

# Daily Current Affairs





5  
**The Hindu**



1  
**PIB, PRS & Other  
newspaper**



1  
**The Indian  
Express**

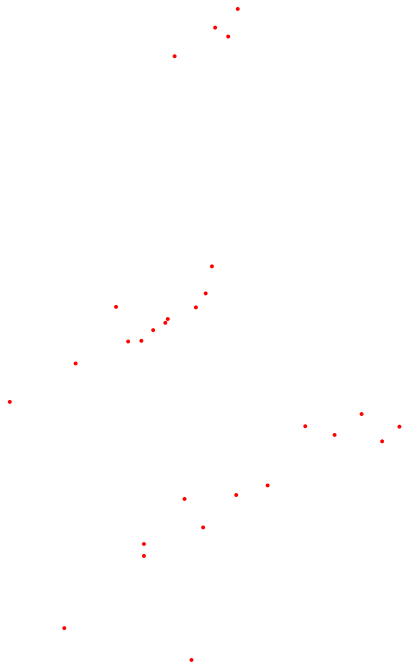


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**Jansatta**



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10 MCQ QUIZ

“Education is not the stuffing of ideas into the mind, but the ignition of courage to think independently.”



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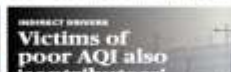
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**WOW, THIS HONORARITY?**  
Can Haryana grant relief to academic: SC  
NEWS • PAGE 4



**IMPERFECT DESIGN**  
Victims of poor AQI also 'contributors' to the issue: SC  
NEWS • PAGE 4



**THUNDERBOLT CHARGE**  
Former Union Minister Suresh Kalmadi dies  
NEWS • PAGE 5



**PROSECUTION PROSECUTED**  
U.S.'s Venezuelan actions are most unlawful  
U.S. move an affront to international law  
EDITORIAL • PAGE 6



**THROW CHARGE**  
Smith and Head slam centuries on day three  
SPORTS • PAGE 17

## NEARBY



**'U.S. takeover of Greenland will be end of NATO'**

**COMMENTARY**  
Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said on Monday that an American takeover of Greenland would amount to the end of the NATO alliance, after U.S. President Donald Trump's call to take the island under U.S. control. **• PAGE 19**

**Sadhvi demands non-Hindus be banned from fair**

**NEWS BRIEF**  
A day after the Ganga Sathya, which manages religious activities at various ghats of Varanasi, demanded a ban on entry of non-Hindus who, with Hinduism, made ghatras, religious leader Sadhvi Prakash also made a similar demand on Tuesday. **• PAGE 2**

**Awami League is behind murder of Hadi, say police**

**DEKRA/NEWS BRIEF**  
Bihar's murder victim Hadi was shot dead due to "political conspiracy" at the hands of the Awami League, the Bangladesh police said on Tuesday as they pressed formal charges against 17 people in connection with the murder. **• PAGE 10**

**Confident I will complete term: Siddaramaiah**

**NEWS/DEKRA/NEWS**  
Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who resigned from the Karnataka Cabinet on Monday, said he would complete his term as Chief Minister of Karnataka, on Tuesday, amidst confidence that he would complete the remainder of the Assembly term in office. **• PAGE 8**

# India turned to Trump aide's firm during standoff with Pak.

Indus Valley  
NEWS (10/18)

The Indian Embassy in Washington made four requests, including three to White House officials and one to the U.S. trade representative, on May 30, 2018, the day a trade dispute between India and Pakistan following Operation Bluestone was announced. It appears that White House Chief of Staff Mark Whitaker, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, Secretary of Defense James Mattis and Director of Communications Steven Cheung to discuss "matters arising from the conflict," says a filing with U.S. Judge John J. Griesbach, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, which was filed with the Department of Justice (DOJ). While the

Bill, made in December 2015 on the Day's Foreign Agent Registration Act included an explicit provision that does not divide whether the cable was made before or after the conflict, it indicates close interaction on the day. Things made by firms government-owned by the Pakistan government also showed a flurry of activity by Islamabad. It appears that the White House Chief of Staff Mark Whitaker, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, Secretary of Defense James Mattis and Director of Communications Steven Cheung to discuss "matters arising from the conflict," says a filing with U.S. Judge John J. Griesbach, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, which was filed with the Department of Justice (DOJ). While the

## Private diplomacy

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# EC tells SC it has duty to weed out foreigners

**Poll body defends SRR in the Supreme Court, insists it has power to verify citizenship status**

Rishabh Kumar  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) began its defence of the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls before the Supreme Court on Tuesday by distancing claims that it is conducting a "poll" National Register of Citizens (NRC) as short "check".

The poll body maintained that it has the "constitutional power, even a constitutional duty" to ensure that not a single foreigner, as far as possible, occupies space in the nation's electoral rolls.

The SIR began off in Bihar last year and expanded to cover 12 more States and Union Territories in the second half of 2018.

"We have a constitutional duty, and not just a constitutional power, to ensure that no foreigner is included in the electoral rolls," said Mr. Dutt, who is the chairperson of the SIR with the Election Commission.

The EC differentiated between the NRC conducted in Assam and the "special revision" of electoral rolls underway in the State.

"The NRC register includes all the people, all citizens, wherever, in electoral rolls. It is citizens who are shown in years of age in the electoral roll. A person of sound mind is included in the electoral roll, but a part of the NRC is a part of the SIR."

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# EC tells SC it has duty to weed out foreigners

**Poll body defends SIR in the Supreme Court, insists it has power to verify citizenship status**

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

**T**he Election Commission of India (EC) began its defence of the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls before the Supreme Court on Tuesday by dismissing claims that it is conducting a “parallel” National Register of Citizens (NRC) as sheer “rhetoric”.

The poll body maintained that it has the “constitutional power, even a constitutional duty” to ensure that not a single foreigner, as far as possible, occupies space in the nation’s electoral rolls.

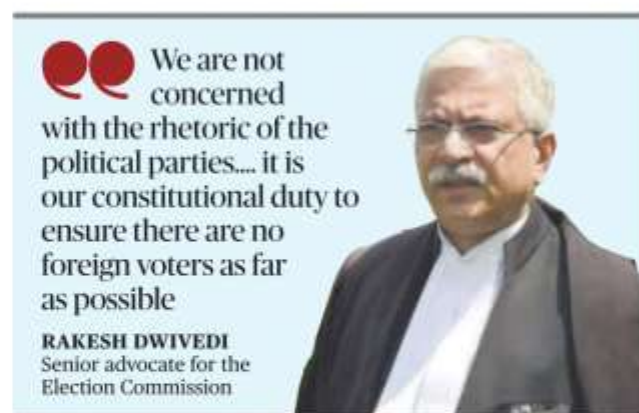
The SIR kicked off in Bihar last year and expanded to cover 12 more States and Union Territories in the ongoing second phase.

“We have a constitutional duty, and not just a constitutional power, to en-

sure no foreigners are there on the electoral rolls. It is not important how many foreigners are found... It was repeatedly asked of us to show how many foreigners were found in Bihar, but that is not important. Even if there was one foreigner, he had to be excluded. We are not concerned with the rhetoric of the political parties. They may be right or wrong. As the Election Commission, it is our constitutional duty to ensure there are no foreign voters as far as possible,” senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the EC, clarified before a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant.

## Faulty comparison

Mr. Dwivedi said the comparison of the SIR with the NRC was devoid of truth. The EC differentiated between the NRC conducted in Assam and the “special



revision” of electoral rolls underway in the State.

“The NRC register includes all the people, all citizens, whereas, in electoral rolls it is citizens who are above 18 years of age. Less than that they are not in the electoral roll. A person of unsound mind is excluded from the electoral roll, but is part of the NRC. Preparation of the electoral roll is not a parallel NRC on the face of it,” Mr. Dwivedi contended.

**EC stresses that NRC register includes all citizens; the electoral rolls only consider those above 18**

## 2.89 crore voters deleted in U.P.

**NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW**

The Election Commission on Tuesday published the draft rolls for Uttar Pradesh under the special intensive revision with 2.89 crore names deleted, the highest for any State or Union Territory where SIR has been held so far. » **PAGE 5**

said the Constitution was “citizen-centric”, which meant ‘citizenship’ was a central theme.

“All the important functionaries of the three organs of governance have to be citizens of India, be it the President, Vice-President, MPs, MLAs, or judges of the constitutional courts. One of the conditions is that they be citizens... No person is eligible to participate in the electoral process unless he is a ci-

**Counsel for the EC says the Constitution is citizen-centric; the central theme is citizenship**

tizen,” Mr. Dwivedi said.

## Citizenship status

He noted how citizenship had played a prime part in the struggle for nationhood. The Government of India Act, 1935, had allowed a separate electorate for Europeans, leading to an objection raised in the Constituent Assembly.

“From the aforesaid, it is evident that from its inception, the Constituent Assembly intended that authorities responsible for preparation of electoral rolls would enquire into citizenship and exclude those who were not citizens from the electoral rolls of constituencies. Later, the EC was vested with plenary powers with respect to superintendence, direction, and control over all elections, as well as the power to verify the status of citizenship under Article 324 read with Article 326

(adult suffrage),” Mr. Dwivedi submitted for the poll body.

Even the power of Parliament under Article 327 to frame election laws was “subject to provisions of the Constitution”, Mr. Dwivedi said, adding that this means that “the legislative powers of Parliament envisaged under Article 327 are subject to Articles 324 and 326.”

## Citizenship Act

Addressing the petitioners’ submission that citizenship was exclusively the domain of the Union government, the EC counsel pointed to Section 9(2) of the Citizenship Act. “The Central government has exclusive jurisdiction only with termination of citizenship on account of voluntary acquisition of foreign citizenship under this provision,” Mr. Dwivedi submitted.



## 1 Core Issue / मूल मुद्दा

- **English:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) told the Supreme Court that it has a **constitutional duty** to ensure **no foreigner is on electoral rolls**.
  - **हिंदी:** चुनाव आयोग (ECI) ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट को बताया कि मतदाता सूची से विदेशियों को हटाना उसका संवैधानिक कर्तव्य है।
- 

## 2 Special Intensive Revision (SIR) / विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण

- **English:** SIR is a **regular electoral exercise**, not a parallel NRC.
  - **हिंदी:** SIR एक सामान्य चुनावी प्रक्रिया है, यह NRC का समानांतर प्रयास नहीं है।
  - **English:** Started in **Bihar** and extended to **12 States/UTs**.
  - **हिंदी:** शुरुआत बिहार से हुई और इसे **12 राज्यों/केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों** तक बढ़ाया गया।
- 

## 3 EC vs NRC Clarification / NRC से अंतर

- **English:** NRC includes **all citizens**, while **electoral rolls** include **citizens above 18 years only**.
  - **हिंदी:** NRC में सभी नागरिक, जबकि मतदाता सूची में **18 वर्ष से अधिक आयु के नागरिक** शामिल होते हैं।
  - **English:** Exclusion from electoral rolls  $\neq$  loss of citizenship.
  - **हिंदी:** मतदाता सूची से नाम हटना  $\neq$  नागरिकता समाप्त होना।
-

#### 4 Constitutional Basis / संवैधानिक आधार

- **English:** EC derives powers from **Article 324**, subject to **Articles 326 & 327**.
  - **हिंदी:** चुनाव आयोग की शक्तियाँ **अनुच्छेद 324** से आती हैं, जो **अनुच्छेद 326 व 327** के अधीन हैं।
  - **English:** Constitution is **citizen-centric**; voting is tied to **citizenship + age**.
  - **हिंदी:** संविधान **नागरिक-केंद्रित** है; मतदान का अधिकार **नागरिकता + आयु** से जुड़ा है।
- 

#### 5 UP Draft Rolls Data / उत्तर प्रदेश डेटा

- **English:** **2.89 crore names** deleted in UP draft rolls during SIR.
  - **हिंदी:** SIR के दौरान यूपी की ड्राफ्ट सूची से **2.89 करोड़** नाम हटाए गए।
- 

#### 6 Citizenship Act Reference / नागरिकता अधिनियम

- **English:** Termination of citizenship lies with the **Union Government** under **Section 9(2)** of the Citizenship Act, 1955.
  - **हिंदी:** नागरिकता अधिनियम, 1955 की धारा **9(2)** के तहत नागरिकता समाप्त करने का अधिकार **केंद्र सरकार** के पास है।
-



Aspect	Key Facts (English)	संबंधित तथ्य (हिंदी)
Constitutional Article	Article 324 – Superintendence of elections	अनुच्छेद 324 – निर्वाचन प्रशासन
Voting Right	Article 326 – Adult suffrage	अनुच्छेद 326 – वयस्क मतदाता अधिकार
Election Laws	Article 327 – Parliament's power	अनुच्छेद 327 – संसद की शक्ति
NRC Authority	Citizenship Act, 1955 (Sec. 14A)	नागरिकता अधिनियम, 1955 (अनुच्छेद 14A)
Electoral Roll Prep	Citizenship verification allowed	नागरिकता जांच की अनुमति
Mental Unsoundness	Excluded from rolls, not NRC	मानसिक अस्थिरता से निरास, NRC में शामिल नहीं

Exam	Year & Date	Question (Summary)	Answer
<b>UPSC CSE Prelims</b>	2018	Which Article deals with powers of Election Commission?	<b>Article 324</b>
<b>UPSC CSE Prelims</b>	2016	Adult suffrage is provided under which Article?	<b>Article 326</b>
<b>UPPSC PCS</b>	2021	Who has power to frame election laws?	<b>Parliament (Art. 327)</b>
<b>SSC CGL</b>	2019	Minimum age to be a voter in India	<b>18 years</b>
<b>Bank PO (IBPS)</b>	2020	Authority to decide termination of citizenship	<b>Union Government</b>
<b>Railway NTPC</b>	2021	NRC is governed under which Act?	<b>Citizenship Act, 1955</b>



Aspect / Theme	Key Points (English)	मुख्य बिंदु (हिंदी)
Full Form	SIR = <b>Special Intensive Revision</b> of Electoral Rolls	SIR = विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण
Authority	Conducted by <u>Election Commission of India</u>	भारत निर्वाचन आयोग द्वारा
Constitutional Basis	Article <b>324</b> (Superintendence, direction & control of elections)	अनुच्छेद 324
Legal Framework	Representation of the People Act, 1950; Registration of Electors Rules, 1960	जनप्रतिनिधित्व अधिनियम, 1950; निर्वाचक नियम, 1960
Nature	<b>Administrative &amp; periodic exercise</b>	प्रशासनिक एवं आवधिक प्रक्रिया
Objective (Core)	Ensure <b>accurate, updated, error-free electoral rolls</b>	सही, अद्यतन, त्रुटिरहित मतदाता सूची
Key Purpose	Remove <b>ineligible names</b> (death, shift, duplicate, non-citizen, underage) and add <b>eligible voters</b>	अयोग्य नाम हटाना व योग्य मतदाता जोड़ना
Age Criterion	Only <b>citizens ≥18 years</b> can be on rolls	केवल 18+ भारतीय नागरिक

Citizenship Link	Voting requires <b>citizenship</b> , but <b>SIR ≠ NRC</b>	मतदान हेतु नागरिकता आवश्यक, पर <b>SIR ≠ NRC</b>
SIR vs NRC	NRC: all citizens; SIR: only voters (18+). <b>SIR does not determine citizenship</b>	NRC: सभी नागरिक; SIR: केवल मतदाता
Trigger for SIR	Large migration, delimitation, time gap since last intensive revision	भारी प्रवासन, परिसीमन, लंबे अंतराल
Types of Revision	1) Intensive 2) Summary 3) Special Summary 4) Special Intensive	4 प्रकार
When SIR is Used	When <b>major corrections</b> are needed	जब व्यापक सुधार आवश्यक हों
Verification Method	<b>Door-to-door verification</b> , BLO verification, claims & objections	घर-घर सत्यापन, BLO
Officials Involved	ERO, AERO, BLO, DEO under EC supervision	ERO, AERO, BLO, DEO
Public Participation	Citizens can file <b>claims &amp; objections</b>	दावे व आपत्तियाँ दर्ज
Transparency	Draft rolls published; objections invited	ड्राफ्ट सूची सार्वजनिक
Deletion Grounds	Death, migration, duplication, non-citizen, unsound mind	मृत्यु, प्रवासन, दोहराव, गैर-नागरिक
Unsound Mind Clause	Excluded from rolls but <b>not from NRC</b>	सूची से हटेगा, NRC से नहीं
Appeal Mechanism	Appeal to <b>District Magistrate/Chief Electoral Officer</b>	अपील की व्यवस्था



- Which statement is correct?
- NRC includes only voters above 18 years.
- Electoral rolls include only citizens above 18 years.
- **Correct option:**
  - a) 1 only
  - b) 2 only
  - c) Both
  - d) None



# India turned to Trump aide's firm during standoff with Pak.

**Suhasini Haidar**  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Embassy in Washington made four outreach requests, including three to White House officials and one to the U.S. trade representative on May 10, 2025, the day a ceasefire between India and Pakistan following Operation Sindoor was announced. It approached White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, Ricky Gill of the National Security Council, and Director of Communications Steven Cheung to discuss “media coverage” of the conflict, says a filing by U.S. lobby firm SHW LLC with the Department of Justice (DoJ). While the

filing, made in December 2025 on the DoJ's Foreign Agent Registration Act website listing 60 entries, does not divulge whether the calls were made before or after the ceasefire, it indicates close interaction on the day.

Filings made by firms contracted by the Pakistan government also showed a flurry of activity by Islamabad to drum up support during the conflict, and a *New York Times* investigation in November 2024 showed how the country spent “millions” in trying to “win Mr. Trump over”.

The Narendra Modi government has repeatedly denied that the U.S. played any role in mediating the ceasefire, despite several claims by U.S. President

## Private diplomacy

The filings under U.S. Foreign Agent Registration Act by lobby firm SHW LLC marks India as the only client

- Filings show 60 entries from April 24, 2025, detailing requests from the Indian Embassy
- Half of the entries related to lobbying work on India-U.S. trade discussions
- Filings show, for the first time, a lobby firm asking to schedule meetings for External Affairs Minister and other officials
- Total four requests for calls made on day of the Indo-Pak. ceasefire



**Close allies:** U.S. President Donald Trump with Jason Miller, Principal of SHW LLC. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Donald Trump, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio's decision to recognise Mr. Gill for the ‘role’ he played. The External Affairs Ministry has denied Mr. Trump's contention that he had threatened to stop trade if the conflict was not ended,

and the call made to Mr. Greer is particularly significant for that reason.

Responding to questions from *The Hindu*, the Indian Embassy did not deny the filings but only said that hiring lobbyists was a “standard practice” in or-

der to “augment outreach”. “The Indian Embassy has hired such firms, consistent with local practice and requirements, under successive governments since the 1950s,” the Embassy spokesperson said, but did not respond to specific questions on why the firms had been asked to fix meetings or calls with senior U.S. officials on May 10.

## ‘A first for India’

The practice for India is a first, say former and current Ministry officials, suggesting that the use of a former spokesperson of Mr. Trump, Jason Miller, who is listed as the principal of SHW LLC, may have been due to the more “transactional” nature of

the Trump administration.

The U.S. lobby firm's filings raised eyebrows amongst diplomats in Delhi as the firm claimed that it set up meetings for several Indian officials – from External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, Deputy National Security Advisor Pavan Kapoor and Indian Ambassador Vinay Kwatra – with top U.S. officials over the past year. On June 23, days before Mr. Jaishankar's visit to Washington to attend the Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting, SHW says, it sent emails requesting meetings for the Minister with U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth and CIA Chief John Ratcliffe.

## 1 What happened? / क्या हुआ?

- **English:** During the India–Pakistan standoff following Operation Sindoor, the Indian Embassy in Washington sought help from a U.S. lobby firm linked to a former Trump aide.
  - **हिंदी:** ऑपरेशन सिंदूर के बाद भारत-पाक तनाव के दौरान वॉशिंगटन स्थित भारतीय दूतावास ने ट्रंप के पूर्व सहयोगी से जुड़ी अमेरिकी लॉबी फर्म की सेवाएँ लीं।
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## 2 Timing & Outreach / समय और संपर्क

- **English:** On May 10, 2025 (the day the ceasefire was announced), four outreach requests were made—three to White House officials and one to the U.S. Trade Representative.
  - **हिंदी:** 10 मई 2025 (युद्धविराम की घोषणा का दिन) को चार संपर्क प्रयास किए गए—तीन व्हाइट हाउस अधिकारियों से और एक अमेरिकी व्यापार प्रतिनिधि से।
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## 3 Who was contacted? / किनसे संपर्क किया गया?

- **English:** Contacts included Susie Wiles (White House Chief of Staff), Jamieson Greer (USTR), Ricky Gill (NSC) and Steven Cheung (Director of Communications).
- **हिंदी:** संपर्क में सूज़ी वाइल्स, जेमीसन ग्रीर, रिकी गिल और स्टीवन च्यांग शामिल थे।



#### 4 Legal Trail: FARA filings / कानूनी रिकॉर्ड

- **English:** Filings under the U.S. Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) by SHW LLC list India as the only client; about 60 entries (from April 24, 2025) detail embassy requests.
  - **हिंदी:** यूएस फॉरेन एजेंट्स रजिस्ट्रेशन एक्ट (FARA) के तहत SHW LLC की फाइलिंग में भारत को एकमात्र क्लाइंट बताया गया; 24 अप्रैल 2025 से लगभग 60 प्रविष्टियाँ दर्ज हैं।
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#### 5 Nature of work / काम का स्वरूप

- **English:** Roughly half the entries relate to India–U.S. trade discussions; for the first time, a lobby firm sought to schedule meetings for India's External Affairs Minister and senior officials.
  - **हिंदी:** लगभग आधी प्रविष्टियाँ भारत-अमेरिका व्यापार वार्ताओं से जुड़ी हैं; पहली बार किसी लॉबी फर्म ने विदेश मंत्री व वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों के लिए बैठकों की व्यवस्था की।
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#### 6 India's position / भारत का रुख

- **English:** India reiterated that the U.S. did not mediate the ceasefire; hiring lobbyists was termed "standard practice" to augment outreach, consistent since the 1950s.
- **हिंदी:** भारत ने दोहराया कि युद्धविराम में अमेरिका की मध्यस्थता नहीं थी; लॉबिस्ट रखना 1950 के दशक से चली आ रही "मानक प्रक्रिया" बताया गया।

## 7 Context & controversy / पृष्ठभूमि और विवाद

- **English:** Parallel filings showed **Pakistan's lobbying surge**. A prior **New York Times** investigation (Nov 2024) noted Islamabad's efforts to court U.S. leadership.
  - **हिंदी:** साथ-साथ पाकिस्तान की लॉबिंग गतिविधियाँ भी दिखीं; न्यूयॉर्क टाइम्स (नवंबर 2024) ने ऐसी कोशिशों का उल्लेख किया था।
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## 8 Key personalities / प्रमुख नाम

- **English:** The firm's principal is Jason Miller, a former aide to Donald Trump; references also arose to Marco Rubio in wider U.S. policy context.
  - **हिंदी:** फर्म के प्रमुख जेसन मिलर हैं—डोनाल्ड ट्रंप के पूर्व सहयोगी; अमेरिकी नीति संदर्भ में मार्को रुबियो का भी उल्लेख आया।
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Theme	English Fact	ਸ਼ਾਸ਼ਨ ਨਿਊ
Law	<b>FARA (1938)</b> mandates disclosure of foreign lobbying in the U.S.	<b>FARA (1938)</b> ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਇਹ ਸ਼ਾਸ਼ਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ
Diplomacy Tool	Track-II / private diplomacy complements official channels	ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਈਵੇਟ ਡਾਇਪਲਮੈਸੀ ਔਫੀਸ਼ਲ ਚੈਨਲਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਧਾਰਦੀ ਹੈ
Trade Angle	Lobbying often aligns with trade access & market rules	ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਡਾਇਪਲਮੈਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਟਰੇਡ ਰੂਲਜ਼ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੈ
Ceasefire Claim	India denies third-party mediation	ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਡਾਇਪਲਮੈਸੀ ਦੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸੁਧਾਰਦੀ ਹੈ
Precedent	Indian embassies have used firms since 1950s	1950 ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਤੋਂ ਡਾਇਪਲਮੈਸੀ ਦੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸੁਧਾਰਦੀ ਹੈ



Exam	Year	Question Theme (Summary)	Answer
UPSC CSE Prelims	2014	Track-II diplomacy refers to?	Informal/non-official diplomacy
UPSC CSE Mains (GS-II)	2017	India–U.S. relations: stakeholders & tools	Strategic + diplomatic instruments
SSC CGL	2020	Meaning of lobbying	Influencing policy decisions
IBPS PO	2021	Role of USTR	U.S. trade negotiations
Railways NTPC	2022	Ceasefire meaning	Formal stoppage of hostilities

- Which of the following best describes **Track-II diplomacy**?
  - a) Military negotiations
  - b) Official treaty talks
  - c) Informal engagement by non-official actors
  - d) Parliamentary exchanges

# Madras HC upholds order to light lamp at Madurai stone pillar

The Hindu Bureau  
MADURAI

A Division Bench of the Madras High Court on Tuesday upheld an earlier single-judge order directing the Subramaniya Swamy Temple management to light the Karthigai Deepam at a stone pillar, identified as the *deepathoon*, atop Thirupparankundram Hill in Madurai of Tamil Nadu, dismissing fears of public disturbance as an "imaginary ghost", which would only happen if sponsored by the State itself.

The State government plans to challenge the order in the Supreme Court, Minister S. Regupathy told journalists after the ruling.

The Madurai Bench of Justices G. Jayachandran and K.K. Ramakrishnan criticised the State government for citing its apprehension of law and order issues and public peace as a reason for not complying with the earlier order of Justice G.R. Swaminathan.

## 'Imaginary ghost'

"It is ridiculous and hard to believe the fear of the mighty State that by allowing representatives of the Devasthanam [temple management] to light the lamp at the stone pillar near top of the hill located within its territory of Devasthanam land, on a particular day in a year, will cause disturbance to public peace. Of course, it may happen only if such disturbance is sponsored by the State itself. We pray no State should stoop to that level to achieve their political agenda," it said.

For the administration to act as though such a congregation will disturb the peace or cause stam-



pedes or disharmony among communities is either an exposure of their incapacity to maintain law and order or their hesitation to bring harmony among communities, the court said.

"We find that the apprehension expressed by the District Administration regarding the probability of disturbance to the public peace is nothing but an imaginary ghost created by them for their convenience sake and to put one community against another community under suspicion and constant mistrust. By allowing a few persons from Devasthanam to the pillar for lighting the lamp and keeping the devotees stay at the foothill and worship is not an un-manageable task," the judges said.

They said no member of the public should be allowed to accompany the team from the Devasthanam, whose size is to be decided in consultation with the police and the Archaeological Society of India. The District Collector is to co-ordinate and supervise the event, the court said.



### 1 What did the Court decide? / न्यायालय का निर्णय

- **English:** A Division Bench of the Madras High Court (Madurai Bench) upheld a single-judge order allowing the **lighting of the Karthigai Deepam** at a **stone pillar (deepasthoon)** on **Thirupparankundram Hill, Madurai**.
  - **हिंदी:** मद्रास हाईकोर्ट (मदुरै पीठ) ने थिरुप्परकुंदरम पहाड़ी पर स्थित दीपस्तंभ (पत्थर के स्तंभ) पर कार्तिगई दीपम जलाने के आदेश को बरकरार रखा।
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### 2 Temple & Location / मंदिर और स्थान

- **English:** The event concerns the Subramania Swamy Temple at Thirupparankundram Hill.
  - **हिंदी:** यह मामला सुब्रमण्य स्वामी मंदिर, थिरुप्परकुंदरम पहाड़ी (मदुरै) से संबंधित है।
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### 3 'Imaginary ghost' argument rejected / 'काल्पनिक भय' खारिज

- **English:** The Court dismissed the State's apprehension of **law-and-order disturbance** as an **"imaginary ghost"**, holding that such fears are unfounded.
  - **हिंदी:** राज्य सरकार के कानून-व्यवस्था बिगड़ने के डर को अदालत ने **"काल्पनिक भय"** कहकर खारिज किया।
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### 4 State's plan & judicial criticism / राज्य की योजना व आलोचना

- **English:** Though the State plans to **challenge the order in the Supreme Court**, the Bench criticised the government for using speculative public-order concerns to avoid compliance.
- **हिंदी:** राज्य सरकार ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट में चुनौती देने की बात कही, लेकिन पीठ ने अनुमानों के आधार पर आदेश न मानने की आलोचना की।

- Conditions to ensure harmony / **ट्रक्क ट्रक्कश्राल**  
**इघण्डुइह ट्रल**
- **English:** Only a few **temple representatives** may go to the pillar to light the lamp; **devotees remain at the foothill**. Coordination and supervision lie with the **District Collector**, in consultation with **police** and the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**.
- **श्राव्ह:** व्हह न चवड्डुइअघड् **रक्कघ** इड् **द्वहश्रवल** **ब्रलश्रश्र** एह  
नवड्डुइ **क्र** **एहड्डुघण्डु** **श्र** चवड् **चैज घ**, **ह्मघट्र** अ **ASI**  
इड् **द्ववळ** **द्ववौग** **श्र** **एघवह** इ **घळ**

Theme	English Fact	श्रीमह लक्ष्म
Freedom of Religion	Arts <b>25–28</b> protect religious practice, subject to public order	१ आ 25–28क द्वयश्रुड् णत्रिड्डु १ शहण श्रवण्ड सलद्व
State & Temples (TN)	HR&CE administration common in TN	लश्रवणप्रवण्डHR&CE ड्डु लणल रवण डट्रद्व
Public Order	State must show <b>credible evidence</b> , not conjecture	घट्टड १ड्डु डरवण् श्रद्वप्रण्डवण्ड
Heritage Sites	Activities coordinated with <b>ASI</b> where applicable	श्रवणल चिहण ASI ड्रवौग ण अड्डु
Judicial Review	Courts test proportionality & reasonableness	त्रिगणग १ श्रवण्ड ल/लड्डुलल दघड्डु लण्ड



Exam	Year	Theme (Summary)	Answer
<b>UPSC CSE Prelims</b>	2018	Articles linked to freedom of religion	<b>Arts 25–28</b>
<b>UPSC CSE Mains (GS-II)</b>	2016	State control vs religious freedom	Balance via public order
<b>TNPSC</b>	2020	HR&CE role in temple administration	State oversight
<b>SSC CGL</b>	2019	Meaning of ‘public order’	Order & tranquility
<b>Railway NTPC</b>	2021	ASI’s mandate	Protection of monuments

- The Madras High Court upheld lighting of Karthigai Deepam by rejecting which argument of the State?
  - a) Heritage damage
  - b) Financial burden
  - c) Public order disturbance
  - d) Environmental harm

## India's academic openness under strain

**T**he recent denial of entry to noted Hindi scholar Francesca Craini from the U.K., despite holding a valid visa, has brought to light the need for a more balanced and thoughtful approach to understanding and assessing the role of critical academic engagement, and to recognising the broader value of scholarly exchange both within and beyond India.

It seems that a rather difficult situation is emerging for international scholars who have critically engaged with Indian society, politics, or history, entering on a tourist visa and participating in academic events can expose them to procedural complications related to visa regulations, while applying for an academic visa may itself become challenging in light of their critical scholarly work.

The long-term consequence of this paradox is clear: independent and critical voices from abroad will gradually be silenced, rendered rare, and eventually made invisible in India's academic landscape. This situation raises a fundamental question about the spirit of inclusiveness in Indian academia. Universities and research institutions have historically thrived on exchange, critique, and intellectual diversity. The presence of global scholars, sometimes sharply critical, sometimes sympathetic, has enriched debates, introduced new frameworks, and helped Indian academia situate their work in global conversations.

**Sign of vitality**  
In a democracy, criticism is not a threat; it is a sign of vitality. For anthropologists studying caste to historians revisiting colonial legacies and economists questioning policy orthodoxy, these critical engagements in Indian academia have helped refine national self-understanding. India's reputation as a vibrant democracy has never been undermined by such scholarship.



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On the contrary, it has been strengthened by the openness with which these voices were received and debated. It is important to recall that no government in India has ever fallen because of academic criticism. Universities and research programmes across the country have long demonstrated maturity in accommodating a spectrum of ideas, including those critical of state policies. Research funding agencies such as the UGC, ICSSR, ICHR, and DfT have historically supported projects examining sensitive social and political questions without censorship or hostility.

**Intellectual loss**  
The danger today is not only administrative. When international scholars with a critical perspective grow hesitant to apply for visas, when Indian researchers hesitate to engage with interrogative frameworks, and when conferences avoid certain topics to ensure permission, academic life itself assumes scholastic shades. The loss is not merely institutional but intellectual and moral. Nations that have prized only conformity have rarely advanced in the long run, either in knowledge or in innovation. India, which has always projected itself as a nation rooted in dialogue, cannot turn its back on this tradition.

Furthermore, academic collaboration today operates in a deeply interconnected global environment. Research in areas such as digital culture, climate change, migration, artificial intelligence, and postcolonial studies cannot be meaningfully pursued in isolation. When certain scholars are denied access, entire research networks fragment. Students lose opportunities to interact with international peers; projects lose comparative depth; and the overall quality of scholarship declines. The effect is cumulative, slow but lasting. Inclusiveness in academia, hence,

is not simply a matter of hospitality but of democratic responsibility.

**Shape global view**  
The work of sociologists, historians, and anthropologists, both Indian and foreign, has shaped global understanding of caste, gender, religion, and modernity. These studies have sometimes been uncomfortable for those in power but have helped India appear as an intellectually vibrant society. This paradigm is a hallmark of democracy, and it has always coexisted with patriotic commitment.

If it begins to appear that India is using visa restrictions as a means of selective control over academic engagement, the message sent to the world will be unfortunate: that India no longer welcomes the exchange of ideas unless they conform to official narratives. Over time, the appeal for independent thought would shrink, and universities would risk becoming echo chambers. What India needs instead is a renewed commitment to academic openness, a framework that differentiates between political dissent and intellectual dissent, that trusts scholars to engage in debate without ulterior motives, and that recognises the long-term benefits of a plural academic environment.

It is not that there are no initiatives to promote international academic collaboration; the Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) is a commendable example of such efforts. However, for initiatives like GIAN to be truly meaningful, they must also create space for critical scholars to engage freely and thoughtfully with Indian academia, starting dialogue through diverse and independent channels. An inclusive and confident academic culture is the best reflection of a mature democracy, one that listens, argues, and learns.

## A central law to protect Amaravati

The move follows years of political turmoil surrounding the capital

### STATE OF PLAY

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Andhra Pradesh

**F**or Amaravati, the emerging capital city of Andhra Pradesh, the journey has been one of two steps forward during 2014-19 and one step back during Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's rule. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had envisioned Amaravati as a greenfield capital city and began giving shape to the idea in early 2014. To rule out the possibility of any future attempt to shift the capital, the TDP-led government sought to move a bill in Parliament to give Amaravati legal sanctity, leveraging its position as a constituent of the NDA.

And, according to a TDP MP, this effort has been part of a continuous process. The bill was expected to be tabled during the recently concluded Winter Session of Parliament, but that did not materialise.

The project moved at a reasonable pace until early 2019, when Mr. Jagan proposed the idea of declassifying capital cities, and that resulted in the long-term benefits of a plural academic environment.

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government put the brakes on the project in the name of decentralisation, triggering a prolonged legal battle that eventually ended in favour of farmers in March 2022.

And, YSRCP government had challenged the Andhra Pradesh High Court verdict in the Supreme Court by filing a Special Leave Petition. A few months after returning to power in June 2024, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) led coalition government did an about-face in the High Court, committing itself to complete

the ambitious project within three years. However, given the YSRCP's track record of reversing several decisions taken by the previous TDP government during 2014-19, there is a lingering fear that if Mr. Jagan were to stage a political comeback in 2026, he might revive the plan to split the capital into three — developing Visakhapatnam and Kurnool as the executive and judicial capitals respectively, while leaving only the financial capital to the state.

It may be recalled that the YSRCP government had earlier challenged the allotment of land to certain individuals and companies in Amaravati, alleging "insider trading". The current coalition government, meanwhile, suspects that Mr. Jagan and his party are allegedly creating obstacles to the project.

This prompted Mr. Naidu and the A.P. government to push for a bill in Parliament to grant Amaravati formal legal status as the capital.

The proposed legislation seeks to secure formal recognition from the Central government by amending the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 (APRA), under which Hyderabad was designated the common capital of both Telangana State — Telangana and Andhra Pradesh — for a period of 10 years.

The objective of the proposed law is to place Amaravati under the protection of a Central statute, thereby preventing successive state governments from tampering with capital-related decisions. A senior advocate who is presented farmers from the region in the High Court observed that the YSRCP's "irrevocable decision" resulted in substantial financial loss to the public exchequer and was taken not on administrative grounds but for vindictive and mala fide reasons.

What delayed the tabling of the bill in Parliament was reportedly a conundrum over whether Amaravati should be declared the capital from the date the APRA came into force or from the present date. However, this is seen as a hurdle that can eventually be overcome.

In this context, it is argued that the Central government is empowered to decide the capital of the residuary state of Andhra Pradesh, having exercised similar authority in prescribing a common capital under the APRA.

Amaravati was declared and notified as the capital of Andhra Pradesh by the Centre on December 31, 2014, a move subsequently followed by the Survey of India. The coalition government has therefore left the need to amend Section 82 of the APRA to legally fix Amaravati's position as the State capital.

There is little doubt about the government's resolve not to leave anything to chance. It is now only a matter of time before the necessary legal safeguards are put in place.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

57 YEARS AGO JANUARY 7, 1978

### Foreign demand for cube sugar

New Delhi, Jan. 6: The State Trading Corporation, the controlling agency for export of sugar, has enquiries from foreign buyers for a monthly supply of 10,000 tonnes of cube sugar. Indian white crystal sugar has already emerged as one of the top foreign exchange earners since last year when STC exported 6.24 lakh tonnes of sugar earning a total foreign exchange of approximately Rs. 344 crore. During the current year, the Corporation hopes to double exports in terms of quantity but since international price of sugar has recently come down and stabilised around \$228 per tonne, the foreign exchange earnings is expected to be around Rs. 428 crore only. Against \$228 for white crystal sugar, cube sugar is quoted in the international market at more than \$500 per tonne.

Production of cube sugar in the country at present is restricted to two sugar mills only, one in the private sector at Durgam in west U.P. and the other in the co-operative sector in Maharashtra. According to a spokesman of the State Trading Corporation, the two units together have a capacity to produce only 178 tonnes of cube sugar per month and this is consumed within the country.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 7, 1920

### American Indians Terrorised

Organised Massacre for Oil  
Special Cable — Copyright  
Guthrie, Oklahoma, Jan. 7. The strange story of terrorising the entire district during a period of 3 years was revealed in the public hearing, when opened to-day, before a Federal grand jury. Investigating the exploiters of so-called "Indian killing gang" who are alleged to have organised murder on an unprecedented scale with the object of securing a booty of two million dollars worth of allotments in oil lands in Osage Indian Reservation. It is alleged that, in order to wrest these rights into the hands of three parties, a series of ferocious murders were perpetrated, including shootings of women in lone canyons, blowing up of Indian homes and murders by means of poisoned liquor. Only after a score of deaths had occurred did the authorities obtain, an alleged confession of one of the culprits.

## Data shows Venezuela's pivot from the U.S. to China

Was the growing Chinese influence in Venezuela also a trigger behind US's invasion?

### DATA POINT

Samir Parthasarathy

**W**ith close to 200 American troops entering Caracas on Saturday, the Trump administration's invasion of Venezuela and the capture of its President Nicolas Maduro was the most dramatic U.S. intervention in Latin America since the 1989 Panama invasion. The U.S. military intervention has sent shock waves across the globe, with allies and adversaries condemning the U.S. action as a clear violation of its non-intervention policy. Experts suggest that the move was primarily aimed at reimposing the Monroe Doctrine to re-establish U.S. hegemony in the Americas and reducing China's influence in the region.

It is interesting to note that Venezuela relied heavily on the U.S. for weapons till 1998 before diversifying largely to players like Germany and Russia. However, since the mid-2000s, China has consistently emerged as one of its key partners for weapons imports. There were no recorded instances of arms exports to a negligible share to 2015. (Chart D). The trend became more apparent during the Maduro regime. Since 2014, China has accounted for 46% of all arms imports by Venezuela. (Chart E)

Secondly, Venezuela is one of China's key trade partners in Latin America. While Venezuela holds the world's largest proven oil reserves, it lacks the resources to effectively extract and refine them. Consequently, the South American country has sought alternative economic alliances with nations like China and Russia, which have demonstrated a greater tolerance

for the financial and geopolitical risks involved. This trend is visible not just in the arms trade but also in oil exports.

While direct crude oil data was unavailable, this analysis relies on mineral exports, which is a category in which crude oil is a primary component. China formed less than 1% of Venezuela's mineral exports in the early 2000s but reached a peak of 28% by 2018. (Chart A). A Reuters analysis showed that for some months in mid-2025, almost all the oil exports from the country went to China.

China has also surpassed the U.S. as the primary source of imports for Venezuela. In 2022, the U.S. accounted for only one-fourth of Venezuela's imports, with China accounting for one-fifth in the same period. This, however, was not always the case. In the mid-1990s, the share of the U.S. in Venezuela's imports crossed the 40% mark consistently for many years. However, in the last two decades, the U.S.'s share had almost halved, compensated by the increase in China's share. (Chart B)

Thirdly, one of the reasons behind the Trump administration's latest move is also supposedly to counter the Chinese influence in the region. China's investments in the Latin America region, in forms of aid, loans and grants, total up to more than \$300 billion between 2000-2023. Of which more than one-third (about \$106 billion) was invested just in Venezuela, making it the biggest recipient of Chinese investments in the region. (Chart C)

### The Chinese factor

Data were sourced from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Harvard Growth Labs and AidData.org

Chart A: Countrywise share of mineral exports by Venezuela in the 1990-2023 period. Figures in %.



Chart B: Countrywise share of imports by Venezuela in the 2014-2023 period put together. Figures in %.



Chart C: Countrywise share (in % of imports by Venezuela, China has also surpassed the U.S. as the primary source of imports.



## 1 Trigger Event / प्रमुख घटना

- **English:** With ~200 American troops entering **Caracas**, the **Trump administration's** intervention in **Venezuela** and attempt to capture **Nicolás Maduro** became the **most dramatic U.S. action** in **Latin America** since the **1989 Panama invasion**.
  - **हिंदी:** लगभग 200 अमेरिकी सैनिकों के कराकस में प्रवेश के साथ, ट्रंप प्रशासन का वेनेजुएला हस्तक्षेप और निकोलस मादुरो को पकड़ने का प्रयास 1989 के पनामा आक्रमण के बाद लैटिन अमेरिका में सबसे बड़ा अमेरिकी कदम माना गया।
- 

## 2 International Law & Global Response / अंतरराष्ट्रीय कानून व प्रतिक्रिया

- **English:** Allies and adversaries condemned the move as a **clear violation of international law**.
  - **हिंदी:** सहयोगियों व विरोधियों ने इसे अंतरराष्ट्रीय कानून का स्पष्ट उल्लंघन बताया।
- 

## 3 Strategic Objective / रणनीतिक उद्देश्य

- **English:** Experts argue the move aimed to **reassert the Monroe Doctrine**, restore **U.S. hegemony** in the **Americas**, and **curb China's** growing influence.
  - **हिंदी:** विशेषज्ञों के अनुसार उद्देश्य मोनरो सिद्धांत को पुनः लागू करना, अमेरिकी प्रभुत्व बहाल करना, और चीन के बढ़ते प्रभाव को कम करना था।
-



#### 4 Arms Imports Shift / हथियार आयात में बदलाव

- **English:** Venezuela relied on the **U.S. for weapons till 1995**; since the **mid-2000s**, **China** has emerged as a **key arms supplier**.
  - **हिंदी:** 1995 तक वेनेजुएला हथियारों के लिए अमेरिका पर निर्भर था; मध्य-2000s के बाद चीन प्रमुख आपूर्तिकर्ता बना।
  - **English:** Since **2014**, China has accounted for **~46%** of Venezuela's arms imports.
  - **हिंदी:** 2014 से, चीन का हिस्सा लगभग 46% रहा।
- 

#### 5 Trade & Oil Dependence / व्यापार व तेल निर्भरता

- **English:** Though direct crude data is limited, **mineral export proxies** show China's share rising from **<1% (early 2000s)** to **~28% (2018)**; by **mid-2025**, almost all **Venezuelan oil exports** reportedly went to **China**.
  - **हिंदी:** प्रत्यक्ष कच्चे तेल डेटा सीमित होने पर खनिज निर्यात संकेतक बताते हैं कि चीन का हिस्सा **<1% (2000s की शुरुआत)** से **~28% (2018)** तक पहुँचा; मध्य-2025 में लगभग सारा तेल चीन को गया।
- 

#### 6 Imports Pivot / आयात स्रोतों में परिवर्तन

- **English:** In **2023**, the **U.S.** supplied **~25%** of Venezuela's imports, while **China ~33%**; the **U.S. share** has **halved over two decades**.
  - **हिंदी:** 2023 में अमेरिका ~25%, जबकि चीन ~33% आयात का स्रोत; दो दशकों में अमेरिकी हिस्सा लगभग आधा हुआ।
-

## 7 China's Investment & Aid / चीन का निवेश व सहायता

- **English:** China invested **>\$300 billion (2001–2023)** in Latin America; **>\$106 billion** (over one-third) went to **Venezuela**, making it the **largest recipient**.
- **हिंदी:** चीन ने 2001–2023 में लैटिन अमेरिका में **>\$300 अरब** निवेश किया; इसमें से **>\$106 अरब** वेनेजुएला को—इसे सबसे बड़ा प्राप्तकर्ता बनाया।
- **English:** Venezuela is the **4th-largest recipient of Chinese aid globally**; **170+ projects**, largely loans, with **~26% in energy/mining**.
- **हिंदी:** वेनेजुएला चीन की वैश्विक सहायता का चौथा सबसे बड़ा लाभार्थी; **170+ परियोजनाएँ**, अधिकतर ऋण, जिनमें **~26% ऊर्जा/खनन** में।

Dimension	Data / Fact (English)	लघू जशप्रहडा
Doctrine	<b>Monroe Doctrine (1823):</b> U.S. primacy in Western Hemisphere	रक्षाधडाशुडू डूक (1823)
Arms Data Source	<b>SIPRI</b> tracks arms transfers	पशुगवडू डूवक SIPRI
Oil Reserves	Venezuela has <b>world's largest proven crude reserves</b>	अडूडूडूडू डूडू डूवडू शुडूC डूव डू डूडू डूनव डूवडूडू ल कूवडूवडू
Financing Mode	Chinese funds largely <b>loans</b>	डूहडूडू १ डू रडूडू लूडूक रू
Sectors	Energy, mining dominate	रू नूकू डू डूडू डूवडूडू

Exam	Year	Theme (Summary)	Answer
<b>UPSC CSE Prelims</b>	2013	Monroe Doctrine relates to which region?	Americas
<b>UPSC CSE Mains (GS-II)</b>	2019	China's role in Latin America	Investment & influence
<b>UPSC CSE Mains (GS-III)</b>	2020	Energy geopolitics	Oil dependence
<b>SSC CGL</b>	2021	SIPRI's work	Arms transfer database
<b>IBPS PO</b>	2022	Crude oil reserves leader	Venezuela
<b>Railway NTPC</b>	2023	Meaning of hegemony	Dominant influence



- The primary geopolitical objective of the U.S. action in Venezuela (as per analysts) was to:
  - a) Expand NATO
  - b) Reassert Monroe Doctrine and reduce China's influence
  - c) Secure UN mandate
  - d) Control OPEC

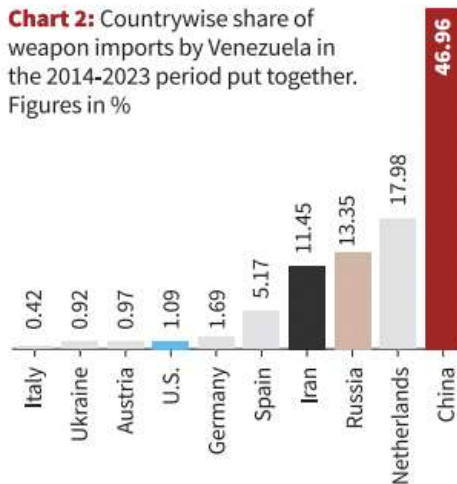
# The Chinese factor

Data were sourced from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Harvard Growth Lab and AidData.org



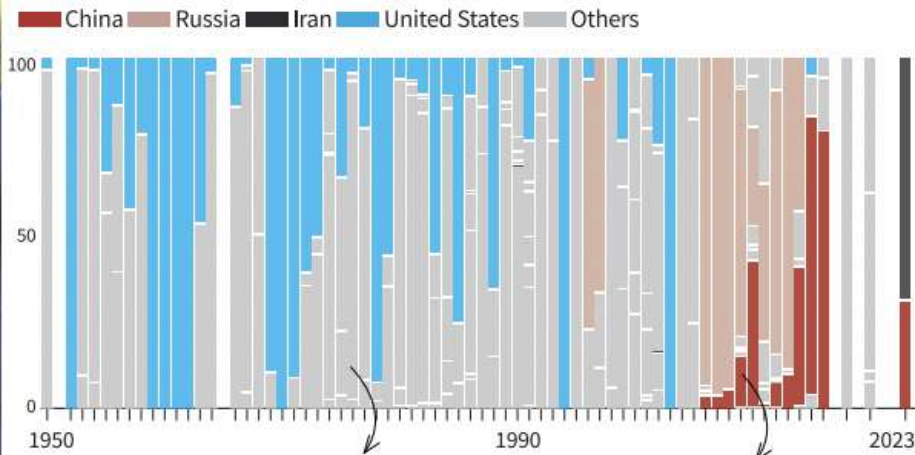
**Rising influence:** China's President Xi Jinping with Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro in 2023. REUTERS

**Chart 2:** Countrywise share of weapon imports by Venezuela in the 2014-2023 period put together. Figures in %



■ Since 2014, China has accounted for 47% of all arms imports by Venezuela

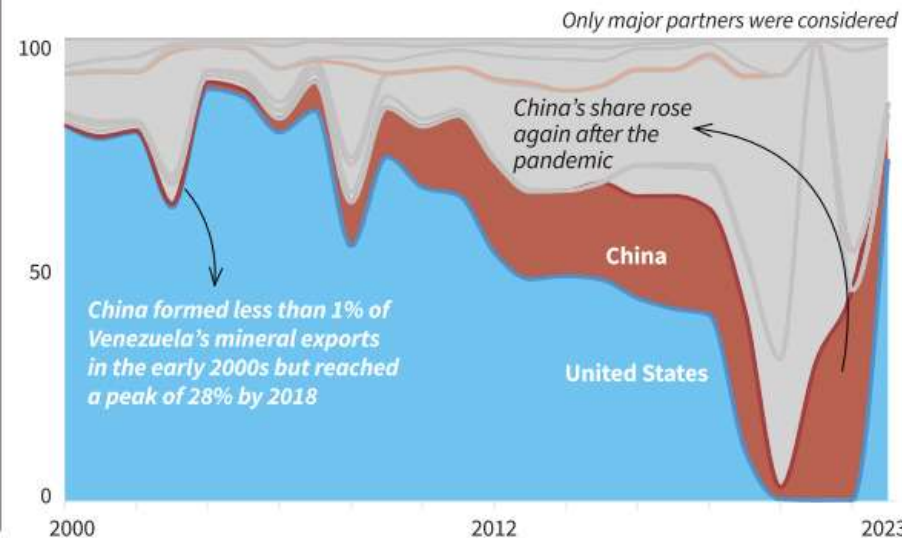
**Chart 1:** Countrywise share of weapon imports by Venezuela in the 1950-2023 period. Figures in %



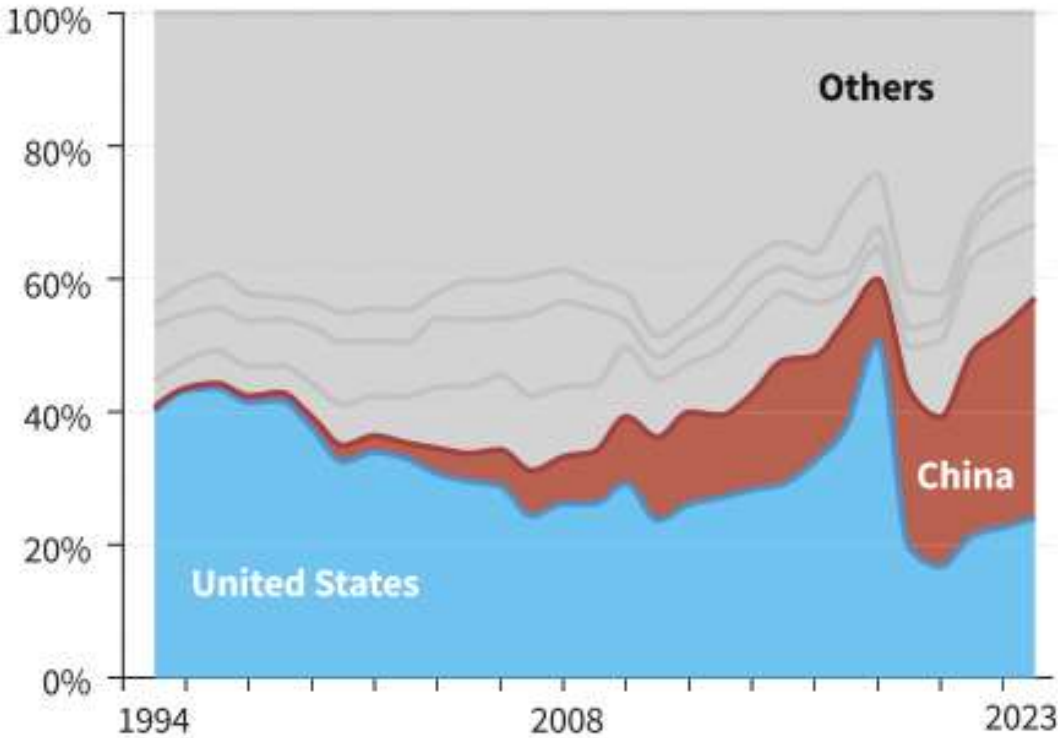
■ Venezuela relied heavily on the U.S. for weapons till 1995 before diversifying largely to players like Germany and Russia

■ Since the mid-2000s, China has consistently emerged as one of its key partners for weapons imports

**Chart 3:** Countrywise share (in %) of Venezuela's mineral exports. As direct crude oil data was unavailable, this analysis relies on mineral export.



**Chart 4:** Countrywise share (in %) of imports by Venezuela. China has also surpassed the U.S. as the primary source of imports



**Chart 5:** China's investments (loans/grants/aid) in the Latin American countries in the 2001-2023 period. Figures in \$ billion





# Text & Context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

## Number of deaths in Manipur pick-up van accident

**4** Four persons, including three women, were killed after a pick-up van carrying 30-40 passengers fell into a gorge in Manipur's Churachand district. The vehicle, hired for a wedding, met with an accident near the remote Ngathang village around noon. **IN**

## Number of people killed in Iran's economic protests

**35** At least 35 people have been killed in violence linked to ongoing economic protests across Iran, according to a U.S.-based rights group. The toll includes 29 protesters, four children and two security personnel. **IN**

## Value of international forex fraud racket busted in Maharashtra

**200** In ₹ crore, Maharashtra Police busted an international online fraud syndicate that cheated hundreds of victims of over ₹200 crore through fake forex and gold trading schemes. Seven have been arrested. **IN**

## Quantity of charas seized from inter-State drug supplier

**2.5** In kilograms, Delhi Police arrested a 38-year-old man for allegedly supplying charas from Uttar Pradesh to multiple States, including Delhi, Mumbai and Goa. The accused reportedly used multiple travel tactics to evade law enforcement. **IN**

## Death toll in Siau island floods in Indonesia

**16** At least 16 people were killed after torrential rains triggered a flash flood on Indonesia's Siau island, north of Sulawesi. A river inundated four towns, injuring 23 people and displacing nearly 700 residents. **AP**

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# Retrinking India's skilling outcomes

What prevents skilling from becoming a first-choice pathway for youth? Why has formal vocational training reached only a small share of the workforce? What limits industry participation in public skilling programmes? Why do Sector Skill Councils lack credibility with employers?

## EXPLAINER

Praveesh Dandani

The story so far:

Over the last decade, India has built one of the largest skilling ecosystems in the world. Between 2015 and 2023, India's flagship skilling programme, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, has trained and certified around 1.40 crore candidates. Yet skilling has not become a first-choice pathway for most young Indians. Employability outcomes remain uneven, and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data show that wage gains from vocational training are modest and inconsistent, particularly in informal employment, where most workers are absorbed, offering limited recognition for certified skills and little visible improvement in quality of life.

**Why does skilling still fail to inspire exploration?**

India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) stands at 26%, far below the National Education Policy 2020 aims to raise it to 80% by 2035. This cannot be done just by expanding traditional education; it must be integrated into higher education pathways in a way that makes it easier for people to learn new skills. Despite years of investment, only about 4.1% of India's workforce has received formal vocational training, barely improving from about 2% a decade ago (PLFS, World Bank). In contrast, across OECD countries, about 44% of upper secondary learners are enrolled in vocational programmes, rising to around 70% in countries such as Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, the Netherlands, and the Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

The India Skills Report 2025 shows that post-degree skilling by graduates is not a mainstream or high-participation behaviour in India. If skilling is to scale

meaningfully, it must travel through and alongside formal education.

**How can industry contribute?**

Industry is the single largest beneficiary of effective skilling and trained manpower. According to various industry reports, high attrition, long onboarding cycles, and productivity losses impose real costs, with attrition rates of 30-40% common across retail, logistics, hospitality, and manufacturing alone. Yet, there is still not much participation from the industry. Most employers do not use public skilling certifications as hiring benchmarks; instead, they use informal training, referrals, or private platforms (NTI Anyang, World Bank). The National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) has increased participation, but its effects are still unequal, particularly among bigger companies.

Industry is neither incentivised nor obligated to meaningfully contribute to relevant curriculum development, certification standards, or assessment rigour at scale. As long as skilling remains something industry consumes rather than

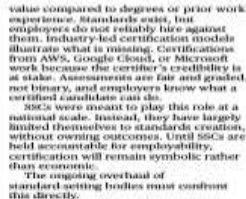
co-designs, it will lag labour-market reality.

**Why do Sector Skill Councils fail?**

The most serious structural failure in India's skilling ecosystem lies with the Sector Skill Councils (SSCs). SSCs were created with a clear mandate: to act as industry-facing institutions that define standards, ensure relevance, and anchor employability. In effect, they were meant to own the skilling value chain — from identifying industry demand to certifying job readiness. That mandate has not been fulfilled.

Today, responsibility is fragmented: training is delivered by one entity, assessment by another, certification by SSCs, and placement by someone else — if at all. Unlike higher education or technical institutions such as polytechnic diploma colleges, where reputational risk enforces accountability, the skilling system diffuses responsibility without trust.

This fragmentation has eroded trust. Employer surveys frequently indicate that SSC credentials have limited signalling



GETTY IMAGES

value compared to degrees or prior work experience. Standards exist, but employers do not reliably hire against them. Industry-led certification models illustrate what is missing. Certifications from AWS, Google Cloud, or Microsoft work because the certifier's credibility is at stake. Assessments are fair and graded, plus binary, and employers know what a certified candidate can do.

SSCs were meant to play this role at a national scale. Instead, they have largely limited themselves to standards creation, without owning outcomes. Until SSCs are held accountable for employability, certification will remain symbolic rather than economic.

The ongoing overhaul of standard-setting bodies must confront this directly.

**How can skilling drive sustained economic growth?**

India's skilling challenge is a failure of accountability, not of intent or government funding. Expanding NAPS and deepening industry integration can become one of the fastest levers to improve job readiness at scale by pushing skilling into the workplace. Initiatives like PM-SKTF, the central scheme for modernisation of ITIs, point towards stronger execution models where industry ownership and accountability are built into programme design.

When skills are embedded in degrees, when industry is treated as a co-owner, and when SSCs are made answerable for placement outcomes, skilling moves from fragmented welfare intervention to a pillar of national economic empowerment.

That shift is not just about jobs. It is about the dignity of labour, productivity, and India's ability to convert its demographic strength into sustained national growth.

*Praveesh Dandani is the Founder & Chancellor of Medhavi Skills University and an Advisor to NSRF.*

## THE GIST

Despite PMKVY training around 1.40 crore candidates, employability outcomes remain uneven, wage gains are modest and inconsistent, and informal employment offers limited recognition for certified skills and little visible improvement in quality of life.

Limited industry participation, uneven NAPS outcomes, and the structural failure of Sector Skill Councils — fragmented responsibility, weak signalling value of certification, and lack of accountability for employability — have reduced skilling to a fragmented welfare intervention rather than a driver of sustained economic growth.

# What are biomaterials and how do they work?

How can indigenous biomaterials reduce dependence on fossil-based imports?

Shambhavi Nair

The story so far:

A country's lack to shift to cleaner processes to manufacture consumer products, be it plastic or textiles, biomaterials will become the new frontier of materials engineering.

**What are biomaterials?**

Biomaterials are materials derived wholly or partly from biological sources, or engineered using biological processes, that are designed to replace or interface with conventional materials. They are increasingly used across sectors such as packaging, textiles, construction, and healthcare. Biomaterials can be broadly categorised into three types: drop-in biomaterials, which are chemically identical to petroleum-based materials and can be used in existing manufacturing systems (such as bio-PEF); drop-out biomaterials, which are chemically different and require new processing or end-of-life systems (such as

polylactic acid or PLA); and novel biomaterials, which offer new properties not found in conventional materials, such as self-healing materials, bioactive implants, and advanced composites.

**Why does India need biomaterials?**

For India, biomaterials address multiple goals, including environmental sustainability, industrial growth, revenue generation, and supporting farmer livelihoods through a single pathway. Indigenous biomaterials can reduce India's heavy dependence on fossil-based imports for plastics, chemicals, and materials. It would also enable diversified value for agricultural feedstocks and residues, offering farmers new income streams beyond food markets. As global regulations and consumer preferences shift toward low-carbon and circular products, biomaterials position the Indian industry to remain competitive in export markets. Biomaterials also support domestic policy goals around waste reduction, such as the ban on single-use

plastics and climate action goals.

**Where does India stand today?**

India's biomaterials sector, spanning bioplastics, biopolymeres, and bio-derived materials, is rapidly emerging as a strategic industrial and sustainability opportunity, with the bioplastics market alone valued at around \$600 million in 2024 and forecast to grow strongly through the decade. Barampuri Chini Mills planned PLA plant investment in Uttar Pradesh is one of the biggest investments in India. Domestic innovation includes startups like Phorolix, converting temple flower waste into biomaterials and Prag Industries, who have their own demonstration-level bioplastics plant in progress. Although India has a rich agricultural base, in some sectors, there is foreign dependence for the technologies required for the transformation of feedstocks into market-ready final products.

**What is the way forward?**

India has an advantage in building a

biomaterials industry, but some issues would need to be addressed first. If feedstocks also do not scale with increased demand, there could be feedstock competition with food sources. Similarly, aggressive agricultural practices could lead to water stress and soil deterioration. Further, weak waste management and composting infrastructure could undermine environmental benefits. Fragmented policy coordination across agriculture, environment, and industry may slow adoption, and failure to move quickly could leave India dependent on imports as other countries scale faster. To capitalise on this sector, policy actions include scaling biomanufacturing infrastructure (especially fermentation and polymerisation capacity), improving feedstock productivity for crops such as sugarcane, maize, and agricultural residues using emerging technologies, and investing in R&D to raise agricultural standards to develop both drop-in and novel biomaterials.

Clear regulatory definitions, labelling norms, and end-of-life pathways (recycling or industrial composting) are essential to build consumer and industry confidence.

Government procurement, time-bound incentives under frameworks, and support for pilot plants and shared facilities can help de-risk early investments.

*Shambhavi Nair is chairperson, Tatyashashila Institute's Health & Life Sciences Policy.*

## THE GIST

Biomaterials derived from biological sources are increasingly used across sectors and can reduce dependence on fossil-based imports while supporting environmental sustainability, industrial growth, and farmer livelihoods.

India's biomaterials sector is emerging as a strategic opportunity, but scaling biomanufacturing infrastructure (especially fermentation and polymerisation capacity), improving feedstock productivity for crops such as sugarcane, maize, and agricultural residues using emerging technologies, and investing in R&D to raise agricultural standards to develop both drop-in and novel biomaterials.

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## What is the way forward?

India has an advantage in building a

biomaterials industry, but some issues would need to be addressed first. If feedstocks also do not scale with increased demand, there could be feedstock competition with food sources. Similarly, aggressive agricultural practices could lead to water stress and soil deterioration. Further, weak waste-management and composting infrastructure could undermine environmental benefits. Fragmented policy coordination across agriculture, environment, and industry may slow adoption, and failure to move quickly could leave India dependent on imports as other countries scale faster.

To capitalise on this sector, policy actions include scaling biomanufacturing infrastructure (especially fermentation and polymerisation capacity), improving feedstock productivity for crops such as sugarcane, maize, and agricultural residues using emerging technologies, and investing in R&D and standards to develop both drop-in and novel biomaterials.

Clear regulatory definitions, labelling norms, and end-of-life pathways (recycling or industrial composting) are essential to build consumer and industry confidence.

Government procurement, time-bound incentives under frameworks, and support for pilot plants and shared facilities can help de-risk early investments.

*Shambhavi Naik is chairperson, Takshashila Institution's Health & Life Sciences Policy*

## 1 What are biomaterials? / बायोमैटेरियल्स क्या हैं?

- **English:** Biomaterials are materials **derived wholly/partly from biological sources** or **engineered using biological processes**, designed to **replace or interact with conventional materials**.
  - **हिंदी:** बायोमैटेरियल्स वे सामग्री हैं जो पूरी तरह/आंशिक रूप से जैविक स्रोतों से बनी होती हैं या जैविक प्रक्रियाओं से इंजीनियर की जाती हैं, और पारंपरिक सामग्रियों का विकल्प बनती हैं।
  - **English:** Widely used in **packaging, textiles, construction, healthcare**.
  - **हिंदी:** पैकेजिंग, वस्त्र, निर्माण, स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्रों में उपयोग।
- 

## 2 Types of biomaterials / बायोमैटेरियल्स के प्रकार

- **Drop-in biomaterials**
  - **English:** Chemically identical to petroleum-based materials; work in existing systems (e.g., bio-PET).
  - **हिंदी:** रासायनिक रूप से पेट्रोलियम-आधारित जैसी; मौजूदा सिस्टम में उपयोग (जैसे bio-PET)।
- **Drop-out biomaterials**
  - **English:** Chemically different; need new processing/end-of-life systems (e.g., **PLA – polylactic acid**).
  - **हिंदी:** रासायनिक रूप से अलग; नए प्रोसेसिंग/निपटान सिस्टम की जरूरत (जैसे **PLA**)।
- **Novel/advanced biomaterials**
  - **English:** New properties—**self-healing materials, bioactive implants, advanced composites**.
  - **हिंदी:** नए गुण—स्व-मरम्मत सामग्री, बायोएक्टिव इम्प्लांट, उन्नत कंपोज़िट।



### 3 Why does India need biomaterials? / भारत को क्यों ज़रूरत है?

- English: Meet goals of **environmental sustainability**, **industrial growth**, **revenue generation**, and **farmer livelihoods**.
  - हिंदी: पर्यावरणीय स्थिरता, औद्योगिक विकास, राजस्व, और किसानों की आय।
  - English: Reduce dependence on **fossil-based imports** (plastics, chemicals, materials).
  - हिंदी: फॉसिल-आधारित आयात निर्भरता कम करना।
  - English: Align with **circular economy**, export competitiveness, and **single-use plastic bans**.
  - हिंदी: परिपत्र अर्थव्यवस्था, निर्यात प्रतिस्पर्धा, और सिंगल-यूज़ प्लास्टिक प्रतिबंध।
- 

### 4 How do biomaterials reduce fossil imports? / फॉसिल आयात कैसे घटाते हैं?

- English: Use **agri-feedstocks and residues** → domestic value addition → less crude-linked inputs.
- हिंदी: कृषि फीडस्टॉक/अवशेष का उपयोग → घरेलू वैल्यू-एडिशन → कच्चे तेल पर निर्भरता कम।
- English: Create **new income streams** for farmers beyond food markets.
- हिंदी: किसानों के लिए खाद्य बाजार से आगे आय के अवसर।

## 5 Where does India stand today? / भारत आज कहाँ खड़ा है?

- **English:** Biomaterials sector (bioplastics, biopolymers, bio-derived materials) is **rapidly emerging**; **bioplastics market ~US\$500 million in 2024**, strong growth expected.
- **हिंदी:** बायोमैटेरियल्स क्षेत्र तेज़ी से उभर रहा; बायोप्लास्टिक्स बाज़ार ~US\$500 मिलियन (2024)।
- **English:** Major investments like Balrampur Chini Mills' PLA plant in Uttar Pradesh.
- **हिंदी:** बलरामपुर चीनी मिल्स का यूपी में PLA प्लांट।
- **English:** Startups such as Phool.co (temple-flower waste to biomaterials) and **Praj Industries** with demo plants.
- **हिंदी:** Phool.co (मंदिर-फूल अपशिष्ट से बायोमैटेरियल) और प्राज इंडस्ट्रीज़ की पहल।
- **English:** Some **technology dependence** remains for scale-up.
- **हिंदी:** बड़े पैमाने पर कुछ तकनीकी निर्भरता बनी हुई है।

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## 6 Challenges / चुनौतियाँ

- **English:** Feedstock scaling vs **food competition**; **water stress/soil degradation** from aggressive farming.
- **हिंदी:** फीडस्टॉक विस्तार बनाम खाद्य प्रतिस्पर्धा; जल-मृदा दबाव।
- **English:** Weak **waste-management & composting** infrastructure; fragmented policy coordination.
- **हिंदी:** कमजोर कचरा प्रबंधन/कम्पोस्टिंग; नीति समन्वय की कमी।
- **English:** Risk of continued **import dependence** if adoption is slow.
- **हिंदी:** धीमी अपनाने से आयात निर्भरता का जोखिम।



## 7 Way forward / आगे का रास्ता

- **English:** Scale **biomanufacturing infrastructure** (fermentation, polymerisation).
- **हिंदी:** बायो-मैन्युफैक्चरिंग अवसंरचना का विस्तार।
- **English:** Boost feedstock productivity (sugarcane, maize, agri-residues) using new tech.
- **हिंदी:** गन्ना, मक्का, कृषि अवशेष की उत्पादकता बढ़ाना।
- **English:** Invest in **R&D, standards, clear labelling & end-of-life pathways** (recycling/industrial composting).
- **हिंदी:** R&D, मानक, स्पष्ट लेबलिंग व जीवन-अंत निपटान।
- **English:** Government procurement, **time-bound incentives**, pilot plants & shared facilities.
- **हिंदी:** सरकारी खरीद, समयबद्ध प्रोत्साहन, पायलट प्लांट व साझा सुविधाएँ।

## WASHINGTON

## U.S. Justice Dept. says millions of Epstein files still not released



The U.S. Department of Justice said on Monday it is still reviewing over two million documents related to sex offender Jeffrey Epstein as it pushed more than two weeks past a deadline to release the files. More than 600 DOJ attorneys will spend "the next few weeks" reviewing the documents, the office said. **AP**

## BEIRUT

## Israeli strikes undermine efforts to prevent escalation, says Lebanon



Lebanese President Joseph Assan on Tuesday condemned Israel's latest strikes on his country, saying they undermine efforts to prevent escalation. Mr. Assan's criticism came after Israel launched a series of strikes in southern and eastern Lebanon on Monday, saying it hit Hezbollah and Hamas targets. **AP**

## CARACAS

## 'U.S. killed 55 Cuban, Venezuelan troops during capture of Maduro'



Fifty-five Cuban and Venezuelan military personnel were killed during the U.S. raid to ouster Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, according to lists published on Tuesday. Venezuela's Defense Minister Vladimir Padron Lopez said that Mr. Maduro's presidential guard was largely wiped out "in cold blood" by U.S. troops. **AP**

## DUBAI

## Yemen separatists set for Riyadh talks after fighting, says official



The leader of Yemen's separatists is heading to Riyadh on Tuesday for talks, a Yemeni official said, after days of fighting between his UAE-backed forces and pro-Saudi rivals. The Saudi-organized talks indicate the beginning of the escalation efforts after clashes in Yemen's government-run areas. **AP**

## Venezuelan Parliament swears in Rodriguez as interim President

Former V-P takes the oath in National Assembly, expressing willingness to cooperate with Washington while condemning Maduro's capture. Machado denounces Rodriguez as corrupt and illegitimate, vowing to return and win future elections

ANNE FRANCIS-PRINCE

CARACAS

Venezuela's Parliament swore in Delcy Rodriguez as interim President on Monday, two days after U.S. forces ousted his predecessor Nicolas Maduro to face trial in New York.

Mr. Rodriguez, who has indicated she will cooperate with Washington, took the oath of office during a ceremony in the National Assembly, telling lawmakers she was doing so "in the name of all Venezuelans".

She said she was "in pain over the kidnapping of our heroes, the hostages



Taking charges: Delcy Rodriguez takes the oath during a session of the National Assembly in Caracas on Monday. **AP**

in the United States," referring to Mr. Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores, who face drug charges in New York with other Venezuelan officials.

shocked Caracas and the world.

Outside the legislature, thousands of Venezuelans gathered to demand the release of their leader, chanting: "Maduro, hold on! Venezuela is rising!" Inside, meanwhile, members of the National Assembly offered their full backing to Mr. Rodriguez — who had been Mr. Maduro's Vice President — and rejected her brother Jorge Rodriguez as Parliament Speaker.

Elsewhere, Opposition leader Maria Corina Machado denounced the capture of leftist leader Maduro while vowing support for his stand in Ms. Rodriguez after the U.S. military attack.

"One of the main architects of torture, persecution, corruption, harassment, and human rights violations," she said in an undecoded location to *First News* in her first public comments since the weekend.

Mr. Machado added that she plans to return to Venezuela "as soon as possible".

"In free and fair elections, we will win by over 90% of the votes. I have no doubt about it," Ms. Machado said.

Mr. Trump, however, has downplayed the possibility of Maduro coming to power, saying she was "rejected" by the Venezuelan people and calling her

## China bans dual-use goods exports for Japanese military

Reuters

BEIJING

China has banned exports of dual-use items to Japan that can be used for military purposes, according to a Commerce Ministry statement on Tuesday, Beijing's latest move in reaction to an early November remark by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida about Taiwan.

Dual-use items are goods, software or technologies that have both civilian and military applications, including certain rare earth elements that are essential for making drones and ships.

Beijing added that organisations or individuals

Dual-use items are goods, software or technologies having both civilian and military applications

from any country or region that violated the ban would be held legally liable.

A Japanese government source who spoke on condition that they weren't identified called the move "symbolic", adding that

"Until now, China has avoided doing things that would seriously hurt Japan's business community, by taking this step, they may be aiming to fuel domestic criticism of Prime Minister Takashi".

## Strong dissent



Protesters affiliated with the Central Obrera Boliviana clash with riot police after taking part in the 'Bolivia is Not for Sale' march against Decree 3563 and rising fuel prices, in La Paz, Bolivia, on Monday. **REUTERS**

## Hadi killed due to political vendetta, chargesheet names 17 people: police

Press Trust of India

DHAKA/NEW DELHI

Student leader Sharif Osman Hadi was killed due to "political vendetta" at the behest of the Awami League, Bangladesh police said on Tuesday as it pressed formal charges against 17 people in connection with the murder.

"Through public rallies and social media, Hadi had strongly criticised the past activities of the now-banned Awami League and Chhatra League and his outspoken remarks angered leaders and activists of Chhatra League and its affiliated groups," Md Shafiqul Islam, Additional Commissioner of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's



Sharif Osman Hadi rose to prominence during the July-August 2024 mass protests that led to the fall of Hasina government. **REUTERS**

(CMM) Detective Branch, was quoted as saying by news portal *dhakapost.net*. The Chhatra League is the student wing of the banned Awami League party. "Considering the politi-

cal vendetta in the Hadi murder case to the court.

The chargesheet was filed against 17 people, including prime suspect Faisal Karim Masud, the *Dhaka Tribune* newspaper reported, quoting Mr. Islam.

He said 12 of the 17 charge-sheeted accused have been arrested so far, while five remain at large. Inqilab Moncho spokesperson Hadi, 32, rose to national prominence during the July-August 2024 mass protests that led to the fall of the Hasina-led government, was also in the head of the student wing of the Chhatra League.

## Hungarian director Béla Tarr, master of long, darkly comic films, dies at 70

Associated Press

BUDAPEST

The celebrated Hungarian filmmaker Béla Tarr, director of such works as *Satantango* and *The Turin Horse*, which won the recipient of numerous awards for his long and often darkly comic films, has died at 70.

During a career spanning decades, Tarr wrote and directed nine feature films, starting with his debut, *Aranykor* in 1979 and ending in 2011 with *The Turin Horse*, which won the Silver Bear Jury Grand Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival that year.

Tarr frequently collaborated with Hungarian author Laszlo Krasznahorkai,



Celebrated filmmaker: Béla Tarr completed his first feature film, *Family Nest*, when he was only 23. **REUTERS**

who last year won the Nobel Prize in literature. Tarr's films, some of which were adaptations of Mr. Krasznahorkai's novels *Satantango* and *Wweknesen Harmadik*, have been awarded prizes at festivals around Europe and

## At least 35 killed and 1,200 held in Iran's economic protests

Associated Press

TEHRAN

The death toll in violence surrounding protests in Iran has risen to at least 35 people, activists said on Tuesday, as the country's theocracy acknowledged the unrest in one western province where security forces reportedly searched a hospital.

The figure came from the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, which said more than 1,200 people have been detained in the protests, which have been ongoing for more than a week.

It said 39 protesters, four children and two members of Iran's security

forces have been killed. Demonstrations have reached over 250 locations in 27 of Iran's 31 provinces.

The group, which relies on an activist network in Iran for its reporting, has been accurate in past unrest.

The semi-official news agency, believed close to Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, reported late on Monday that some 280 police officers and 45 members of the Guard's all-volunteer Basij force have been hurt in the demonstrations.

The protests have become the biggest in Iran since 2022, Mahsa Amini's death triggered nationwide demonstrations.

after a long and serious illness, film director Béla Tarr passed away early this morning".

Tarr completed his first feature film, *Family Nest*, when he was only 23. That film won the Grand Prize at the Mannheim-Heidelberg International Film Festival last year.

His films, the longest of which, *Satantango*, clocks in at 435 minutes, often used slow pacing and stark imagery to depict despair and social decay.

Often shot in black and white and defined by long, hypnotic takes, Tarr's films depict bleak, hopeless, even dystopian landscapes.



# Venezuelan Parliament swears in Rodriguez as interim President

Former V-P takes the oath in National Assembly, expressing willingness to cooperate with Washington while condemning Maduro's capture; Machado denounces Rodriguez as corrupt and illegitimate, vowing to return and win future elections

**Agence France-Presse**  
CARACAS

Venezuela's Parliament swore in Delcy Rodriguez as interim President on Monday, two days after U.S. forces seized her predecessor Nicolas Maduro to face trial in New York.

Ms. Rodriguez, who has indicated she will cooperate with Washington, took the oath of office during a ceremony in the National Assembly, telling lawmakers she was doing so "in the name of all Venezuelans".

She said she was "in pain over the kidnapping of our heroes, the hostages



**Taking charge:** Delcy Rodriguez takes the oath during a session of the National Assembly in Caracas on Monday. AFP

in the United States," referring to Mr. Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores, who face drugs charges in New York with other Venezuelan officials.

Parliament denounced the capture of leftist leader Maduro while vowing support for his stand-in Ms. Rodriguez after the U.S. military attack that

shocked Caracas and the world.

Outside the legislature, thousands of Venezuelans gathered to demand the release of their leader, chanting: "Maduro, hold on: Venezuela is rising!"

Inside, meanwhile, members of the National Assembly offered their full backing to Ms. Rodriguez – who had been Mr. Maduro's Vice President – and reelected her brother Jorge Rodriguez as Parliament Speaker.

Elsewhere, Opposition leader Maria Corina Machado slammed Ms. Rodriguez, saying she was "rejected" by the Venezuelan people and calling her

"one of the main architects of torture, persecution, corruption, narcotrafficking".

Speaking from an undisclosed location to *Fox News* in her first public comments since the weekend, Ms. Machado added that she plans to return to Venezuela "as soon as possible".

"In free and fair elections, we will win by over 90% of the votes, I have no doubt about it," Ms. Machado said.

Mr. Trump, however, has downplayed the possibility of Machado coming to power, saying she did not not command the "respect" to run the country.

## 1 What happened? / क्या हुआ?

- **English:** Venezuela's **National Assembly** swore in **Delcy Rodríguez** as **Interim President**, days after former President **Nicolás Maduro** was captured by U.S. forces to face trial in **New York**.
  - **हिंदी:** वेनेजुएला की नेशनल असेंबली ने डेलसी रोड्रिगेज को अंतरिम राष्ट्रपति के रूप में शपथ दिलाई, यह कदम पूर्व राष्ट्रपति निकोलस मादुरो की अमेरिकी बलों द्वारा गिरफ्तारी के बाद उठाया गया।
- 

## 2 Who is Delcy Rodríguez? / डेलसी रोड्रिगेज कौन हैं?

- **English:** She is the **former Vice-President** of Venezuela and expressed willingness to **cooperate with Washington** while condemning Maduro's arrest.
  - **हिंदी:** वे वेनेजुएला की पूर्व उपराष्ट्रपति हैं और उन्होंने वॉशिंगटन से सहयोग की इच्छा जताई, साथ ही मादुरो की गिरफ्तारी की निंदा की।
- 

## 3 Parliamentary stance / संसद का रुख

- **English:** Parliament denounced Maduro's capture as an **illegal foreign intervention** and pledged support to the interim leadership.
  - **हिंदी:** संसद ने मादुरो की गिरफ्तारी को अवैध विदेशी हस्तक्षेप बताया और अंतरिम सरकार को समर्थन दिया।
-



#### 4 Public response / जन प्रतिक्रिया

- **English:** Large protests erupted in Caracas, with supporters demanding Maduro's release.
  - **हिंदी:** कराकस में बड़े-पैमाने पर प्रदर्शन हुए, जहाँ मादुरो की रिहाई की माँग की गई।
- 

#### 5 Opposition reaction / विपक्ष की प्रतिक्रिया

- **English:** Opposition leader María Corina Machado denounced Rodriguez as **corrupt and illegitimate**, vowing to return and win future elections.
  - **हिंदी:** विपक्षी नेता मारिया कोरीना माचाडो ने रोड्रिगेज को भ्रष्ट और अवैध बताया और भविष्य के चुनाव जीतने का दावा किया।
- 

#### 6 International angle / अंतरराष्ट्रीय आयाम

- **English:** The crisis deepens Venezuela's confrontation with the United States, while raising questions about **sovereignty, regime change, and international law**.
- **हिंदी:** यह संकट अमेरिका के साथ वेनेजुएला के टकराव को और गहरा करता है तथा संप्रभुता, सत्ता परिवर्तन और अंतरराष्ट्रीय कानून पर प्रश्न खड़े करता है।



Exam	Year	Question Theme (Summary)	Answer
<b>UPSC CSE Mains (GS-II)</b>	2018	Foreign intervention & sovereignty	International law
<b>UPSC CSE Prelims</b>	2020	Presidential form of government	Executive headed by President
<b>SSC CGL</b>	2021	Meaning of interim government	Temporary authority
<b>Railway NTPC</b>	2022	Legislature of Venezuela	National Assembly

- The Venezuelan crisis discussed above most directly raises concerns related to:
  - a) Monetary policy
  - b) Environmental governance
  - c) Sovereignty and foreign intervention
  - d) Climate change



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# Word of the day

## **Morass:**

an unpleasant and complicated situation that is difficult to escape from

---

**Synonyms:** trap, tangle, confusion

---

**Usage:** *The project is stuck in a morass.*

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

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**International Phonetic**

**Alphabet:** /məˈræs/





Thank you 😊

