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ANALYSIS

Topics

1. India needs innovative strategies to eliminate TB – Pg 6
2. Rubio fails to win India back for Washington – Pg 6
3. Incomplete truce – Pg 6 → GS II
4. GDP growth estimated at 7.7% in 2025-26 – Pg 1
5. MPC retains repo rate, lowers growth forecast – Pg 13
6. OIL reports natural gas in Andaman offshore block – Pg 13

PIB

1. Second BRICS culture working group in Varanasi
2. Panchayat advancement Index

→ GS III

→ GS II

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India needs innovative strategies to eliminate TB

→ Gs III

More than a century after the first tuberculosis vaccine was introduced, the world is struggling to control one of its oldest diseases. Tuberculosis (TB) continues to kill more people annually than any other infectious disease, surpassing even the COVID-19 pandemic at its peak. Yet, there is still no effective vaccine for adolescents and adults.

Once exposed to *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, individuals may get infected and remain asymptomatic for years. Others develop subclinical disease, showing minimal or no symptoms while harbouring infection. A subset progresses to active TB, which may manifest as pulmonary TB (PTB) – the infectious form that drives transmission – or as extrapulmonary TB (EPTB), which affects organs beyond the lungs and is harder to diagnose, more debilitating, and sometimes fatal.

No one-size-fits-all vaccine

With such diversity in disease pathways, expecting a single “one-shot” vaccine to prevent all forms of TB may be unrealistic. This expectation has shaped global disappointment in TB vaccine development especially since most previous trials have focused primarily on preventing pulmonary TB.

Meanwhile, the burden remains immense. In many low- and middle-income countries, TB incidence ranges between 200 and 300 per 100,000 population. Reducing this to 10-20 per 100,000 – the threshold for elimination – will require sustained effort and enormous public health investment. For India, which carries one of the world's highest TB burdens, the challenge is systemic.

India's goal of eliminating TB is ambitious and necessary. But achieving it will require a holistic approach towards all forms of disease and all age groups moving beyond the search for a perfect solution and embracing a layered, pragmatic approach. As tools are discovered and tested, decisions will need to be made on their deployment.

The first layer is better detection. Advances in diagnostics, including tools for identifying subclinical TB, can help identify individuals at risk earlier. The second is preventive therapy, ensuring that those with latent infection receive treatment before progressing to active disease. The third – arguably the most complex – is vaccination. However, access to diagnostics and preventive therapy remains uneven, making vaccination an especially critical pillar.

Recent findings from the BMJ-published PreVenTB trial conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) provide such an opportunity. Conducted across 18 sites in India and involving more than 12,700 household contacts of TB patients, the trial evaluated VPM1002 developed by SIIPL and Immuvac developed by Cadila, in a real-world, high-risk population aged six years and above, including



Balram Bhargava

Former Director-General, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)



Soumya Swaminathan

Former Chief Scientist of the World Health Organization (WHO)

New Indian vaccine trial data show meaningful protection against extrapulmonary TB, underscoring the need for targeted vaccination alongside stronger public health strategies

individuals with comorbidities and varying infection status closely reflecting real life conditions.

The trial reported efficacy of VPM1002 and Immuvac as: 50.4% efficacy of VPM1002 against extrapulmonary TB (statistically significant); 64.6% efficacy of VPM1002 in children aged 6-14 years against all TB (PTB and EPTB); More than 60% efficacy of Immuvac against EPTB in children aged 6-10 years; more than 60% efficacy against progression to disease among those developing latent infection during follow-up and overall 21.4% efficacy of VPM1002 against all TB (Reference: Subho Sarkar, Consultant Intervention Pulmonologist; from *LinkedIn*). These are not trivial findings.

Extrapulmonary TB is the hidden burden of the epidemic, harder to diagnose, frequently missed, and associated with significant morbidity and mortality. A reduction of over 50% in such cases represents a meaningful clinical and public health impact, including reduced health-care costs and patient suffering.

The data also highlight a strong signal in school-age children and adolescents, where efficacy exceeded 60% which is an add-on benefit of vaccination in this age group. This is particularly relevant because India currently has no structured TB vaccination strategy beyond infancy. If confirmed, this could open the door to a booster-dose TB prevention strategy.

Need for nutritional support

Another important piece of evidence generated from study is the role of nutrition. Reduced efficacy was observed in individuals with low body mass index (BMI), underscoring the need for nutritional support for vaccines to work optimally in undernourished in context of broader health determinants.

From a programmatic standpoint, VPM1002 offers additional advantages. It is a single-dose vaccine based on a modified BCG platform, making it operationally simpler than multi-dose, adjuvanted vaccines in development. In a country of India's scale, logistical simplicity is a decisive advantage. The vaccine can be manufactured at large scale and cost effectively.

TB is largely a disease of low and middle income countries (LMIC) and their governments must act proactively. Waiting for expansive solutions developed elsewhere is neither practical nor sustainable. LMICs cannot afford to wait for a silver bullet, because there is no one-stop solution for TB, especially when there are results from a Phase III trial conducted in an Indian population across all age groups (six years and above) and against all forms of TB, including PTB and EPTB. It is to be noted that no other TB vaccine trial till date has studied efficacy against EPTB and none of the currently ongoing trials worldwide has included EPTB as the efficacy end-point.

India has navigated similar public health

decisions before. TrueNat was the first ‘make in India’ Molecular test approved and adopted by the National TB Elimination Programme before its World Health Organization pre-qualification study.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin was initially approved in “clinical trial mode” to enable early access while additional data continued to accumulate. That decision was driven not by perfection, but by urgency and it helped accelerate protection at a critical time.

India has also demonstrated this approach with indigenous rotavirus vaccines, which were introduced despite modest efficacy and wide confidence intervals. Since then, they have helped reduce severe disease and child mortality and have been incorporated into the national immunisation programme (Bhandari *et al.*, *The Lancet*, 2014).

A smarter TB strategy

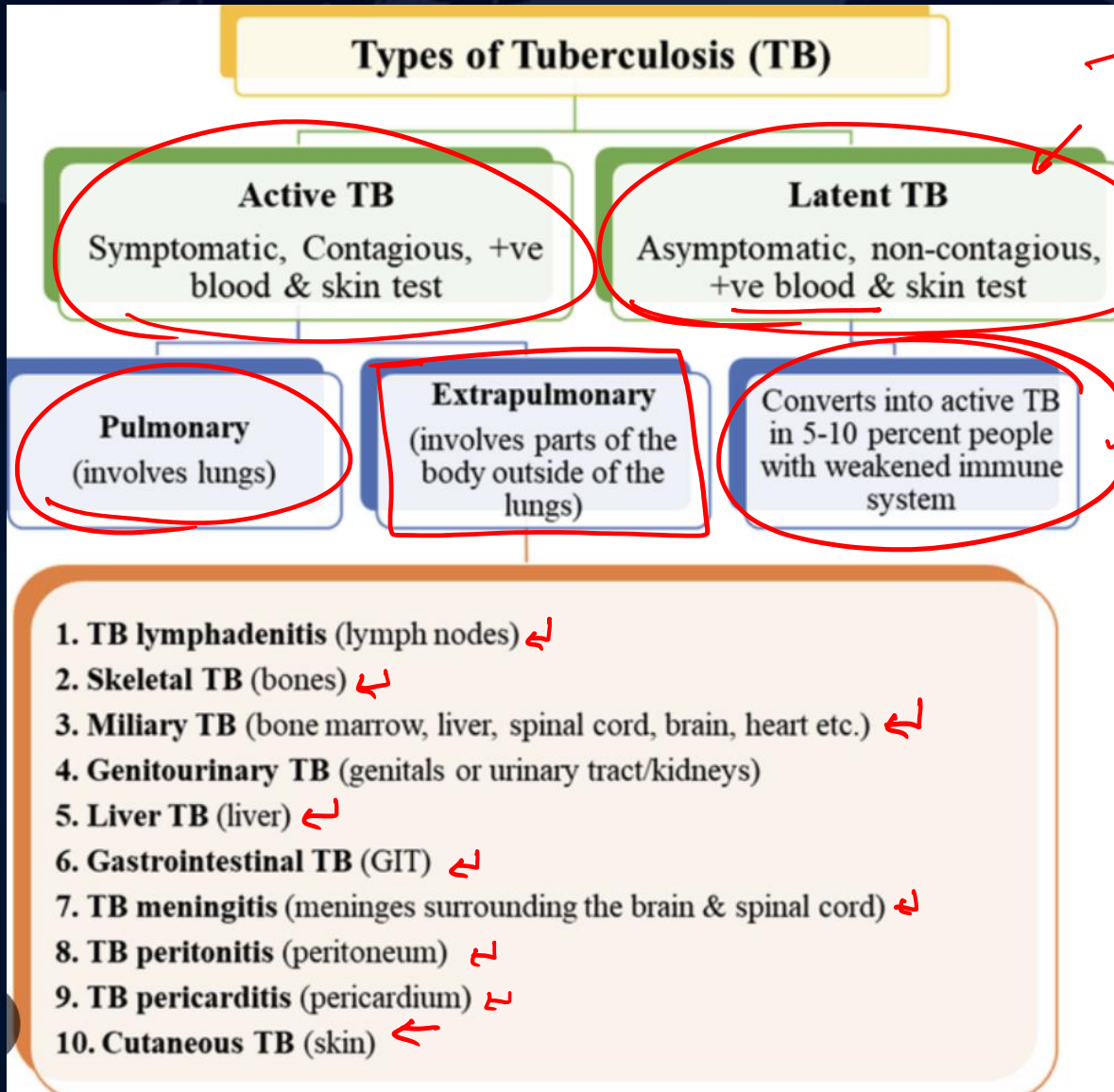
TB is, in many ways, a slow-moving pandemic. Yet, it has not always been met with the same urgency in policy action. The policy question, therefore, is how innovations, including moderately effective vaccines such as VPM1002 and Immuvac, can be intelligently integrated into the TB elimination programme. Targeted use among household contacts, deployment in school-age children, and alignment with nutrition and preventive therapy programmes could together lead to a form a more effective TB control framework. A combination of vaccines effective across different indications and age groups may be needed to have an impact.

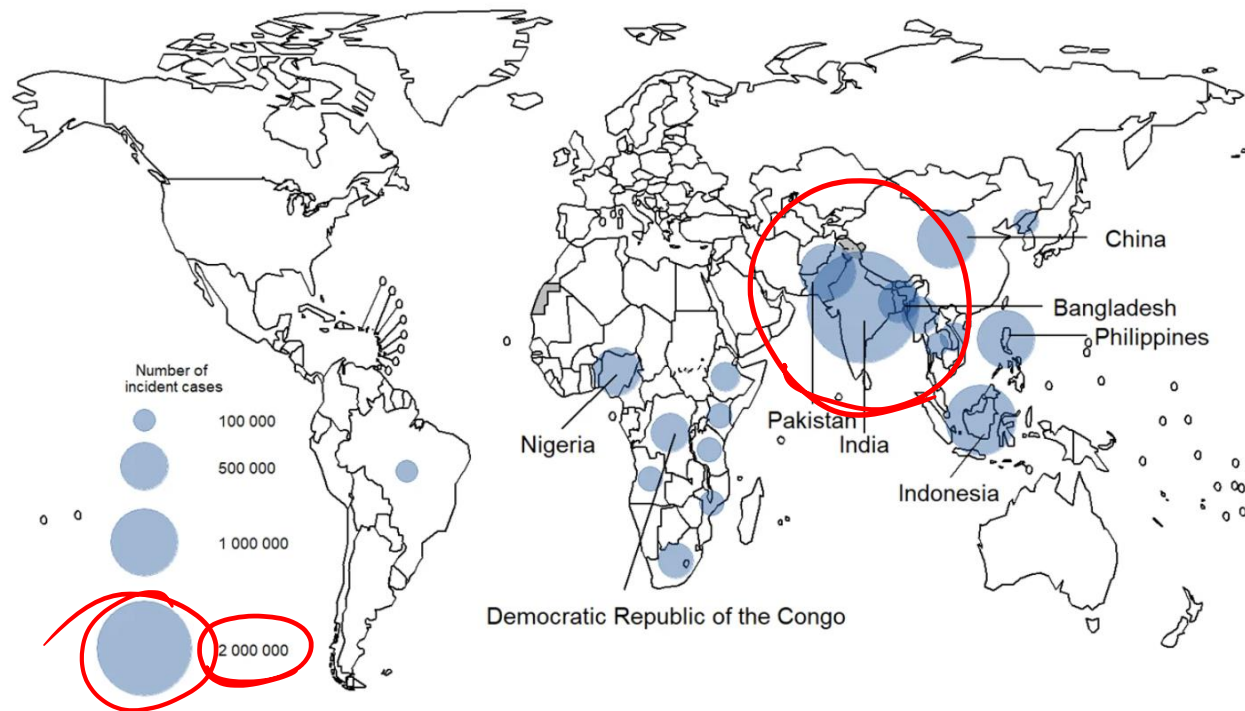
India's TB challenge is unlikely to be solved by a single breakthrough. It will require a combination of early detection, preventive treatment, targeted vaccination against both pulmonary and extrapulmonary TB, case-based clinical management, nutritional supplementation, and sustained public health investment.

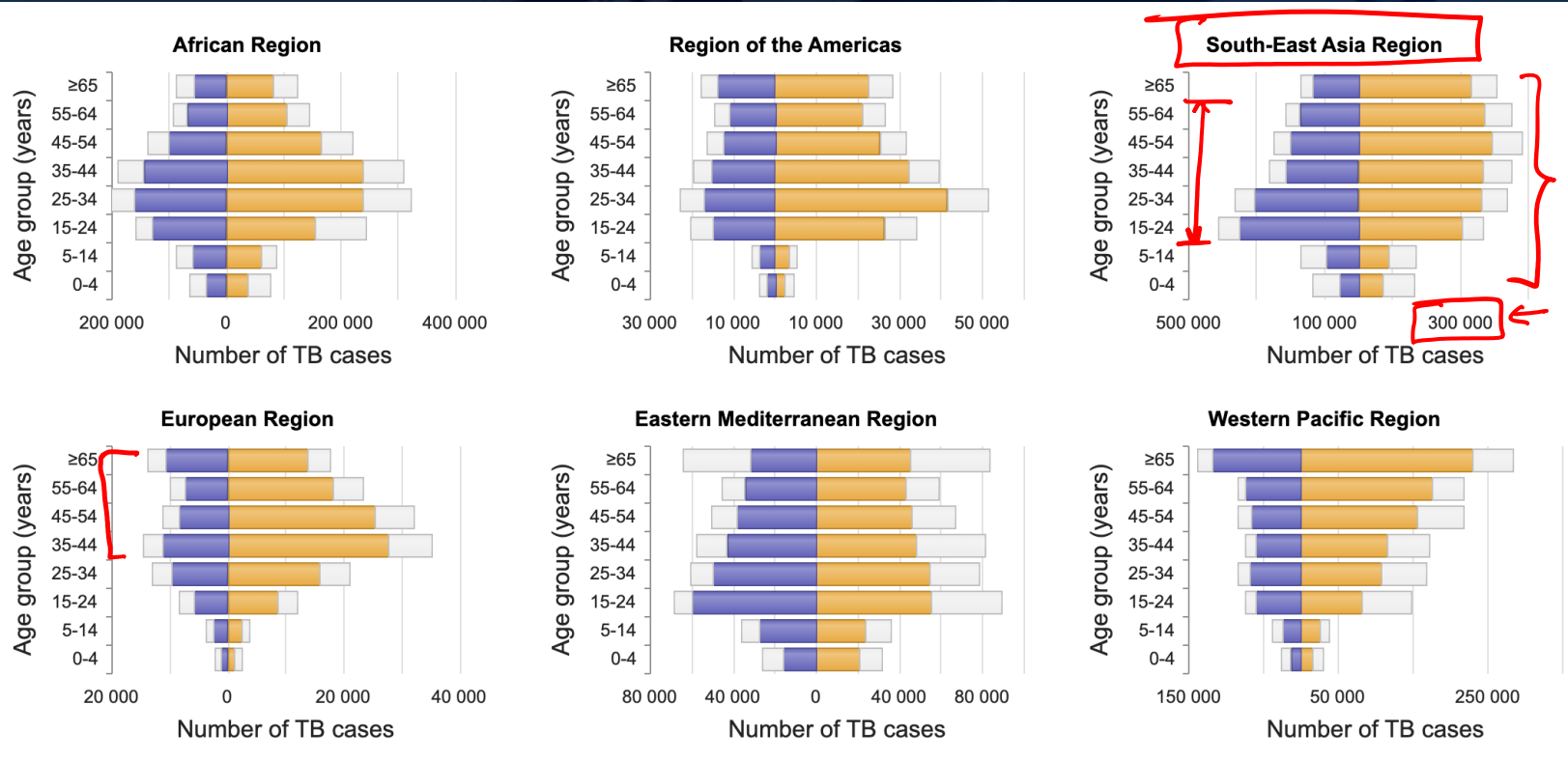
Waiting for a perfect vaccine may delay progress indefinitely, especially when no trial other than the PreVenTB trial has evaluated vaccine efficacy against both pulmonary and extrapulmonary TB in individuals aged six years and above. In contrast, deploying tools that reduce severe disease, particularly EPTB, can deliver immediate and tangible benefits.

The PreVenTB trial is comprehensive, well-designed and well conducted, offering a meaningful signal – perhaps a light at the end of the tunnel in TB vaccine development. Given the urgency of the challenge and the limited time to act, we must focus on solutions that are available today and supported by robust evidence of efficacy against both PTB and EPTB in individuals aged six years and above under real-world conditions, rather than wait indefinitely in the hope that better options may emerge in the future – an outcome that is far from certain.

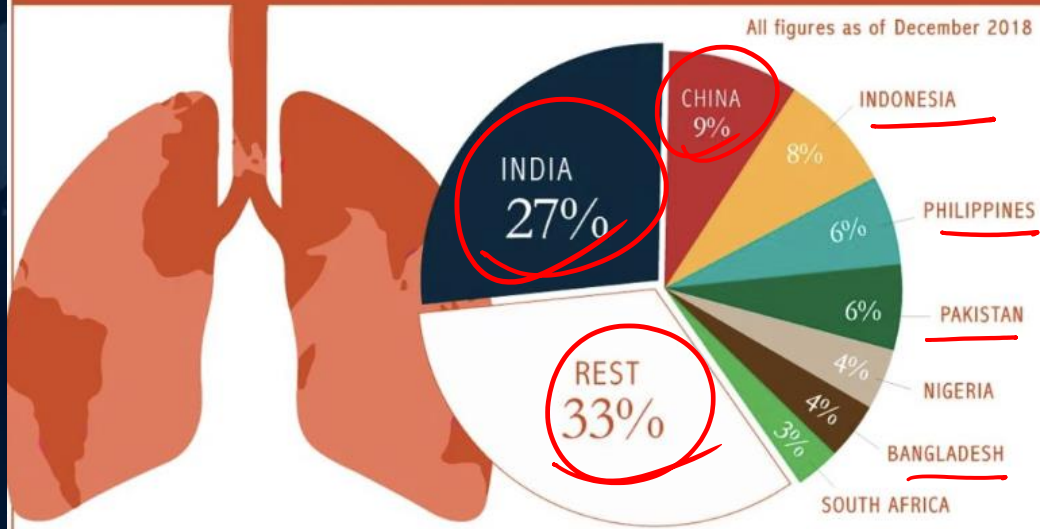
Prelims







INDIA HAS LARGEST NUMBER OF TUBERCULOSIS PATIENTS IN THE WORLD



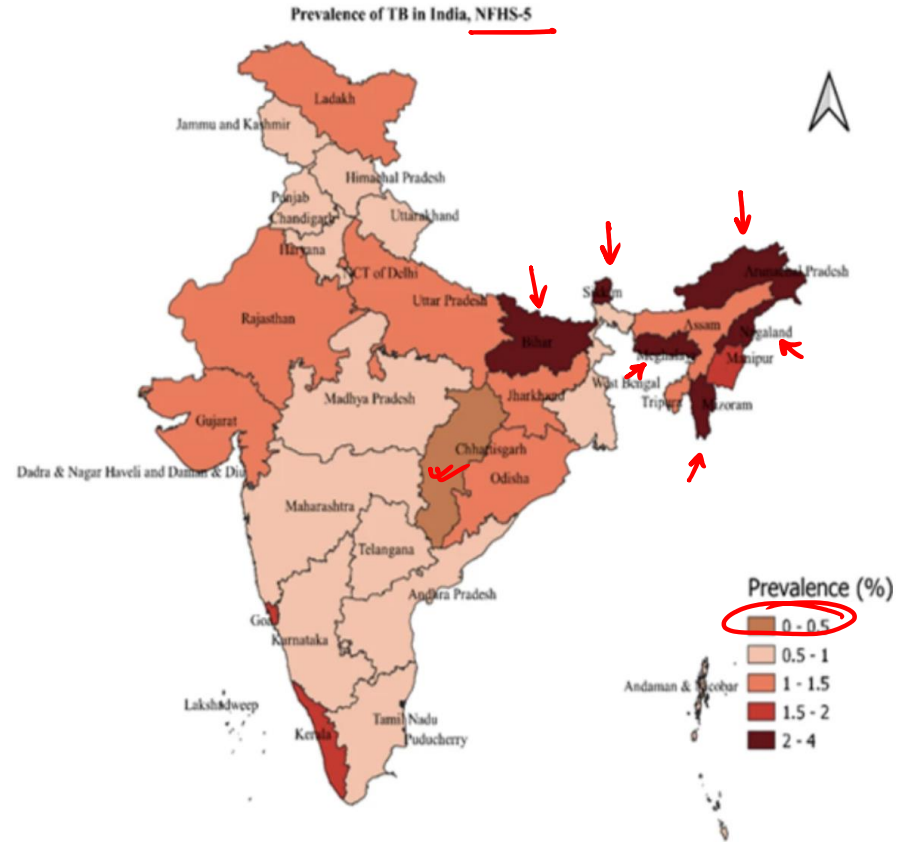
TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD SUFFERING FROM TUBERCULOSIS: **1 crore**

TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN INDIA SUFFERING FROM TUBERCULOSIS: **26.9 lakh**

DEATHS DUE TO TUBERCULOSIS FELL FROM **1.6 million** IN 2017 TO **1.5 million** IN 2018

Source: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

ThePrint



Recap

- The disease is caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and can remain latent for years before becoming active.
- TB occurs in two major forms:
 - **Pulmonary TB (PTB)** – affects lungs and drives transmission.
 - **Extrapulmonary TB (EPTB)** – affects organs beyond the lungs, is harder to diagnose, and often causes severe morbidity.



Holistic approach needed

- ↳ **Early detection and diagnosis**, including identification of subclinical and latent TB.
- **Preventive therapy** to stop latent infections from progressing.
- **Vaccination**, which remains critical despite existing limitations.

Trials

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) conducted the PreVenTB trial across 18 sites.
- More than **12,700 household contacts** of TB patients were studied.

Two vaccine candidates were evaluated:

- **VPM1002**
 - 50.4% efficacy against extrapulmonary TB. ✓
 - 21.4% efficacy against all forms of TB.

↳ **Immuvac** ✓

- [64.6% efficacy against TB among children aged 6–14 years.]
- Over 60% efficacy against extrapulmonary TB in children aged 6–16 years.
- [More than 60% protection against progression to disease among those with latent infection.]

Socio – economic cost

TB

Role of Nutrition



Govt initiatives


↳ National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP)

- Formerly known as the [Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP)].
- Renamed in 2020 to emphasize the goal of TB elimination.
- Built around four pillars:
 - Prevent ✓
 - Detect ✓
 - Treat ✓
 - Build (institutional capacity and social support) ✓
- Provides free diagnosis and treatment across the country.



National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB Elimination (2017–2025)

- Framework guiding India's TB elimination efforts.
- Targets:
 - 80% reduction in TB incidence.
 - 90% reduction in TB mortality.
 - Elimination of catastrophic expenditure for TB-affected households.



Pradhan Mantri TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (PMTBMBA)

- Launched in 2022 to strengthen community participation.
- Encourages citizens, institutions, corporates, NGOs and elected representatives to support TB patients.
- Focuses on:
 - Nutritional support. ✓
 - Additional diagnostic support. ✓
 - Vocational and social assistance. ✓
- Operates through the **Ni-kshay Mitra** model.



Ni-kshay Mitra Initiative

- Community support programme under PM TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan.
- Individuals and organizations "adopt" TB patients.
- Support includes:
 - Food baskets.
 - Nutritional supplements.
 - Diagnostic assistance.
 - Vocational support.
- Enhances social and nutritional care beyond medical treatment.



Ni-kshay Digital Platform

- National digital TB surveillance and patient-management portal. ✓
- Tracks patients from diagnosis to treatment completion. ✓
- Facilitates:
 - Case notification. ✓
 - Treatment monitoring.
 - DBT transfers. ✓
 - Contact tracing. ✓
- Strengthens real-time monitoring and accountability.

Way Forward

- Early detection.
- Preventive treatment. ✓
- Targeted vaccination of high-risk groups. ✓
- Improved management of pulmonary and extrapulmonary TB.
- Nutritional interventions.
- Sustained public health investment.

screening & testing

Practice Question (10 marks)

20:20 rule

- What are the different types of TB which impact the population? Discuss the TB burden that the world faces and way forward for India.



Reason for massive spread in India.

Rubio fails to win India back for Washington

GS II (IR)

For nearly a year, strategic experts in India and the United States have warned that worsening bilateral ties could damage a partnership that former U.S. President Joe Biden called the most consequential of the 21st century. They argue that India remains central to America's Indo-Pacific strategy and indispensable to its competition with China in geopolitics, technology, and securing critical supply chains.

Warnings from think tanks, sense of betrayal

Think tanks have also been sounding the alarm. A March 2026 report by the Center for a New American Security, titled *Repairing the Breach: Getting U.S.-India Ties Back on Track*, said bilateral ties had "stumbled badly" in the second half of 2025. It cited U.S. President Donald Trump's claims about the May 2025 India-Pakistan ceasefire and his 50% tariffs on Indian exports as the key causes of the breach in trust, and recommended urgent steps to rebuild trust and deepen cooperation.

Similarly, the Hudson Institute's "New India Conference" underscored India's importance to U.S. interests and the Indo-Pacific balance of power. By featuring RSS General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale, it also signalled a willingness to engage Hindutva nationalists despite concerns over their treatment of religious minorities.

This anxiety is not confined to Washington's think tanks, but also in India too. During a visit to India in January 2026, discussions at academic and policy institutions, as well as engagements with experts, diplomats and Indian foreign policy scholars, pointed to a common concern: New Delhi had lost trust in Washington. The damage was seen as not merely diplomatic or transactional, but also strategic. Many Indian experts believed that even if both sides recognised the importance of the relationship, it would take a long time to repair the trust deficit.

Three indicators came to define the deterioration in relations. The first was the growing U.S.-Pakistan strategic partnership in the



Muqtedar Khan

Professor of International Relations at the University of Delaware, a Senior Non-Resident Fellow at the Middle East Policy Council and also host of a YouTube channel on global affairs called Khanversations

The U.S. Secretary of State's visit failed to bridge the widening U.S.-India divide

post-Operation Sindoor period. As India sought to isolate Pakistan internationally, Mr. Trump's repeated praise for Pakistani leaders and the country's role in mediating with Iran was widely seen in India as a betrayal.

The second indicator was trade. The 50% tariffs levied on India – among the highest imposed on any country – came as a shock to New Delhi. The 25% tariff penalty on India, imposed specifically for buying Russian oil, further reinforced the perception that India was being singled out and punished for no apparent reason. The third indicator was the neglect of the Quad (Australia, India, Japan and the U.S.). The absence of head-of-state summits, combined with the lack of visible enthusiasm around the Quad meetings, suggested that one of the central pillars of America's Indo-Pacific strategy had been downgraded. The Quad, and therefore India, were clearly less important to Mr. Trump's plans which now appear to be more focused on carving a more productive partnership with China.

The Rubio visit and after

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's visit to India (May 23-26, 2026) gave him a clear opportunity to address all three parameters. Unfortunately, there was hardly any progress on the pending trade deal. On top of that, Mr. Rubio essentially gaslit India by asserting in a tweet that India had committed to buying \$500 billion worth of American products over the next five years – a claim that Indian officials had disputed. The Quad Foreign Ministers' summit produced no major breakthrough and no clear announcement about when the heads of state would meet. Finally, when given an opportunity by the Indian press to criticise Pakistan for cross-border terrorism, Mr. Rubio instead chose to praise Pakistan's role in the Iran crisis.

He failed to take positions that would have reassured India that he had come to repair the relationship. Instead, the message he sent was that "America First" would be the only criterion determining U.S. choices, not any desire to repair

the U.S.-India strategic partnership.

The symbolism after Mr. Rubio's return to Washington only reinforced this conclusion. Just hours later, he participated in a public Cabinet meeting. When Mr. Trump asked him about Iran, Mr. Rubio spoke about Iran, Ebola, Cuba, Venezuela, and even his stopover in Armenia, which he described as highly successful. But he did not mention India, his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, or the Quad meeting. Mr. Trump did not ask about India either. This amnesia is astonishing – coming just hours after a visit to one of America's most important strategic partners. Nor did Mr. Trump use his social media platforms to highlight the Quad or stress the importance of repairing U.S.-India relations.

It is precisely such indicators that make policymakers in New Delhi nervous. They signal that India's strategic significance has diminished in Washington's eyes.

A partnership that still matters

There remain many strategic reasons for the U.S. and India to work together: keeping the Indo-Pacific open, sustaining a partnership between major democracies in an era of rising authoritarianism, and collaborating on technological innovation, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, defence, and energy security. These shared interests have not disappeared and may well bring the two countries back toward closer cooperation. But for now, India and the U.S. are not as closely aligned as they were a year and a half ago.

If Mr. Rubio's goal was to repair the perceived damage done to India-U.S. relations since Mr. Trump's election in 2024, he clearly failed. But if his mission was to reinforce that American foreign policy will be driven by whatever Mr. Trump defines as "America First" on any given day, then perhaps he succeeded – making clear that American national interests are now shaped less by careful strategic thinking and more by the unpredictable thought process of President Trump.

Reasons

Operation Sindoor

&
Pakistan

Trade

50% Tariff

Downgrade of QUAD

Indo-Pacific

Importance of the relationship

Remittances

\$130bn

→ Diaspora

→ Tech sharing → AI → skilled professionals.

→ Democracies

→ Belief in peaceful world order

→ Space Research

→ Oceanic Research

→ Defence.

Incomplete truce

Israel has to pull back troops from Lebanon for peace to take hold

The new ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon could help remove a major obstacle to U.S. President Donald Trump's efforts to secure a preliminary agreement with Iran to end the war. Last week, Iran suspended talks with the U.S. in protest against Israel's escalating war in Lebanon. In April, when Mr. Trump announced an Israel-Lebanon ceasefire, he had said that Israel was "prevented" from attacking the country any longer. But Tel Aviv continued air strikes and expanded ground operations in southern Lebanon. Iran has maintained that in its April 8 ceasefire with the U.S., Washington had promised that the ceasefire would come into force on all fronts, including Lebanon. Now, after Iran paused talks with the U.S., Mr. Trump swung into action. He claimed that he had talked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu out of his plans to bomb Beirut and had a conversation with Hezbollah's representatives, who agreed "not to shoot". The Israel-Lebanon ceasefire statement followed Mr. Trump's announcement. Mr. Trump's firm diplomatic intervention, which reportedly included an expletive-laden call with Mr. Netanyahu, points to the importance he gives to the diplomatic process. Before the Lebanon crisis flared up, the U.S. and Iran were negotiating a memorandum of understanding to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and remove the U.S. blockade of Iranian ports, which would set the stage for negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme.

While the ceasefire agreement is welcome, it remains fragile and incomplete, leaving the conflict's key problems unaddressed. The actual fighting in Lebanon is between Israel and Hezbollah. The Lebanese government is not a party to the conflict and Hezbollah does not report to the Lebanese army. But Hezbollah was not part of the negotiations. The ceasefire agreement requires Hezbollah to unilaterally cease attacks, but it does not ask Israel to make concessions. Hezbollah says it would stop fighting only if Israel withdraws from southern Lebanon. Israel, which has made its deepest incursions into southern Lebanon since its 2000 withdrawal, is not talking about any withdrawal plan. Israel has also broken all its ceasefire agreements in recent years. Despite a truce deal, it continues to bomb Gaza. Mr. Trump's announcement of a new ceasefire despite an existing one highlights the fragility of the truce. What he is trying to do is to bring in a stop-gap arrangement in Lebanon to push his planned deal with Iran. But for this to work, he should get firm commitments from Israel that it would not break the terms. For a lasting truce in Lebanon, Israel has to end its illegal occupation of the south and pull back its troops.

'It's not your job to interfere in our country', Lebanon leader tells Iran

Tehran insists the fighting in Lebanon and the war in the Gulf are linked; Aoun urges Hezbollah to pursue diplomacy with Israel, stating that negotiation and dialogue are the only ways to resolve the conflict; six killed as Israel hits south Lebanon

Agence France-Presse
GENEVA

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun urged Iran not to interfere in his country in an interview broadcast on Friday, also telling the Tehran-backed Hezbollah that diplomacy was the only solution to the conflict with Israel.

"It's not your country, it's our country. It's not your job to interfere into our country," Mr. Aoun said in the interview with CNN, addressing Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

"They are using Lebanon as a bargaining chip in their negotiation with the



Reclaiming space UN peacekeepers and Lebanese soldiers at a road in Dibliss village in southeast Lebanon on Friday. AP

United States. It's unacceptable," he said.

Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the West Asia war with rocket fire at Israel on March 2 to avenge the killing days earlier of Iran's Supreme Leader in U.S.-backed strikes. Israel responded with massive strikes and a ground invasion.

On Wednesday, Lebanese and Israeli envoys in Washington agreed to a truce which according to a statement is conditional on a "complete cessation" of Hezbollah fire, without mentioning a halt to Israeli attacks.

Tehran insists the fighting in Lebanon and the war in the Gulf are linked, and on Thursday the head of the Guards' foreign arm said Israel must pull back from its front lines in Lebanon.

"Hezbollah must understand that [there is] no other way but to sit and talk, no other way to solve this problem and to save what's left except through negotiation and diplomacy," Mr.

Aoun added.

"It's the Lebanese people, they are not Naim Qassem's people," he said, referring to the Hezbollah chief, who on Thursday rejected the truce deal.

"The majority of the Lebanese people are fed up with war," the President added.

Meanwhile, Israel's air force struck different parts of southern Lebanon and killed six persons as the military issued evacuation warnings for nine villages, including one that has been spared much of the destruction and was sheltering thousands of people displaced by the three-month war.

Lebanon have faced an appalling situation due to the escalation of hostilities," Imran Riza, the UN's resident humanitarian coordinator for Lebanon as the country reels from Israel's war against Iran-backed Hezbollah, saying nearly \$640 million was needed over six months.

Three months into the war, the United Nations warned that a "humanitarian catastrophe" was looming in Lebanon, with a quarter of its population needing aid.

"Communities across

UN doubles appeal for Lebanon aid to \$640 mn amid war

Agence France-Presse
GENEVA

The UN on Friday more than doubled its appeal for Lebanon as the country reels from Israel's war against Iran-backed Hezbollah, saying nearly \$640 million was needed over six months.

Three months into the war, the United Nations warned that a "humanitarian catastrophe" was looming in Lebanon, with a quarter of its population needing aid.

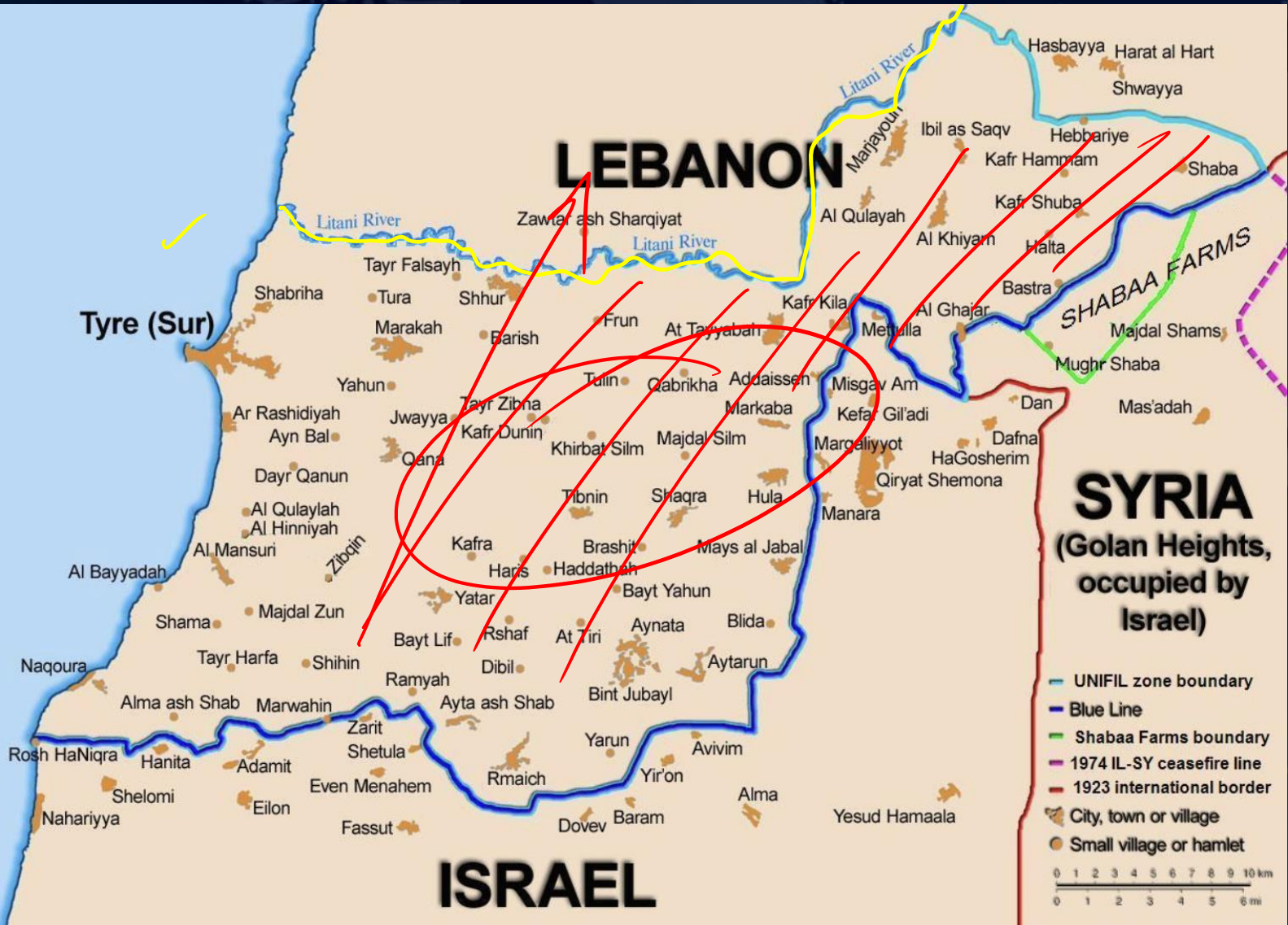
"Communities across

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"Communities across





What is the Blue Line?

1 On **25 May 2000** Israel unilaterally withdrew from Lebanon in compliance with **United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 (1978)**.

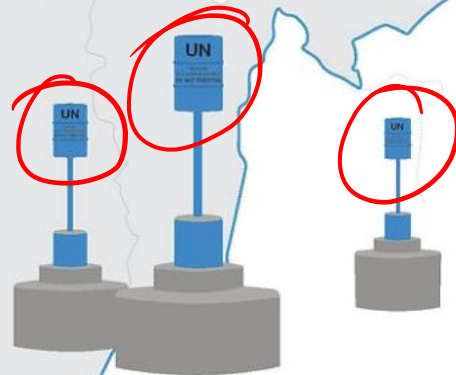
2 In **the absence** of an **agreed border**, the **UN** identified a **120 km Line of Withdrawal** to **confirm** the Israeli withdrawal.

3 This **Line of Withdrawal** is more commonly known as the **Blue Line**.

4 The **Blue Line** is **NOT a border** between Lebanon and Israel nor is it **intended to be one**. It is without any prejudice to future border agreements between the states.

5 In **2007** both parties agreed to a UNIFIL proposal to **visibly mark** the **Line of Withdrawal (Blue Line)** on the ground.

6 The **Blue Line Barrels (markers)** act as a **reference** and also **directly contribute to the safety & security of the people** by **preventing inadvertent crossing**.



GDP growth estimated at 7.7% in 2025-26: govt.

Provisional estimates are slightly higher than the 7.6% growth projected in February; growth in Q4 stands at 7.8%; PM Modi says the figures show the success of reforms and the hard work of Indians

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The growth in India's gross domestic product (GDP) has been estimated at 7.7% in 2025-26, according to data released by the government on Friday, compared with 7.1% in the previous financial year of 2024-25. GDP growth in the fourth quarter of 2025-26 stood at 7.8%.

According to the data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the provisional estimates of GDP growth in 2025-26 are slightly higher than the 7.6% growth estimated in February 2026.

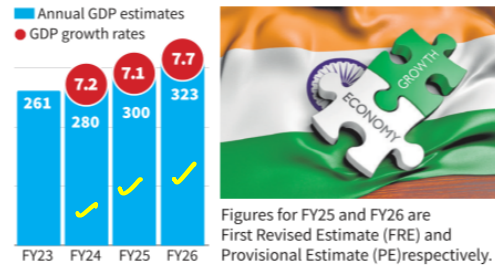
The data comes at a time when Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra, while announcing the Monetary Policy Committee's decisions, said that GDP growth for 2026-27 was expected to slow to 6.6%.

'Fair estimates'

In the press conference on the GDP data, Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran said that the RBI's assessment on growth and inflation "seems fair estimates" and that he didn't see the need to second-guess them. "GDP growth rate of

Stronger estimate

India's GDP is estimated to grow by 7.7% in 2025-26, slightly faster than the 7.6% estimated in February 2026. In the chart below, the bars show annual GDP estimates (in ₹ lakh crore) and the circles indicate growth rates at constant prices (in %).



7.7% in FY 2025-26 and 7.8% in Q4 of FY 2025-26 reflect the inherent strength of our economy, the success of reforms and the hard work of 140 crore Indians," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on X following the data release. "We shall leave no stone unturned to further 'Ease of Living,' 'Ease of Doing Business' and increase opportunities for our youth."

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, on X, emphasised that manufacturing, trade, repair, hotels, transport, communication & services related to broadcasting, storage and financial, real estate and professional services sectors hit double-digit growth at both constant and current prices in 2025-26.

Growth in 2026-27 is expected to slow due to the pressure on demand and the price levels exerted by the crisis in West Asia, economists say

Earlier this year, the government also updated the base year of the GDP data to 2022-23 and improved its methodology.

The data shows that the manufacturing sector is estimated to have grown at 10.7% in 2025-26 as compared to 9.3% in the first revised estimates for 2024-25. However, in Q4 of 2025-26, the sector grew at 7.3%, as opposed to 11.8% in the same quarter of the previous year.

The "trade, repair, hotels, transport, communication & services related to broadcasting and storage" sector similarly saw its growth estimate quicken to 11% in 2025-26 from 6.6% in 2024-25. In Q4, the sector accelerated to 12.4% from 6.3% in Q4 of 2024-25.

The agriculture sector, however, is expected to see growth slowing to 3% in 2025-26 from 4.2% in the previous year, with growth in Q4 slowing to 3.6% from 3.8% in the fourth quarter of 2024-25.

Notably, the data also shows that the growth of private final consumption expenditure (PFCE) is estimated to have quickened to 7.7% in 2025-26 from 5.8% in the previous year.

Asset creation and investment, in the form of gross fixed capital formation (GFCF), is also estimated to have grown 8.2% in 2025-26 from 6.4% in 2024-25.

Looking ahead, economists across the board, however, have warned that growth in 2026-27 could slow due to the pressure on demand and price levels being exerted by the crisis in West Asia, as well as the possibility of a lower-than-normal monsoon.

7.6%

Key excerpts

Manufacturing – Major Growth Driver

- Manufacturing sector growth:
 - 10.7% in FY26 ←
 - Up from 9.3% in FY25
- However, growth slowed in Q4:
 - 7.3% in Q4 FY26
 - Compared with 11.8% in Q4 FY25



Trade, Hotels, Transport and Communication

- Sector growth accelerated sharply:

- **11.0% in FY26**

- Up from 6.6% in FY25

- Q4 growth:

- **12.4%**

- Up from 6.3% a year earlier.



43-44%
(Rural growth) ↓

Agriculture

- Agriculture growth slowed:
 - • 3.0% in FY26
 - Down from 4.2% in FY25
- Q4 growth:
 - 3.6%
 - Down from 3.8% in the previous year.

Demand Side

Private Consumption

- Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) growth:
 - 7.7% in FY26
 - Up from 5.8% in FY25

Investment

- Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF):
 - 8.2% growth in FY26
 - Up from 6.4% in FY25

MPC retains repo rate, lowers growth forecast

Repo rate unchanged at 5.25%; real GDP growth projected at 6.6%, down by 0.3% from the earlier projection of 6.9% for FY27; CPI inflation projected to be at 5.1% 50 bps more than the earlier one

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

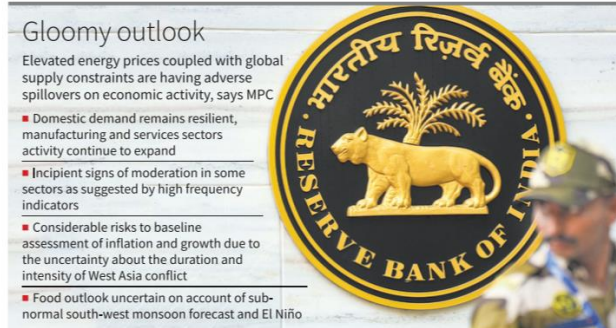
The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday voted unanimously to keep the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) unchanged at 5.25%. Consequently, the standing deposit facility (SDF) rate remains at 5% and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate at 5.50%.

The MPC also decided to continue with its neutral stance.

"The committee noted that the global environment has deteriorated since the last policy meeting with the conflict lingering amidst a fragile truce. The adverse implications of the extended disruption in supply chains and elevated energy prices are reflected in the moderation of growth and increase in inflation projections from the April policy," RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said in a statement.

Stating that CPI inflation remained below the target despite global shock as the pass through to domestic prices had been limited, he said baseline projections pointed towards headline inflation firming up towards the upper tolerance level in Q3 2026-27 and the impact of the supply shock would wane Q4 onwards.

"The underlying inflation pressures continue to remain benign at this juncture. However, generalisation of inflation through second-round effects on expectations and wages is a distinct possibility, warranting a close vigil. The outlook also remains clouded due to the sub-normal south-west monsoon forecast and El Niño risks," Mr. Malhotra said.



Central bank announces host of measures to attract foreign capital

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To attract foreign capital the RBI on Friday announced several measures. For government securities under the Fully Accessible Route (FAR), the RBI said it was expanding the universe of

'specified securities' by including all new issuances of 15, 30 and 40-year tenor G-secs.

Additionally, limits on short-term investments, concentration and individual securities on FPI investment under the General Route are being removed. "These

measures should help attract foreign capital for government borrowing," the RBI Governor said.

The RBI has also decided to increase the limits for investment by NRIs and OCLs in equity instruments traded on the stock market without SEBI registration.

As for growth, the MPC noted that elevated energy prices coupled with global supply constraints are having adverse spillovers on economic activity.

"While domestic demand remains resilient and manufacturing and services sectors activity continue to expand, there are incipient signs of moderation in some sectors as suggested by high frequency indicators," he stated.

He said the MPC was of the opinion that there were considerable risks to the baseline assessment of inflation and growth due to the uncertainty about the duration and intensity of the conflict, magnitude of its spillover effects, and the

pace of restoration of supply chains. "Additionally, the food outlook remains uncertain on account of the sub-normal south-west monsoon forecast and El Niño. Although risks of higher inflation have amplified, the MPC felt it would be prudent to wait for greater clarity to emerge," he said.

Stating that overall, the economic situation had broadly exhibited resilience and withstood the conflict spillovers, he said the impact of cost pressure was becoming visible.

"The rise in prices of energy and other inputs, coupled with supply disruptions, is likely to weigh on economic activity.

While import diversification in affected commodities is likely to improve supply, it would come at a higher cost," he said.

"The full impact, however, will depend on the duration of the conflict, time taken for normalisation of supply chains and the burden-sharing approach among the stakeholders," he added.

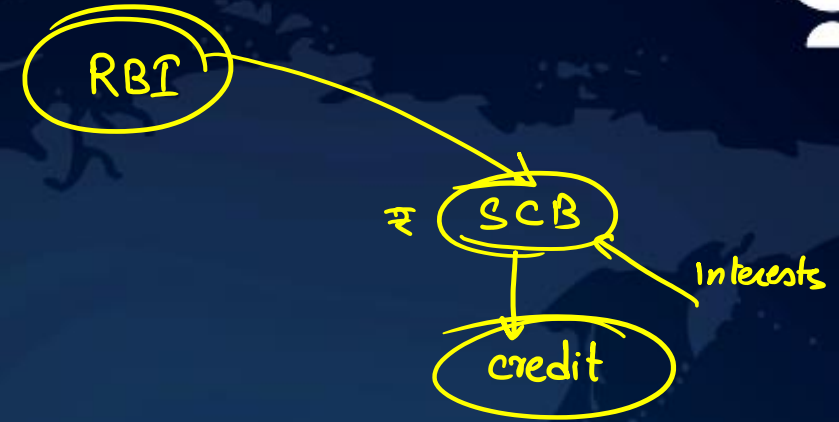
Real GDP growth for 2026-27 is projected at 6.6% down from earlier projection of 6.9% with Q1 at 6.6%; Q2 at 6.3%; Q3 at 6.5%; and Q4 at 6.8%.

CPI inflation for 2026-27 is projected to be at 5.1% which is 50 basis points more than the earlier projection.

MPC

- The Reserve Bank of India's six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) comprises **three internal RBI officials and three external experts appointed by the Central Government.**
- The committee sets benchmark interest rates like the repo rate and aims to maintain price stability.
- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of India was formally constituted by the Government of India on June 27, 2016, following amendments to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act, 1934.

MSF



- **Marginal standing facility (MSF)** is a window for banks to **borrow from the Reserve Bank of India** in an emergency when inter-bank liquidity dries up completely.
- The Marginal Standing facility allows banks to borrow money with an interest rate above the repo rate and can be termed as the Marginal standing facility rate.

Bank Rate

- The bank rate is the standard interest rate at which a **country's central bank (such as the Reserve Bank of India) lends money to commercial banks, typically on a long-term basis** without requiring collateral or security.
- It is a vital monetary policy tool used to control money supply, manage liquidity, and curb inflation.

SDF

Reverse Repo rate

→ govt. securities

- The Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) is a monetary policy tool used by central banks, like the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), **to absorb excess liquidity from the banking system.**
- Unlike traditional reverse repo operations, the **SDF allows banks to park their surplus funds directly with the central bank** without needing to provide government securities as collateral.

OIL reports natural gas in Andaman offshore block

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

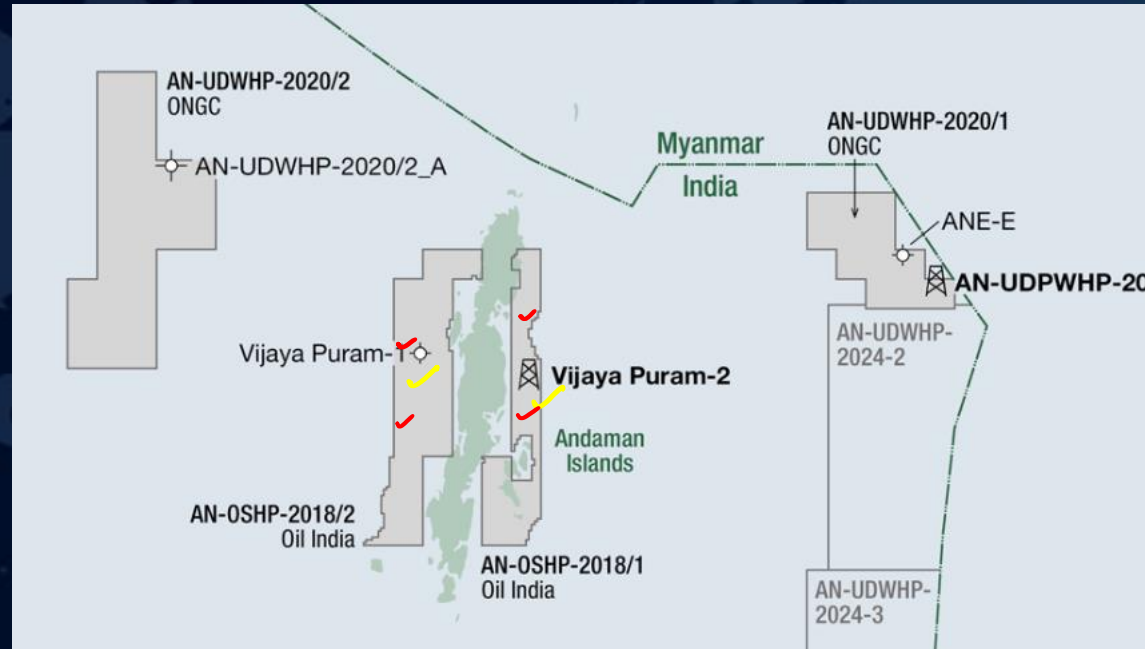
State-owned explorer-producer Oil India Ltd. (OIL) confirmed the presence of natural gas in the third exploratory well it drilled, that is, Vijayapuram-3, in the Andaman shallow offshore block.

With this, OIL has established hydrocarbon presence in two of the three exploratory wells it has drilled in the block so far. It had earlier reported the occurrence of natural gas in the second exploratory well September last year.

In a statement, the explorer-producer said, "Initial production testing of the well at the depth of 1,900 plus meter in the Eocene formation has established the presence of natural gas through continuous flaring," adding, "Post perforation, immediate pressure build up was observed and well started to produce."

Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said, "presence of natural gas will help us take forward exploration ambitions in coordination with global deepwater exploration experts like Petrobras, TotalEnergies, BP India, Shell and ExxonMobil."

OIL said it already started the appraisal programme for the second exploratory well.



Eocene period
→ 40 - 54 mya



Pib

Second BRICS Culture Working Group Meeting Concludes in Varanasi with Renewed Commitment to Cultural Cooperation

BRICS Nations Strengthen Cultural Partnerships Through Dialogue on Heritage, Cooperation and Sustainable Development

Posted On: 05 JUN 2026 9:22PM by PIB Delhi

Today, the second day of the 2nd BRICS Culture Working Group's Meeting commenced with opening remarks by Dr. Arvind Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India. The deliberations continued the substantive discussions initiated on the first day, reflecting the shared commitment of BRICS Member States towards strengthening cultural cooperation and advancing common priorities in the cultural sector.



The first panel discussion, titled *“Institutional Strategies for Cultural Heritage Protection and Return of Cultural Property”* and moderated by Prof. Ramesh C. Gaur, Dean, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), provided a platform for Member States to exchange experiences and best practices concerning the protection, preservation, and restitution of cultural property. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to enhanced cooperation in addressing challenges associated with the return of cultural property and underscored the importance of heritage protection as a shared responsibility. Discussions highlighted the role of cultural heritage in fostering identity, safeguarding community rights, and strengthening intercultural understanding.

The subsequent panel, *“Collaborative Approaches for Safeguarding Shared Heritage: Joint Nominations under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the Memory of the World Programme”*, moderated by Dr. Arvind Kumar, explored opportunities for collaborative nominations among BRICS countries. Delegates discussed the potential of joint nominations as a means to promote the safeguarding, recognition, and transmission of shared intangible and tangible cultural heritage, while further strengthening international cooperation within the BRICS framework.

The final panel of the day, *“Culture as a Driver of Sustainable Development: Post-2030 Agenda”* moderated by Smt. Amrita Sarbhai, Additional Secretary, Government of India, examined the growing recognition of culture as an enabler and catalyst of sustainable development. The discussion highlighted the interlinkages between culture, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, economic resilience, and community well-being, while exploring pathways for integrating cultural dimensions into the emerging global development discourse beyond 2030.

Panchayat Advancement Index Wins Gold Recognition at National e-Governance Awards 2026

Posted On: 05 JUN 2026 5:43PM by PIB Delhi

The Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI), a flagship data-driven governance initiative of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, has been selected for the Gold Award at the National Awards for e-Governance 2026 under Category VII – Digital Transformation through the Use of Data Analytics in Digital Platforms by Central Ministries, States and Union Territories. The award will be presented during the 29th National Conference on e-Governance, which will be held on 1–2 July 2026 in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The Conference is being jointly organised by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in association with the Government of Rajasthan. The theme of this year’s Conference, “Viksit Bharat 2047: AI-Enabled, Data-Driven and Secure Digital Governance,” reflects the Government’s commitment to leveraging emerging technologies, data-driven decision-making and robust cybersecurity frameworks to deliver efficient, secure and citizen-centric public services.

The National Awards for e-Governance are conferred annually to recognise and promote excellence in the implementation of e-Governance initiatives across the country. In 2026, a total of 17 projects and initiatives have been selected for recognition across seven award categories. The Gold Award comprises a trophy, a citation, and a cash incentive of ₹10 lakh for further strengthening the initiative and advancing public welfare outcomes.

About Panchayat Advancement Index

The Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) is India’s first comprehensive, data-driven framework for assessing and ranking the performance of Gram Panchayats across the nine themes of the Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs). PAI 2.0, the latest and significantly strengthened version of the Index, assesses more than 2.6 lakh Gram Panchayats against 150 indicators and 230 data points. Based on their composite scores, Gram Panchayats are classified into five performance categories. For



Theme	Indicator Count	Total Data Points
Theme 1 - Poverty Free and Enhanced Livelihoods Panchayat	32	60
Theme 2 - Healthy Panchayat	21	42
Theme 3 - Child Friendly Panchayat	82	143
Theme 4 - Water Sufficient Panchayat	21	34
Theme 5 - Clean and Green Panchayat	33	58
Theme 6 - Self-sufficient Infrastructure in Panchayat	159	189
Theme 7 - Socially Just and Socially Secured Panchayat	62	100
Theme 8 - Panchayat with Good Governance	62	87
Theme 9 - Women Friendly Panchayat	44	81
Total	516	794

Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI)

Developed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, PAI serves as a robust tool for evidence-based planning, performance monitoring and incentivisation of Panchayati Raj Institutions, while promoting transparency and technology-driven governance at the grassroots level. PAI scores form the objective basis for the National Panchayat Awards. Based on their composite scores, Gram Panchayats are classified into **five performance categories** - Achiever (90 and above), Front Runner (75 to below 90), Performer (60 to below 75), Aspirant (40 to below 60), and Beginner (below 40) - enabling transparent benchmarking, healthy competition, and targeted developmental interventions at the grassroots level. PAI 2.0, the latest and substantially enhanced version of the Index, **evaluates over 2.6 lakh Gram Panchayats across 150 indicators and 230 data points**. It witnessed participation from 2,59,867 Gram Panchayats across 33 States and Union Territories, accounting for 97.3 per cent of all Gram Panchayats that submitted data. This marks a significant improvement over PAI 1.0, which recorded a participation rate of 80.79 per cent. Through the publicly accessible PAI portal (pai.gov.in), citizens can view the performance of their Gram Panchayat without any login requirement, enabling them to track local development outcomes and participate more meaningfully in the development journey of their Panchayat. The Index also serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, government departments, research institutions, development partners and civil society organisations. It supports States and Union Territories in prioritising developmental interventions, preparing Gram Panchayat Development Plans, and identifying high-performing Panchayats as models of best practices and learning hubs.

