

# NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS FOR BPSC

**(12-06-2024)**

**TOP OF THE  
WORLD**


Waker-Uz-Zaman

Lt Gen Zaman  
named new  
Bangladesh  
Army chief

**STILL FACES TAX CHARGES IN LOS ANGELES**

# Hunter Biden found guilty of lying about drug use to buy gun



(From left) First lady Jill Biden with Hunter Biden and his wife Melissa Cohen Biden after the verdict in Wilmington. *NYT*

## Opp parties in France scramble to form alliances before snap polls

**BARBARA SURK**  
NICE, JUNE 11

EMPOWERED BY a stunning triumph at the European elections, France's far-right National Rally on Tuesday hit the national campaign trail running with its star leader, Jordan Bardella, promising supporters "the largest possible majority" at the upcoming parliamentary elections.

While sharp differences between parties on both sides of the political spectrum remain,



French President Emmanuel Macron. *File*

both camps appear to have one thing in common: They don't want to cooperate with

President Emmanuel Macron.

Despite their divisions, left-wing parties agreed late Monday to form a new alliance that includes the Greens, the Socialists, the Communists and the far-left France Unbowed of Jean-Luc Mélenchon. The National Rally leader Marine Le Pen is working to consolidate power on the right. Le Pen met with members of the conservative Republicans party to discuss a united front as her niece Marion Maréchal tries to form an alliance with rival Reconquer! party of Eric Zemmour.

**AIRCRAFT WENT MISSING MONDAY**

# Malawi Vice President and 9 others died in plane crash: President

**FRANK PHIRI**  
BLANTYRE, JUNE 11

MALAWI'S VICE President Saulos Klaus Chilima and nine other people were killed when the military plane they were traveling on crashed, President Lazarus Chakwera said on Tuesday.



Malawi Vice President

**MOHAN CHARAN MAJHI IS FOUR-TIME MLA FROM KEONJHAR**

# BJP opens Odisha innings with surprise CM choice, 2 deputies

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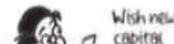
## Naidu is back: Amaravati will be capital of Andhra

**SREENIVAS JANYALA**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 11

A DAY before he is set to be sworn in as Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Telugu Desam Party

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



## Production stalled, MeitY & Commerce want visa norms for Chinese eased

**RAVI DUTTA MISHRA  
& SOUMYARENDRA BARIK**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

AT LEAST TWO Union ministries — Electronics and Information Technology and Commerce and Industry — are pushing for easier visa norms for entry of Chinese technicians after the domestic industry raised concerns that export orders were not being fulfilled due to delays in grant of visas.

A senior official in the industry told *The Indian Express*, “The department is aware of the concerns raised by the industry and we are pushing for limited entry of Chinese technicians to resolve the issue.”

The issue was flagged in several forums including the Board of Trade meeting in January this year. The BOT plays an advisory role to the Commerce and Industry Ministry and the annual meetings are attended by central and state government officials, alongside all major trade

and industry bodies, Export Promotion Councils and industry associations.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade and MeitY are learnt to have conveyed their demands to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Industry representatives said the delay in visa approval is hurting the manufacturing industry including the leather sector which is increasingly shifting to sports footwear. Having imported and installed Chinese machinery, the domestic industry is unable to operationalise plants due to visa hurdles.

The issue first cropped up after the Galwan clash in 2020. Since then, alternate ways such as sending Indian professionals to China have not quite worked out as Chinese authorities tend to promptly grant visas to importers but delay applications sent by Indian manufacturers and government officials.

A query sent by *The Indian Express* to the Commerce and Industry Ministry and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology remained unanswered.

### ‘Chinese technicians affordable’

“We want the government to relax visas for Chinese technicians. The Taiwanese who are improving their productivity and capturing Indian export markets in the leather and footwear sector are doing so with the help of Chinese technicians. The productivity of Chinese professionals is of high quality. They will help you pro-

duce 150 items with the same resource with which we produce 100,” M Rafeeqe Ahmed, Chairman, Farida Group said.

“The Chinese technicians will only stay in India for a year, share the expertise and then return and this is in the interest of our manufacturing. Taiwanese professionals charge four times the Chinese. Vietnamese don’t have the same expertise as the Chinese. A joint venture was supposed to come from China but the visa would have caused a lot of blockages so we transferred the industry to our factory in Bangladesh,” Ahmed said.

### Heavy dependence on Chinese machines

The industry needs Chinese professionals since it is heavily dependent on China for crucial parts in most electrical and electronic segments. Official data shows that out of the nearly \$100 billion worth imports from China, nearly 60 per cent comprised engineering and electronic items, and these also play a key role in fulfilling India’s export orders.

Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC) Chairman Arun Kumar Garodia said the council has flagged the requirement of Chinese technicians. “The government is looking into visa norms of Chinese on a case-to-case basis as national security concerns are a strong consideration. Our members are, however, using video conferencing wherever possible to get Indian technicians trained,” Garodia said.

Given the strained geo-political

### EXPLAINED E Why industry is in a fix

STRAINED RELATIONS have made visa approvals for Chinese workers difficult. Several sectors such as leather and electronics have imported Chinese equipment, and their installation is held up since visas aren’t coming easy for Chinese technicians. This is hurting producers.

relationship with China, India has imposed strict quality norms to reduce Chinese imports of items of mass consumption as well as intermediate products and is simultaneously promoting manufacturing with the help of the Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) in strategic areas.

### ‘MSME slowdown root cause’

“Earlier, the MSMEs would hire polytechnic and Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) graduates and train them on the job with skills required in the factory floor. But MSMEs faced a major slowdown and corporate growth far outstripped that of MSMEs following the economic shocks of GST, demonetisation and Covid-19. As a result, movement of technicians from MSMEs to corporates is not happening, creating a serious shortage of skills in the industry,” former Chief Statistician Pronab

Sen said.

Sen said GST is a step in the positive direction but more time should have been given to the MSMEs to adjust to the new policy. The government should look into the extent of stress in the MSME sector and undertake measures to address the skill gap in various sectors so that Indian industry is not reliant on China for technicians.

### Different visa norms for Chinese nationals

India allows entry of foreign nationals for business-related activity under the ‘employment’ and ‘business’ visa categories. While the employment visa gives access to skilled and qualified professionals for “one year at a time”, business visas are given with a “validity of five years” to individuals who aim to set up industrial or business ventures in India.

For Chinese nationals, however, only single-entry tourist and business visas valid for up to three months are issued. All other types of visas including employment visas fall in the “prior clearance category”. Moreover, as per the Ministry of Home Affairs, an employment visa “shall not be granted” for jobs for which “qualified Indians are available”.

Industry sources said the government is allowing limited entry of Chinese professionals in PLI schemes, but several manufacturers are often forced to move manufacturing to alternate geographies such as Bangladesh where there are no such restrictions.

### ‘China blocks Indian professionals’

Vijay Kalantri, Chairman and President of All India Association of Industries, said the dependence on Chinese technicians is a result of a deteriorating manufacturing base in the country over the years and high dependence on imports from China which follows unfair trade practices when it comes to visa approvals.

“Visas are a problematic issue between India and China. The Chinese tend to approve visas applied by Indian importers but delay or block visa requests by government officials and exporters. Similarly, Indian companies find it difficult to get Chinese technicians in India. Our members have asked MeitY and the commerce ministry to allow entry of Chinese professionals only to those particular companies whose products we are importing,” Kalantri said.

### ‘Idle capacity due to policy change’

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) has also raised concerns with the commerce and industry ministry over the visa hurdles that have left several plants idle causing losses to the industry and unfilled export orders.

“The industry has already imported the plant and it remains an idle asset. We are delaying production. Technicians have to commission the plant after it is imported. If visas are not given, the Indian companies cannot enforce the contract with the Chinese exporters. And un-

less the plant is commissioned, the production cannot commence,” Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai.

He said the government’s concern is valid but the industry is seeking short-term visas for the Chinese technicians to help the commissioning of the plant and is willing to take safeguards as per regulations.

“This is something that is affecting our industry and investments. The industry started flagging these concerns after the Galwan standoff and representation was made to the government,” Sahai said.

### FDI restriction on China

The border standoff has seen several measures announced by the government to limit Chinese influence on the Indian economy. The most prominent was the amendment brought about in the FDI policy under Press Note 3 (PN3). The modification in PN3 brought the investment in India from land bordering countries under the government route. India approved only a quarter of the total 435 foreign direct investment applications from China till June last year since the modification in press note 3 was introduced in April 2020. However, China contributes only a fraction of the total FDI equity inflows into the country. China stands at the 20th position with only 0.43 per cent share or \$ 2.45 billion in total FDI equity inflow reported in India from April 2000 to December 2021, as per the commerce and industry ministry.

## 6 ARRESTED, MINOR APPREHENDED BY GURGAON POLICE

# How drone helped cops bust bootlegging op in Aravallis

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
GURGAON, JUNE 11

AROUND 6.30 AM on Tuesday, a Gurgaon Police team set off on a 1.5-km trek into the wilderness of Gurgaon's Aravalli hills near Rithoj village — the area was empty, save for a few trees and straggly shrubs. Their intel — images captured on a drone a few days ago — however, pointed to canisters and drums being stored in the otherwise sequestered area.

Soon enough, the team of 20 officers swooped in on a gang of seven — including a minor — allegedly running a clandestine bootlegging operation. They also seized 1,600 litres of spurious raw liquor stored in barrels,

drums, and plastic canisters.

Police said the area has been a spot for illegal activity for more than six months.

DCP (South) Sidhant Jain said, "We captured visuals of people making spurious liquor, but we were not certain as patrolling was impossible in the area given its terrain and the high temperature in the day. The terrain was uneven, with no vegetation except a few trees and shrubs present... even animals do not graze there. The men were brewing liquor at odd hours and we could not take out a raid without local inputs. So, we approached local informers and got to know that the men were making liquor."

Police said in a process that was as tedious as it was long, the



Police have seized 1,600 litres of spurious raw liquor stored in barrels, drums, and plastic canisters from the site. *Express*

accused would allegedly make the liquor with jaggery, a special tree bark, spices and water; it

was allegedly sold in 700 ml bottles for Rs 80 a piece, carried down and delivered to local vil-

lage residents on motorcycles.

"In winter, fermentation takes a week, but it is faster in summer. After fermentation, a lid is placed above the concoction and a vessel with cold water is placed over it while the brew is heated. Slowly, the liquor is separated from the potion and is retrieved," the DCP said.

The accused have been identified as Sache, Ganga, Manoj, Anil, Khemchand, all residents of Rithoj, and Munshiram, a resident of Sahjivas.

During the raid, the police said it seized about 50 litres of finished country liquor, 1,600 litres of "lahan" stored in eight barrels, two iron drums, eight plastic drums, and three plastic cans.

"Lahan", according to the Punjab Excise Act, refers to any

solution made from gur or molasses, or both, to which an agent has been added to promote fermentation or which has undergone the process and from which spirit can be obtained by distillation.

A crate, an axe, a shovel, two earthen utensils, and three plastic pipes were also among the equipment recovered from the accused, who were arrested under the Excise Act for setting up an illegal liquor distillery and producing spurious liquor.

Police said they are questioning the accused to ascertain if more groups are working around the area. "We have sought details of the people they sold the liquor to and others they have been in touch with," the DCP added.

# Speculation ends, Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi appointed next Army Chief

Vice Chief of Army Staff will join on June 30, day Gen Manoj Pande demits office

**AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

THE CENTRE Tuesday appointed Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi as the next Army Chief. The development comes in just over two weeks after the government in an unusual move extended by a month the tenure of current Army chief General Manoj Pande who was to retire on May 31.

Lt Gen Dwivedi will now take over the new appointment from the afternoon of June 30, 2024, when Gen Pande demits office.

The former Northern Army Commander is the senior most



Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi

officer in the Army at present. The norm is to appoint the most senior Army commander or the Army vice chief is made the Army chief when the serving COAS retires. The Army chief retires on completion of three years in the appointment or on attaining the age of 62,

whichever is earlier.

The government's decision to extend the tenure of Gen Pande by a month, barely a week before his retirement, had given rise to speculation that it wants to keep options open for the next government to decide on the selection of the Army chief.

Born on July 01, 1964, Lt Gen Dwivedi was commissioned into the Infantry (Jammu & Kashmir Rifles) of the Army on December 15, 1984. During his service spanning four decades, he has served in a variety of Command, Staff, Instructional and Foreign appointments. His Command appointments include Command of Regiment (18 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles), Brigade (26 Sector Assam

Rifles), as Inspector General, Assam Rifles (East) and 9 Corps.

He has also served as Director General Infantry and General Officer Commanding in Chief (Headquarter Northern Command) from 2022-24, before getting appointed as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff.

The senior officer is an alumnus of the Sainik School Rewa, National Defence College, and US Army War College. He was conferred 'Distinguished Fellow' in the coveted NDC equivalent course at USAWC, Carlisle, USA.

The officer holds an M Phil in Defence and Management Studies and two Master's degrees in Strategic Studies and Military Science.

# TERROR IN REASI

Attack raises new security concerns, underscores fragility of a hard-won peace in Jammu and Kashmir

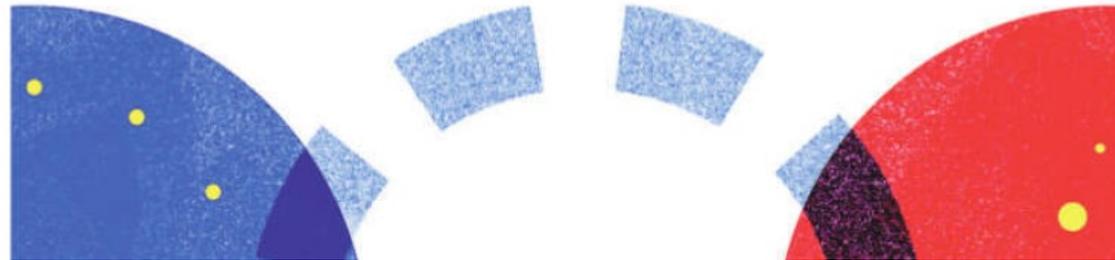
**I**N JANUARY, HOME Minister Amit Shah flagged the decline in terrorist incidents in Jammu and Kashmir — they were down, he said, by 66 per cent since the abrogation of Article 370. Two months later, in his first visit to the Valley since the abrogation of Article 370, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke of a heartening rise of tourism in J&K. Higher voter turnouts in most parts of the Union Territory in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections added to the stirrings of hope and optimism. Now, a terrorist attack on a bus carrying pilgrims, on the day PM Modi and his council of ministers were being sworn-in in Delhi, has underscored the fragility of peace. The strike has claimed nine lives and it's disturbing that it occurred in Reasi, a district where militancy has had a relatively small imprint. The last time terrorists struck in the region was in May 2022, when a bomb attack killed four Vaishno Devi pilgrims and injured more than 20.

Reasi, along with Rajouri and Poonch, was a hotbed of militancy in the 1990s. Subsequently, the three districts in Jammu seemed to have contained the insurgency, until 2021, when terrorists attacked an army patrol in Poonch killing nine soldiers. In the past three years, terror attacks in Rajouri and Poonch have killed 38 soldiers and 11 civilians. The strengthening of the counter-infiltration grid in the Kashmir Valley could be a possible reason for a shift in terrorists' actions towards these Jammu districts. However, unlike Rajouri and Poonch, Reasi is not close to the LoC. The pressure from security forces in the two districts, where terrorism has raised its head again since 2021, could have forced the militants to search for a new battleground. This development poses new security concerns. The Pir Panjal range, which separates Kashmir from Jammu, runs through the three districts. Passes in the range provide seasonal access to PoK and the Pir Panjal's difficult terrain and dense forests allow the militants escape routes as well as launchpads for the attacks. The Reasi strike testifies to this mode of operation — militants reportedly hiding in a forest ambushed the bus carrying pilgrims.

After the conditions imposed by the FATF in Pakistan in recent years, terrorist outfits such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) have often used proxies to avoid international scrutiny. The Resistance Front (TRF), one such group, has reportedly claimed responsibility for Sunday's attack. The outfit's presence in J&K is borne out by the UT police's records. Its data for 2022 shows that most of the militants killed in J&K belonged to either the LeT or TRF — an indication of the persistence of some of the clandestine networks, developed in the past 30 years. Historically, however, insurgency in the Jammu region has not been sustained for long because it lacked local support. In fact, in July 2022, Reasi residents had overpowered LeT militants and handed them over to security forces. The Centre must step up its vigil in the wake of the Reasi strike, even as it moves towards honouring its commitment to holding assembly elections in J&K and restoring statehood at the earliest.

# A reboot at G7

PM Modi's first trip abroad in his third term, to the summit in Italy, is a chance to re-energise relations with the West



## The G-7 Group: Relevance and Significance

### Introduction

The Group of Seven (G-7) is an intergovernmental organization consisting of seven of the world's largest advanced economies: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The European Union also participates in G-7 meetings but is not counted as one of the member states. The G-7 was established in the 1970s as a response to the economic crises of the time, providing a forum for the world's major industrialized democracies to discuss and coordinate economic policies.

### Relevance of the G-7

The relevance of the G-7 lies in its role as a platform for addressing and coordinating on global economic and political issues. Despite the rise of emerging economies and other international forums, the G-7 remains significant for several reasons:

1. **Economic Influence:** The G-7 countries are some of the world's most advanced and influential economies, collectively accounting for a significant portion of global GDP. Their economic policies and decisions have substantial impacts on global markets and economies.

2. **Political Clout:** G-7 member states are prominent players in global politics. Their collective decisions and policies often shape international relations, security, and development agendas.
3. **Global Governance:** The G-7 serves as a crucial platform for discussing and addressing pressing global issues such as climate change, international security, health crises, and economic stability. The group's decisions can lead to significant international initiatives and agreements.
4. **Crisis Management:** Historically, the G-7 has played a vital role in responding to global crises. For example, during the 2008 financial crisis, the G-7 coordinated efforts to stabilize the global economy. More recently, the group has been involved in coordinating responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Significance of the G-7

The significance of the G-7 extends beyond its immediate economic and political influence. Several key aspects highlight its ongoing importance:

1. **Policy Coordination:** The G-7 provides a unique forum for policy coordination among the world's leading democracies. This coordination is essential for addressing transnational challenges that require collective action, such as cybersecurity threats, trade disputes, and environmental protection.
2. **Promoting Democratic Values:** The G-7 is composed of like-minded democracies committed to the principles of human rights, rule of law, and democratic governance. This makes the group an important advocate for democratic values on the global stage.
3. **Setting Global Agendas:** The G-7 often sets the agenda for broader international discussions, influencing the priorities and actions of larger multilateral organizations such as the G-20, the United Nations, and the World Bank.
4. **Economic Policy Leadership:** Given their economic stature, G-7 members lead discussions on global economic policies, including trade regulations, fiscal and monetary policies, and international development. Their collective decisions often serve as benchmarks for other nations.
5. **Innovation and Technology:** The G-7 countries are leaders in technological innovation and research. Discussions within the G-7 on topics like digital economy, artificial intelligence, and technological standards help shape global policies and regulations.

### Conclusion

While the global economic and political landscape continues to evolve, the G-7 remains a pivotal institution. Its ability to bring together the world's leading economies to discuss, coordinate, and implement policies on pressing global issues underscores its

ongoing relevance and significance. As the world faces new challenges, from climate change to global health crises, the G-7's role in fostering international cooperation and stability remains indispensable.

## **The Changing Relations of the West with India**

### **Historical Context**

The relationship between India and the Western countries, particularly the United States and Europe, has evolved significantly over the decades. Historically, India's interactions with the West were shaped by its colonial past under British rule. Post-independence, India adopted a non-aligned stance during the Cold War, distancing itself from both the Western bloc led by the United States and the Eastern bloc led by the Soviet Union. However, as global dynamics have shifted, so too have India's relations with Western nations.

### **Evolution of Relations**

#### **1. Post-Colonial Era and Non-Alignment (1947-1990)**

After gaining independence in 1947, India emerged as a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which sought to maintain independence from the superpower rivalry of the Cold War. India's relations with the West during this period were cautious, marked by limited engagement and occasional friction, particularly with the United States, which had closer ties with Pakistan.

#### **2. Economic Liberalization and Engagement (1991-2000)**

The 1990s marked a significant shift in India's foreign policy and economic landscape. The economic liberalization initiated in 1991 opened India's markets to global trade and investment, leading to closer economic ties with Western countries. This period saw increased diplomatic engagement, trade partnerships, and cooperation in various sectors.

#### **3. Strategic Partnerships and Global Aspirations (2000-2010)**

Entering the 21st century, India began to assert itself as an emerging global power. The United States and European countries started to recognize India's strategic importance, leading to the establishment of key partnerships. The U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement in 2008 was a landmark deal that symbolized the deepening ties between the two nations. The West began to view India as a crucial partner in maintaining regional stability and countering the rise of China.

#### 4. Comprehensive Strategic Engagement (2010-Present)

The last decade has seen a further deepening of India's relationships with Western nations, characterized by comprehensive strategic partnerships. These relationships span multiple areas, including defense, trade, technology, climate change, and counterterrorism.

#### Key Aspects of the Changing Relationship

##### 1. Economic Ties

- **Trade:** Bilateral trade between India and Western countries has grown exponentially. The United States and the European Union are among India's largest trading partners. Trade agreements and dialogues continue to enhance economic cooperation.
- **Investment:** Western countries are significant investors in India, contributing to various sectors such as information technology, manufacturing, and services. India's economic reforms have made it an attractive destination for foreign direct investment (FDI).

##### 2. Defense and Security Cooperation

- **Defense Agreements:** India has signed numerous defense agreements with Western nations, including major deals for the procurement of advanced military technology and equipment. The U.S. has become one of India's top defense suppliers.
- **Military Exercises:** Joint military exercises, such as Malabar (involving the U.S., India, and Japan), reflect the growing defense cooperation. These exercises enhance interoperability and strategic coordination.
- **Counterterrorism:** Collaborative efforts in counterterrorism have strengthened, with intelligence sharing and joint operations becoming more common.

##### 3. Technology and Innovation

- **Digital Collaboration:** The West and India have established strong ties in the technology sector. India's IT industry, headquartered in cities like Bangalore and Hyderabad, has deep connections with Silicon Valley.
- **Research and Development:** Collaborative research initiatives and technology partnerships in areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and space exploration are on the rise.

##### 4. Climate Change and Sustainable Development

- **Climate Agreements:** India and Western countries have committed to addressing climate change through international agreements like the Paris Agreement. Collaborative efforts in renewable energy and sustainable development projects are increasing.

- **Green Technology:** There is a focus on sharing and developing green technologies to combat climate change, with Western nations investing in India's renewable energy sector.
- 5. **Cultural and Educational Exchange**
  - **People-to-People Ties:** The Indian diaspora in Western countries, particularly in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K., plays a significant role in strengthening bilateral relations. Cultural exchanges and educational collaborations are prominent.
  - **Higher Education:** There are strong academic ties, with many Indian students studying in Western universities, fostering educational and cultural exchanges.
- 6. **Geopolitical Dynamics**
  - **Indo-Pacific Strategy:** Western nations, especially the U.S., view India as a key player in the Indo-Pacific region. The Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), involving the U.S., India, Japan, and Australia, reflects the strategic importance of India in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific.
  - **China's Rise:** The strategic partnership between India and the West has been bolstered by mutual concerns over China's assertive policies in the region. India's role as a counterbalance to China is a significant factor in Western foreign policy.

### Challenges and Future Prospects

Despite the positive trajectory, there are challenges that could impact the relationship between India and the West:

1. **Trade Disputes:** Tariff and trade disputes occasionally arise, requiring diplomatic negotiation to resolve.
2. **Human Rights Concerns:** Western nations sometimes express concerns over human rights issues in India, which can strain relations.
3. **Strategic Autonomy:** India's policy of strategic autonomy sometimes leads to differing positions on international issues, requiring careful diplomatic management.

### Conclusion

The relationship between India and the West has evolved from cautious engagement to a multifaceted strategic partnership. This transformation is driven by shared economic interests, defense cooperation, technological collaboration, and geopolitical considerations. As India continues to rise as a global power, its relationship with Western countries is likely to grow even more significant, shaping the global order in the 21st century. The ability to manage challenges and leverage opportunities will be crucial for the continued strengthening of these vital partnerships.

# ‘Never acceptable’: Canadian envoy flays float depicting assassination of Indira

**DIVYAA**

NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

DAYS AFTER a controversial float on former prime minister Indira Gandhi was displayed in Canada’s Brampton, Canadian envoy Cameron MacKay said promotion of violence is never acceptable in his country.

“The Government of Canada is aware of further imagery displayed in Brampton on Sunday. Canada’s position is clear: The promotion of violence is never acceptable in Canada,” MacKay said in a post on X.

The float that glorified Gandhi’s assassination formed a part of a parade in Brampton to mark the 44th anniversary of Operation Blue Star on June 6.

MacKay’s remarks come within days of two Canadian ministers condemning another float depicting the former Indian PM’s assassination as part of a protest by Khalistani activists in front of the Indian consulate in Vancouver. Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc and Anita Anand, president of the Treasury Board, had denounced the violent imagery used in the float last week.

The External Affairs Ministry has not yet reacted to these protests even as India is said to have already taken up the matter with the authorities in Canada.

Last month, in response to media queries regarding a float in the Nagar Kirtan parade in Canada’s Malton, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal had said New Delhi has repeatedly raised its

strong concerns about the violent imagery used by extremist elements in Canada against India’s political leadership. India also has raised concerns over posters put up by Khalistani elements featuring images of Indian diplomats, threatening violence against them.

“Democratic countries, which respect the rule of law, should not allow intimidation by radical elements in the name of freedom of expression,” Jaiswal said, adding that Canada should stop “providing criminal and secessionist elements a safe haven”.

The float displayed in Brampton on June 6 depicted an effigy of late Indira Gandhi being fired upon by her bodyguards. The display also featured images of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. India-Canada diplo-

matic relations have been strained since Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in September last year alleged a “potential” involvement of Indian agents in Nijjar’s killing, who was shot outside a gurdwara in Surrey in June 2023. The Indian government termed Trudeau’s charges “absurd”.

Last week, Trudeau, while congratulating Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his poll victory, said, “Canada stands ready to work with his government to advance the relationship between our nations’ peoples — anchored to human rights, diversity, and the rule of law.”

PM Modi responded by saying that “India looks forward to working with Canada based on mutual understanding and respect for each other’s concerns”.

## Sprouts, sweets to be part of Maharashtra govt school meals

not provided by the government. procured, the state will shift a



## Sarod maestro Pandit Rajeev Taranath passes away

Sarod maestro Pandit Rajeev Taranath, 92, who was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Mysuru, passed away on Tuesday. Pandit Taranath was honoured with Padma Shri in 2019 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi award in 2000. In Karnataka, he was bestowed with the Rajyotsava Award in 1996, Chowdaiah Memorial Award in 1998, Sangeet Vidwan Award in 2018, and the Nadoja Award in 2019. He had composed music for a number of Kannada films, including *Samskara* and *Agunthaka*, besides Malayalam films such as *Kadavu* and *Kanchanaseetha*.

### WORLD BANK'S GLOBAL ECONOMIC PROSPECTS REPORT

## 'India fastest-growing economy, to clock 6.7% growth over 3 years'

*New Delhi:* India will remain the fastest-growing major economy recording a steady growth of 6.7 per cent in the next three years including the current financial year, said a World Bank report.

In India, growth is estimated to have picked up to 8.2 per cent in fiscal year (FY) 2023/24 (April 2023 to March 2024) — 1.9 percentage points higher than estimated in January, according to the World Bank's latest Global Economic Prospects report. It fur-

ther said global growth is projected to hold steady at 2.6 per cent in 2024 before edging up to an average of 2.7 per cent in 2025-26.

"The forecast implies that over the course of 2024-26 countries that collectively account for more than 80 per cent of the world's population and global GDP would still be growing more slowly than they did in the decade before Covid-19," it said.

"India will remain the fastest-growing of the world's largest economies, although its pace of expansion is expected to moderate. After a high growth rate in FY2023/24, steady growth of 6.7 per cent per year, on average, is projected for the three fiscal years beginning in FY2024/25," the report said. This moderation is mainly due to a slowdown in investment from a high base. **PTI**

# IISc develops method to remove heavy metal contaminants from groundwater

## The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

Indian Institute of Science (IISc) researchers have developed a novel remediation process for removing heavy metal contaminants such as arsenic from groundwater.

According to IISc, the three-step method, which is patent-pending, also ensures that the removed heavy metals are disposed of in an environment-friendly and sustainable manner, instead of sending untreated heavy metal-rich sludge to landfills from where they can potentially re-enter groundwater.

“In every technology that exists, you can take



**Polluting groundwater:** Heavy metal contaminants can significantly affect human and animal health. FILE PHOTO

out arsenic and provide clean water. However, after you remove the arsenic, you must do something about it so that it doesn't re-enter the environment, and that aspect is not given due consideration in the existing methods. Our pro-

cess was designed to solve this problem,” said Yagnaseni Roy, assistant professor at the Centre for Sustainable Technologies, whose lab has developed the method.

IISc said that according to reports, 113 districts in 21

States in India have arsenic levels above 0.01 mg per litre while 223 districts in 23 States have fluoride levels above 1.5 mg per litre, which are beyond the permissible limits set by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the World Health Organisation.

These contaminants can significantly affect human and animal health, necessitating their efficient removal and safe disposal.

The researchers have been working with the IN-REM Foundation and Earthwatch, both NGOs, to deploy and test these systems in rural areas such as Bhagalpur in Bihar and Chickballapur in Karnataka.

# *UN declares 2025 the Year of Quantum Science*

## **The Hindu Bureau**

The United Nations has said 2025 will be designated the 'International Year of Quantum Science and Technology'. In a statement, the body said the initiative will be "year-long", "worldwide", and that it will "be observed through activities at all levels aimed at increasing public awareness of the importance of quantum science and applications."

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