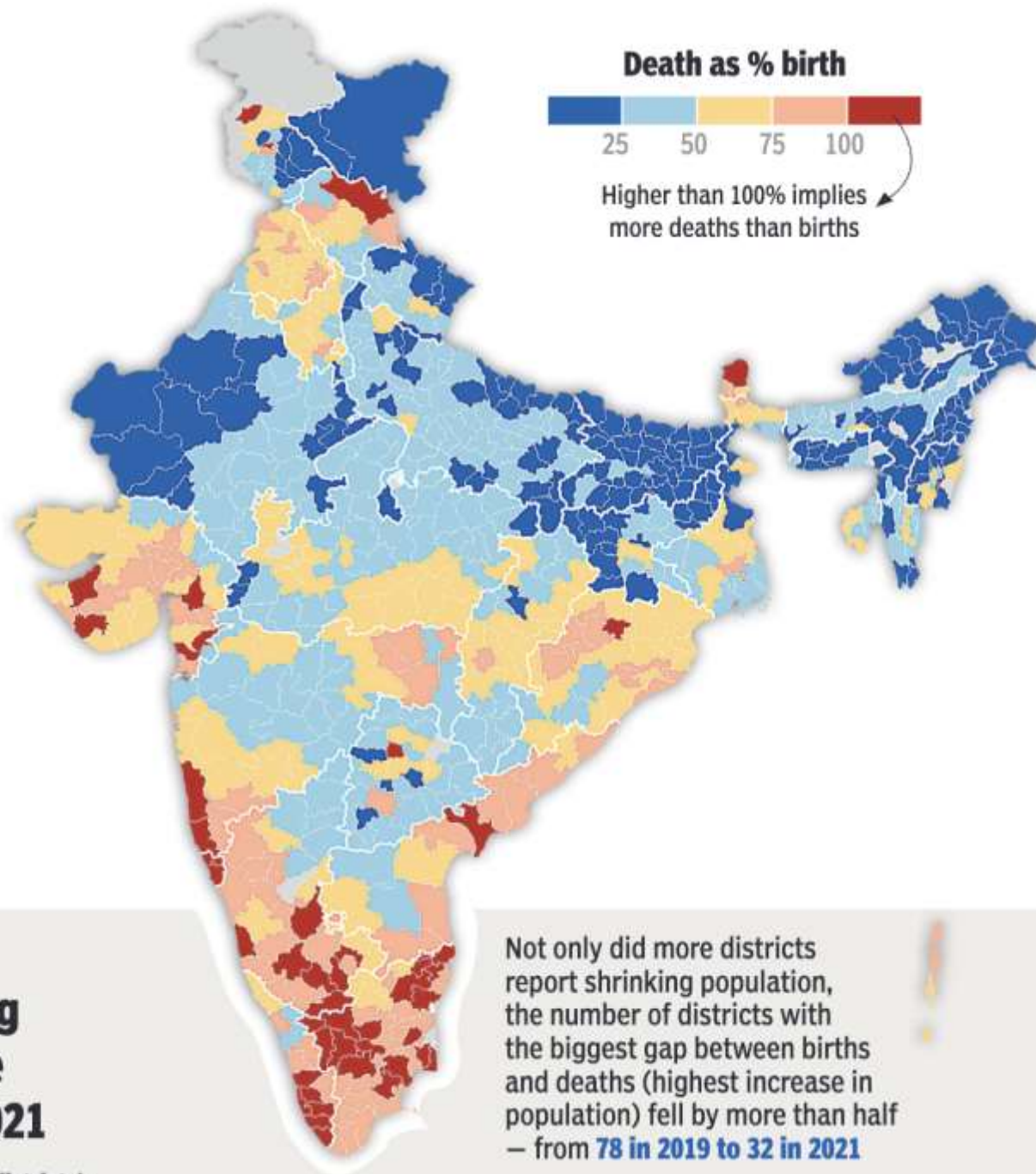
## ◆ 2. Energy Sector Trends

- Renewable Energy Generation:
    - 2013–14: 65,520 GWh
    - 2023–24: 2,25,835 GWh
    - ▲ More than 3.4× increase
  - Thermal Power Generation:
    - 2013–14: 7,92,053 GWh
    - 2023–24: 13,26,549 GWh
-

# More Deaths Than Births In 49 Dists. A New India Story?

India's civil registration data from 2021 reveals an inflection point — not necessarily caused by the pandemic, but clearly exposed by it. While many districts, especially in the South, reported more deaths than births — and, therefore, a decline in population — others in the North continued to register high natural growth. These contrasting trends suggest a country moving at two demographic speeds. Whether this continues in post-pandemic years remains to be seen—but the signals from 2021 are hard to ignore, finds **Richa Gandhi**

The fact that most districts with falling population or slow growth in population — red and pink in the map — are in southern states suggests that factors like aging population and better reporting of deaths also played a role in these places reporting higher death rates. Notwithstanding local factors, parts of India have started shrinking in population and the trend is certain to grow. What is unknown as yet is the extent of inward migration to places where number of deaths exceeded number of births — preventing or reducing population fall.



## No. Of Districts Reporting Falling Population Rose By **7 Times** In 2021

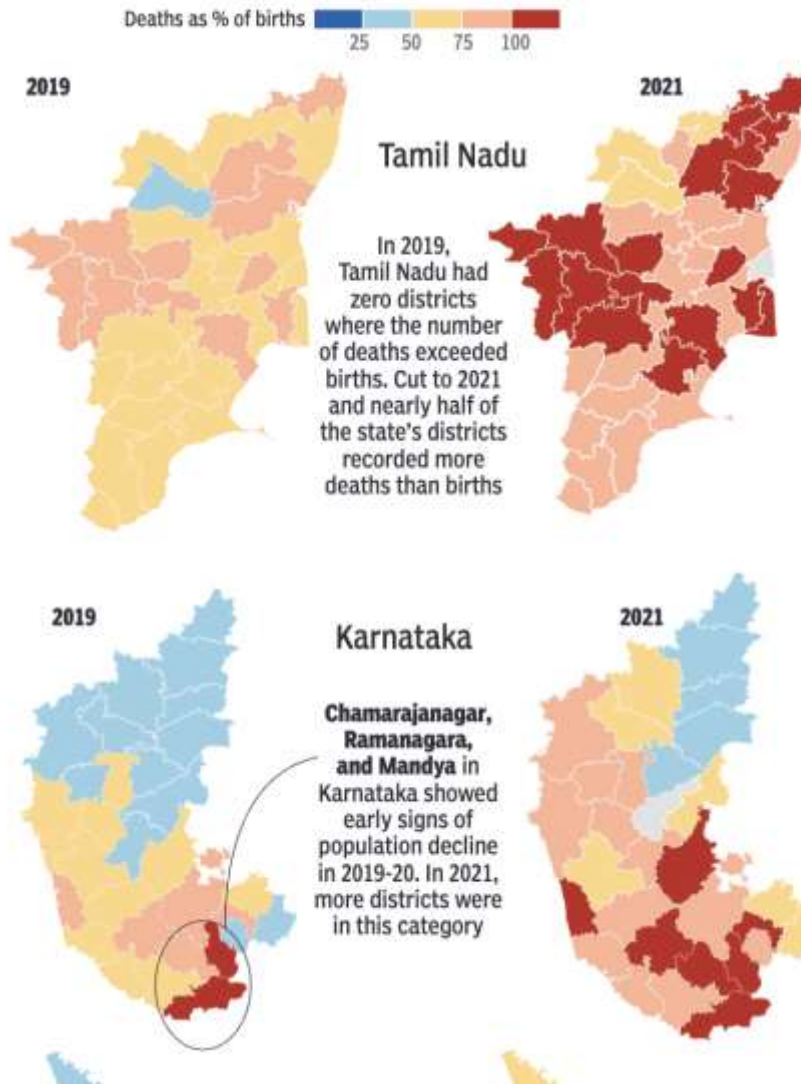
Deaths as % of births (no. of districts)

Not only did more districts report shrinking population, the number of districts with the biggest gap between births and deaths (highest increase in population) fell by more than half — from **78 in 2019** to **32 in 2021**



## Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka Show Widening Population Imbalance

Maps comparing 2021 with 2020 and 2019 for these southern states show a clear pattern: more districts are registering shrinking natural populations. These are not just urban centres but also interior districts. While 2021 was a pandemic year, the consistency with previous years hints that these may be early signs of demographic stabilisation in the South, driven by long-term fertility and aging trends and not just Covid-era mortality spikes



## Where Deaths Outnumbered Births

A simple table tells a complex story. In 2021, states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka had multiple districts where number of deaths exceeded number of births. These aren't just anomalies, they may signal the growing demographic maturity of certain regions. As death registration improves and birth rates stabilise, more states are likely to see districts with shrinking population in the years ahead.

States	No. of districts with more deaths than births	Total districts
Tamil Nadu	17	37
Karnataka	7	30
Kerala	6	14
Gujarat	5	33
Maharashtra	2	35
J & K	2	20
Puducherry	2	4
Goa	2	2
Telangana	1	33
Odisha	1	30
Manipur	1	15
Andhra	1	13
Himachal	1	12
Sikkim	1	4

**Seven-fold jump:** The number of districts where deaths outnumbered births rose from 7 in 2019 to 49 in 2021.

**South leads the shift:** Tamil Nadu alone had 17 districts with shrinking



# International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS)

- India has won the Presidency of the **International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS)** for the 2025–2028 term.

## The International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS)

- It is a global federation comprising **31 Member Countries, 20 National Sections, and 15 Academic Research Centres**, collaborating on scientific research in public administration.
- **Key member countries** include India, Japan, China, Germany, Italy, Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Switzerland, Mexico, Spain, Qatar, Morocco, and Indonesia, among others.
  - **India** has been a Member State of the IIAS since **1998**, represented by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances**.
- It is **not a formally affiliated body of the United Nations**, it actively engages with the UN's work in the field of public administration.
  - It maintains a close working relationship with the United Nations, and participates in the UN's Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) and the UN Public Administration Network (UNPAN).



# Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations



- Recently, India was elected to the **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** of the United Nations for the period from **2026-28**.



## About Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

- Established in **1945 by the UN Charter** as one of the six principal organs of the **United Nations**.
- It is the **United Nations' main body** for coordinating and reviewing policies on economic, social, and environmental issues, as well as overseeing the implementation of global development goals.
- It serves as a **central platform for UN system activities** in these fields, supervises subsidiary and expert bodies, and fosters debate and innovation on sustainable development.
- It has **54 Members**, elected by the General Assembly for **overlapping three-year terms**.



# Two New Ramsar Sites Added To Ramsar List



- 
- On World Environment Day 2025 (observed annually on **June 5 since 1973** and led by the **UN Environment Programme**), two wetlands from Rajasthan—**Khichan and Menar**—were designated as **new Ramsar Sites**, taking India's total sites to 91.
    - Now **Rajasthan** now has **four Ramsar sites**, while **Tamil Nadu** continues to lead with the **highest number (20 sites)** in India.
- 



## What is the Ramsar Convention?



The Ramsar Convention is one of the oldest **inter-governmental accords** signed by member countries to preserve the ecological character of their wetlands of international importance.



It was signed on **February 2, 1971** in **Ramsar, Iran** and came into force in 1975.

India became a signatory to the **Ramsar Convention** in **1982**.

# WOMEN IN COMMANDING AND COMBAT POSITIONS



Indian Defence Forces have taken remarkable steps to become a true gender-neutral and inclusive force. It has commenced the induction of **women** into all branches.



## Highlights

-  **Captain Shiva Chauhan** became the **first woman officer** to get operationally deployed in Kumar Post, Siachen Glacier in January 2024.
-  In December 2023, Captain **Geetika Koul** became the **first woman medical officer** to be deployed at Siachen after completing the training at Siachen Battle School.
-  Captain **Fatima Wasim** became the **first woman medical officer** to be deployed on an operational post on the Siachen Glacier in 2023.
-  **Lt Cdr Perna Deosthalee** was named as the **first woman officer** to command an Indian Naval Warship.
-  **Gp Capt Shaliza Dhami**, a helicopter pilot became the **first woman** from a flying branch to command a combat unit in the IAF in 2023.










## Breaking barriers

- In 2019, 24-year-old Sub-Lieutenant Shivangi became the first woman pilot in the Indian Navy to steer a fixed-wing Dornier maritime reconnaissance aircraft in 2019.
- In 2017, six women officers from the Navy made history by circumnavigating the globe in INSV Tarini.
- Flight Lieutenant Parul Bharadwaj, Flying Officer Aman Nidhi and Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal became the first all-women crew to embark on a battle Inoculation Training Mission.
- Flight Lieutenant Avani Chaturvedi along with fighter pilots Bhawana Kanth and Mohana Singh – first women combat pilots – are inducted into IAF's fighter squadron.



# BharatGen: India's First AI Multimodal LLM



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- The **Union Minister of State (IC) for Science & Technology** launched **“BharatGen LLM”** at the **BharatGen Summit 2025**.
  - **BharatGen**
  - **About:** It is **India’s first indigenously developed, government-funded Multimodal Large Language Model (LLM) in 22 Indian languages**.
    - **Multimodal LLMs are large language models trained on diverse data types (text, images, audio, and video), enabling them to understand and interpret complex human language and multimedia.**





They overcome limitations of unimodal models (such as earlier versions of ChatGPT) by providing cohesive responses across multiple data forms.



Developed Under: National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS), implemented by the TIH Foundation for IoT and IoE at IIT Bombay.



NM-ICPS was launched in 2018 by the Ministry of Science and Technology to promote innovation and R&D in Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS) and new-age technologies.

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# Word of the day

## **Demagogue:**

a political leader who seeks support by appealing to popular passions and prejudices

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**Synonyms:** rebel, inciter, agitator

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**Usage:** *The demagogue stirred anger among the people.*

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**Pronunciation:** [newsth.live/demagoguepro](http://newsth.live/demagoguepro)

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**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /'dɛməgɒɡ/

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A blurred background image showing a group of people clapping their hands. The focus is on the hands in the foreground, which are raised and clapping. The image has a warm, slightly desaturated color palette. In the top left corner, there is a solid orange rectangle.

Thank you  
guys.

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