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ANALYSIS

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Sarmad Sir

21 June | 11AM



Mukesh Sir

20 June | 7PM



What a 'super' El Niño might mean for India's monsoon

Setting the El Niño years since 1950 against IMD's long-period rainfall series shows that, of roughly two dozen such years, about 15 produced a below-normal monsoon and around 10 tipped into outright deficiency

Jacob Koshy

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) confirmed this month that an El Niño has formed in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, and placed the odds at about 63% that it will strengthen into a "very strong" – colloquially, a "super" – event by the northern winter. India's June rainfall, until the 16th, is roughly 35% below normal. The combination has revived a question that returns with every El Niño year: how reliably do the strongest of these events translate into a failed Indian monsoon?

An El Niño is the periodic warming of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific that tends to weaken the South Asian monsoon and whose potency is measured by how far sea-surface temperatures in a reference patch of the Pacific climb above their long-term average.

D.S. Pai, Chief Forecaster at the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Regional Meteorological Centre in Chennai, set out the gradations: a departure of 0.5°C is 'weak', 1.5°C is 'moderate', 1.5-2°C is 'strong', and anything beyond 2°C is 'very strong.' He added that some forecasts suggest the current event could approach a record of around 2.5°C.

The trade winds that normally drive warm surface water westward towards Asia weaken; the



Heat and rain
Several of India's worst droughts have been in El Niño years

- The NOAA has confirmed an El Niño has formed, with high odds of becoming a very strong event
- India's current rainfall deficit in June is mostly local and cannot reliably predict the entire season's final outcome
- Roughly 60% of El Niño years produce deficient rainfall, often leading to significant agricultural deficits
- The Indian Ocean Dipole sometimes counters El Niño, but this year it may be too weak to do so
- Delayed monsoon onset and dry spells are often more concerning than the total volume of rainfall
- Contemporary climate change makes modern El Niño events more intense than those recorded in the past

El Niño follows a consistent calendar, which bears directly on its monsoon impact. THE HINDU

eastern Pacific warms, which in turn slackens the winds further generating a feedback loop that amplifies the anomaly. Scientists note that a warmer baseline ocean, the result of long-term climate change, has raised the heat available to recent events, making them more intense than earlier ones.

In the long term however, such events remain rare. Only a handful, the instrumental record shows, have crossed the 2° threshold – 1972-73, 1982-83, 1997-98 and 2015-16.

El Niño also follows a consistent calendar, which bears directly on its monsoon impact. "It starts in one spring season, peaks in the winter, and very fast it weakens in the next spring," Pai said, noting that an event very occa-

sionally persists into a second year. Because the warming establishes only in spring and matures later, he said, its suppressing effect on the monsoon is felt mainly in the middle and later part of the June-September season rather than at its start. June rainfall and the pace of onset, he added, are governed largely by local and regional factors – so a weak June, including the present 35% shortfall, is not by itself a reliable guide to the season.

The 1982-83 El Niño was associated with severe drought and bushfires in Australia and dry conditions across Indonesia. The 1997-98 event drove severe forest fires and choking haze across Indonesia and Southeast Asia, killed an estimated one-sixth of the

world's coral, and helped push global temperatures to a record. The 2015-16 episode triggered mass bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef, made 2016 the warmest year then recorded, and catalysed severe drought and food shortages across southern and eastern Africa.

Paradoxically, the 1997-98 El Niño actually brought 2% more rains than usual for India's summer monsoon months. This was due to an effect in the Indian Ocean, called the Indian Ocean Dipole, that brought in warm water pools, countering the Pacific-induced drying. Since then, forecasters have consistently watched for the Dipole's waxing and waning.

One of the reasons, IMD Director General, M. Mohapatra has said, for a

monsoon deficit this year is that the Dipole won't be strong enough to counter the Niño.

Setting the El Niño years since 1950 against IMD's long-period rainfall series shows that, of roughly two dozen such years, about 15 produced a below-normal monsoon and around 10 tipped into outright deficiency, i.e. seasonal rainfall below 90% of the long-period average. This correlation is strong enough to shape food and fiscal planning.

Several of India's worst droughts were in El Niño years, among them 1972, 1982, 2009, and 2015.

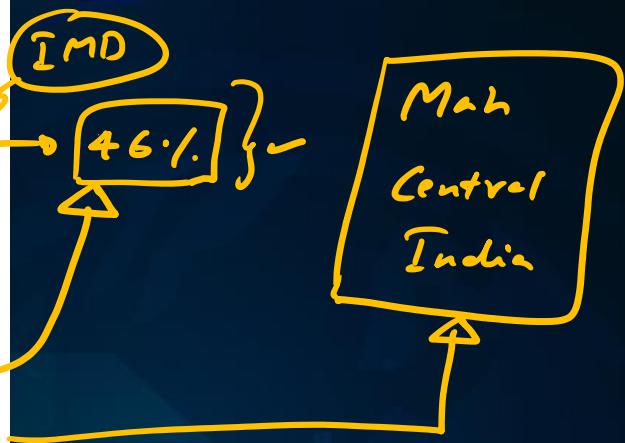
El Niño also redistributes the world's tropical cyclones rather than simply adding to them. NOAA's research arm notes that the warming generally suppresses Atlantic hurricane activity by strengthening vertical wind shear – the change in wind speed and direction with height that can tear a developing storm apart – while making conditions more favourable for hurricanes in the central and eastern Pacific. The effect tends to scale with the event's strength.

For the basins closer to Asia, the signal runs the other way: forecasters note that during an El Niño, the odds of a Pacific storm intensifying into a super typhoon rise appreciably, though such systems typically recede towards East Asia and the Americas rather than the Indian subcontinent.

→ Super El Niño → Indian Monsoons } ✓

IMD → LPA → 90% } ✓

The United States' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) confirmed this month that an **El Niño has formed in the equatorial Pacific**, and placed the odds at about **63%** that it will **strengthen into a "very strong"** — colloquially, a "super" — event by the northern winter. India's June rainfall, until 16th June, is roughly **35% below normal**. The combination has revived a question that returns with every El Niño year: how reliably do the strongest of these events translate into a failed Indian monsoon?



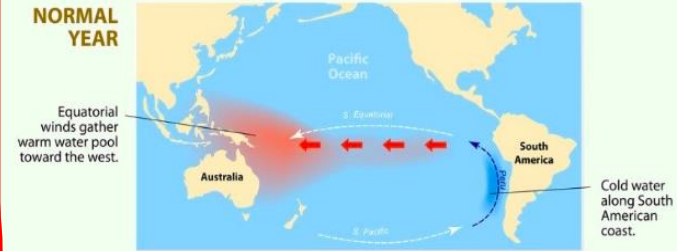
Monsoon missing: Rain deficit jumps to 46%, revival awaited

India's southwest monsoon has begun with a **46 per cent rain deficit**, with El Niño and a sluggish wind flow keeping the showers away. The IMD expects conditions to improve in the final week of June as the **Somali Jet strengthens over the Arabian Sea**.

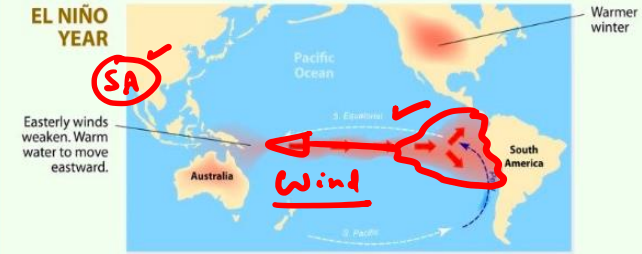
An El Niño is the periodic warming of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific that tends to weaken the South Asian monsoon and whose potency is measured by how far sea-surface temperatures in a reference patch of the Pacific climb above their long-term average. D.S. Pai, Chief Forecaster at the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Regional Meteorological Centre in Chennai, sets out the gradations: a departure of 0.5 to 1 degree Celsius is classed as 'weak', 1 to 1.5 as 'moderate', 1.5 to 2 as 'strong', and anything beyond 2 degrees as 'very strong.' "People call that very strong ... as you wish, super," he told The Hindu, adding that some forecasts suggest the current event could approach a record of around 2.5 degrees. ❌

THE EL NIÑO PHENOMENON

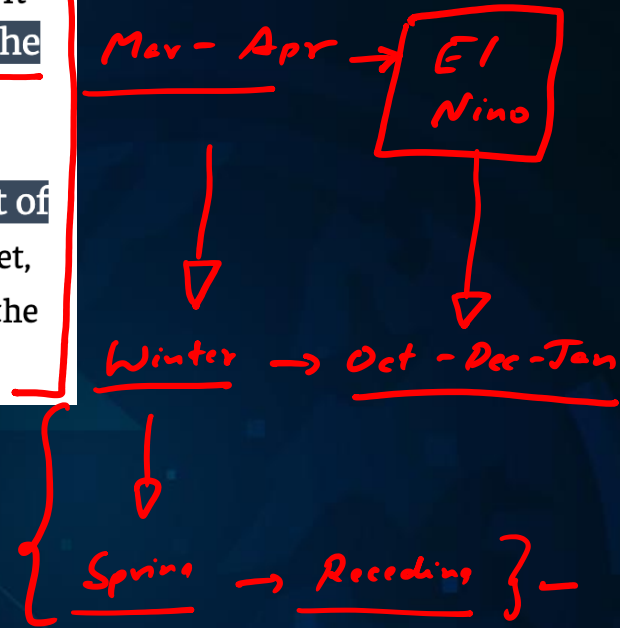
NORMAL YEAR



EL NIÑO YEAR



El Niño also follows a consistent calendar, which bears directly on its monsoon impact. "It starts in one spring season, peaks in the winter, and very fast it weakens in the next spring," Dr. Pai said, noting that an event very occasionally persists into a second year. Because the warming establishes only in spring and matures later, he said, its suppressing effect on the monsoon is felt mainly in the middle and later part of the June-September season rather than at its start. June rainfall and the pace of onset, he added, are governed largely by local and regional factors — so a weak June, including the present 35% shortfall, is not by itself a reliable guide to the season.



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Paradoxically, the 1997-98 El Niño actually brought more rains — 2% more — than what's usual for India's summer monsoon months. This was due to a counteracting effect in the Indian Ocean, called the **Indian Ocean Dipole** that brought in **warm water pools, countering the Pacific-induced drying**. Since that year, forecasters have consistently watched for the Dipole's waxing and waning — particularly during El Niño monsoons — to estimate how much of it can be buffered. One of the reasons, IMD Director General, M. Mohapatra has said, for a monsoon deficit this year is that the Dipole wouldn't be strong enough to counter the Nino.

Neutral → Positive IOD

Counter Balance

The other ocean that matters is closer to home. The **Indian Ocean Dipole, the see-saw of warm and cool water between the western and eastern Indian Ocean, is currently neutral**, neither helping nor hurting.

Then there is the **Madden-Julian Oscillation, or MJO**, a **vast pulse of cloud and rain that travels eastward around the equator every 30 to 60 days**. Depending on where it sits, it can flood India with showers or starve it of them. For now, it offers little help.

WHEN THE TAPS MIGHT OPEN AGAIN

There is reason not to despair. The IMD expects conditions to turn favourable in the final week of June, when the Somali Jet, a powerful low-level wind that hauls moisture off the Arabian Sea, is forecast to strengthen.

Setting the El Niño years ~~✗~~ since 1950 against IMD's long-period rainfall series shows that, of roughly two dozen such years — the exact count depends on how the weaker events are classified — about 15 produced a below-normal monsoon and around 10 tipped into outright deficiency, defined as seasonal rainfall below 90% of the long-period average. That is close to three in five, a correlation strong enough to shape food and fiscal planning. Several of India's worst droughts fell in El Niño years, among them 1972, 1982, 2009, and 2015.

24-25

June - Sep

July

The Benchmark: What Counts As Monsoon Deficit?

The India Meteorological Department classifies the June-September monsoon as:

- Normal: 96-104 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA)
- Below normal: 90-96 per cent of LPA ~~✗~~
- Deficient: Less than 90 per cent of LPA ~~✗~~

87-86%

Mains Practice Question

Q. Examine the impact of El Niño on Indian agriculture and fiscal planning.
(250 words; 15 marks)

Subsidy →

Fertilizers

Power → Farmers

→ Debt → Waiving

Int
Subsidy

G7

Origin, History

G2 Summit

A platform for the globalised elite

Group of Seven

The grouping of industrialised nations, founded in the 1970s, has weathered major geopolitical storms across the 20th and 21st centuries to remain a key forum for discussions and decision-making on global conflicts and economic challenges

Kalol Bhattacharjee

The 1960s were a period of restlessness. The anti-Vietnam war protests and civil rights agitation made the Lyndon Johnson administration uneasy. It was in this backdrop that Johnson came to Michigan on May 22, 1964 to deliver his 'Great Society' speech. Johnson quoted Greek philosopher Aristotle to talk about how to create prosperity. "The Great Society" he said, "rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice, to which we are totally committed in our time. But that is just the beginning."

The previous decade had seen the arrival of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that mobilised the decolonised societies. With the upswing in domestic disturbances in the U.S. it was obvious that the U.S. that had provided loans and economic assistance after the Second World War would no longer be able to provide leadership to the global north on its own and that it would require support from the partner countries in the West. As the decolonisation gathered speed, there was a greater need for the Global North to team up. This was born the idea of reviving the Global Economic Governance in favour of the industrialised economies out of which would emerge the Group of Seven (G7) in the following decade.

The Global Economic Governance (GEG) had been fashionable since the beginning of the Bretton Woods system but after nearly a decade of unrest in western societies, a definite push came in 1973 when the Yom Kippur war and hostilities between the Arabs and Israel triggered the first oil shock. The oil shock highlighted that the emerging order would challenge the domination of the western world.

In this backdrop, the first World Economic Summit was organised by French President Giscard d'Estaing and West Germany's Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in 1975 who invited the leaders of the U.K., Italy, Japan and the U.S. for a meeting at the Chateau



de Rambouillet in France. It began as the Group of Six and in 1976, Canada joined the grouping, making it the G7. The economic and financial crises of that time provided the G7 the agenda for the foreseeable future as it came to be known as a platform of industrialised countries for dealing with financial challenges.

Reborn economy
The 1970s were the decade of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) system but after nearly a decade of unrest in western societies, a definite push came in 1973 when the Yom Kippur war and hostilities between the Arabs and Israel triggered the first oil shock. The oil shock highlighted that the emerging order would challenge the domination of the western world. In this backdrop, the first World Economic Summit was organised by French President Giscard d'Estaing and West Germany's Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in 1975 who invited the leaders of the U.K., Italy, Japan and the U.S. for a meeting at the Chateau

The G7 started playing a bigger role beyond pure economic issues during the 1980s when it provided a platform to industrialised countries to coordinate response to major conflicts that threatened to interrupt global supply chains. First was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which was followed almost simultaneously by the hostilities between the U.K. and Argentina over the Falkland Islands and the Iran-Iraq war. It also played an active role in dealing with various sides for the Lebanese civil war. In 1982 when Israel invaded Lebanon, the G7 expressed shock on Israel's actions. On the Falklands dispute, however, it supported the U.K. and warned about controlling the conflicts in the West Asian region as they could spill into larger disruption of energy and navigation.

Through coordination among the major economies, G7 for the first time in 1990 showed that it had acquired the ability to put economic pressure to a country that refused to abide by the norms of the international order. As

Saddam Hussein prepared to invade Kuwait in August 1990, the G7 convened a meeting in Houston and ensured that Hussein would not profit from forcibly acquiring the energy wealth of Kuwait. By handling a range of conflicts in the 1980s, G7 evolved from the strictly an economic platform to a strategic international mechanism that could play a greater role in maintaining the status quo and avoid shocks and disruptions to the system. The end of the Cold War provided the G7 with the major opportunity to reinvent itself and this it did by opening its doors to Russia. Already during the Iraqi crisis of 1990-91, G7 had succeeded in getting the USSR on board. The new equation with the USSR was made evident with the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev to the G7 London summit on July 14-16, 1991.

Following the dissolution of the USSR, the G7 invited Russian President Boris Yeltsin on multiple occasions, indicating a deeper integration of post-Soviet Russia into the international financial architecture.

During this period, the G7 also helped Russia deal with the demands for transition by supporting it with an economic package. In 1998, Russia formally joined the grouping, transforming it into G8.

France summit
The G7's most visible role in recent years has been in opposing Russia's military campaign in Ukraine. Following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, G8 expelled Russia reverting the grouping to its earlier avatar of G7. That apart, the grouping has emerged as a forum for important discussions in dealing with issues that are global in nature and require a collective action. Among the issues that the G7 has prioritised are climate change, pandemic preparedness, energy security, critical minerals and preservation of supply chains. In order to address these vital issues, the G7 has welcomed participation by other important countries such as India, Egypt, South Africa, Brazil, South Korea, Ukraine and the UAE to its summit meetings and consultations.

In 52nd G7 summit, held in France on June 15-17, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had participated. Among the topics discussed at the summit were the Ukraine war, the U.S.-Iran deal, global economic imbalances, Artificial Intelligence and debt burdens in the developing countries.

As the world deals with major supply chain disruptions and uncertainties following the eruption of the U.S.-Israel war against Iran and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the G7, with its permanent guest European Union, has provided an additional mechanism to discuss difficult issues, often providing its high power table to dissent policies that are relevant to the world order.

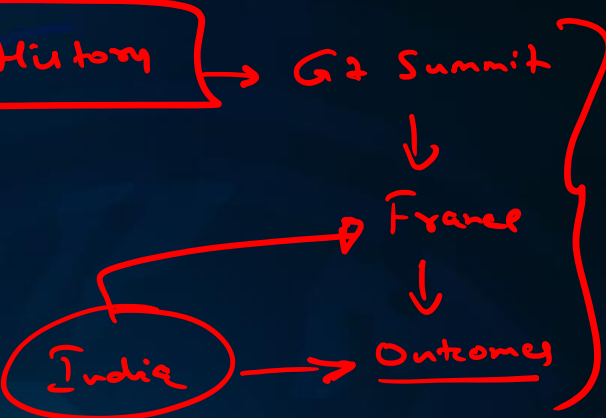
This informal meeting allows the global leaders a much better interaction that is not possible within the confines of the UN. While the world has gone through the Cold War and post-Cold War phases, the G7 remains a continuity as it maintains the globalised economic structure without allowing cracks to spread.

THE GIST

In the backdrop of the oil shock, French President Giscard d'Estaing and West Germany's Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in 1975 organised a summit with leaders from the U.K., Italy, Japan and the U.S. in France to discuss economic challenges

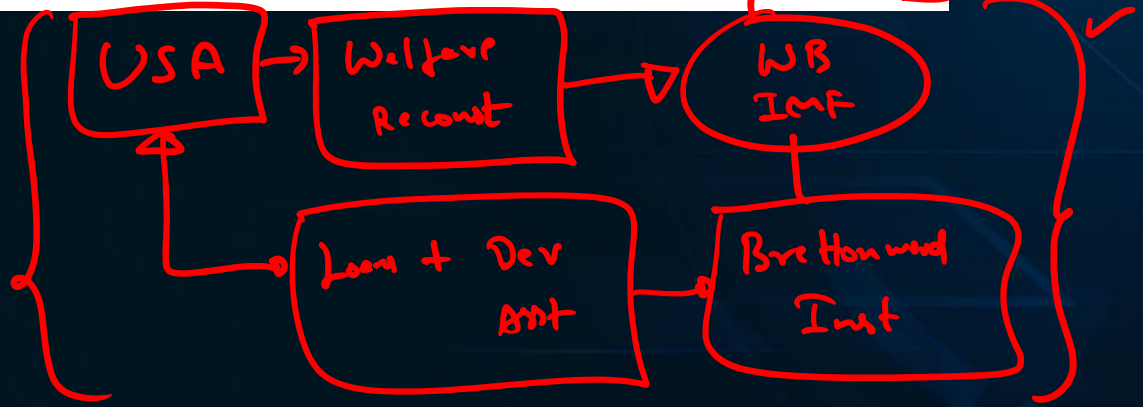
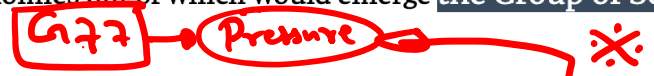
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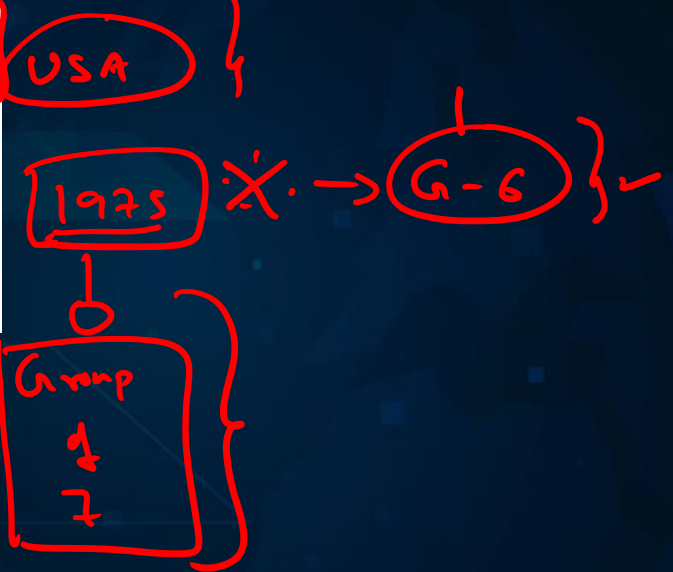
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Oil Embargo → *

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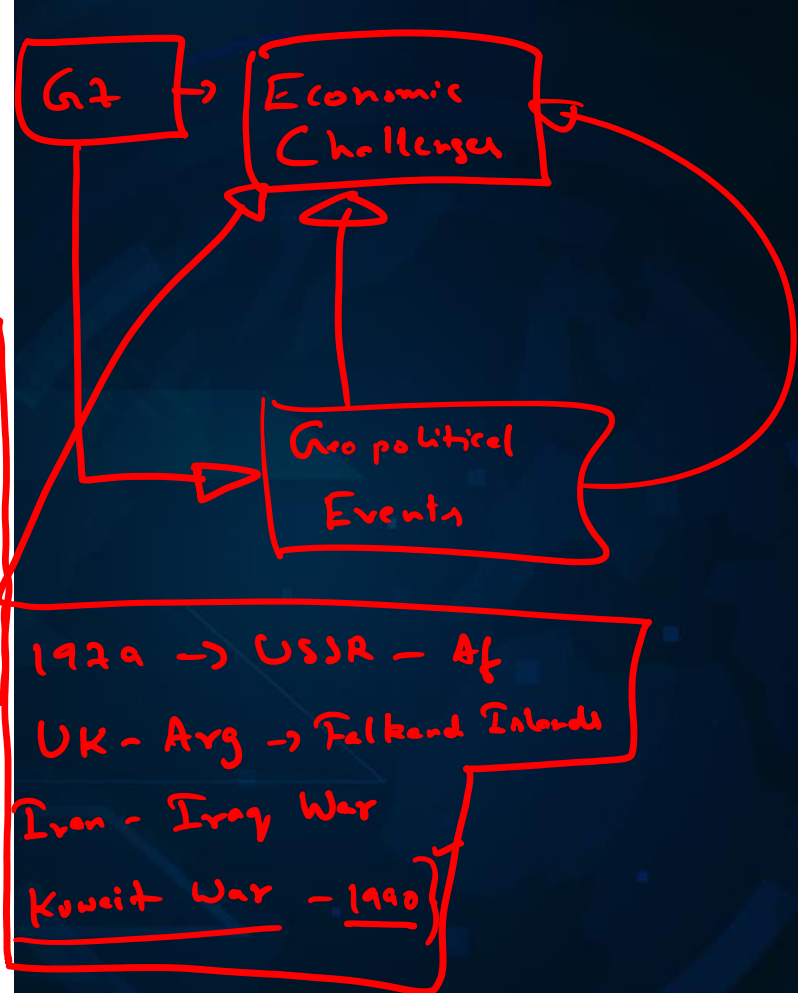


1976 - Canada →

The 1970s were the decade of the **New International Economic Order (NIEO)** under which the Global south under the leadership of the **Group of 77 and NAM** demanded the establishment of a new economic order. Under this system, developing nations pushed for a transformation of global financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to deal with the requirements of the newly decolonised economies of Asia, Africa and Latin America. These demands, however, had to be adjusted against the overall power dynamics between the two superpowers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

The G7 started playing a bigger role beyond pure economic issues during the **1980s** when it provided a platform to industrialised countries to coordinate response to major conflicts that threatened to interrupt global supply chains. First was the **Soviet invasion of Afghanistan**, which was followed almost simultaneously by the hostilities between the **U.K. and Argentina over the Falkland islands** and the **Iran-Iraq war**. It also played an active role in dealing with various sides for the Lebanese civil war. In **1982 when Israel invaded Lebanon**, the G7 expressed shock on Israel's actions. On the Falklands dispute, however, it supported the U.K. and warned about controlling the conflicts in the West Asian region as they could spill into larger disruption of energy and navigation.

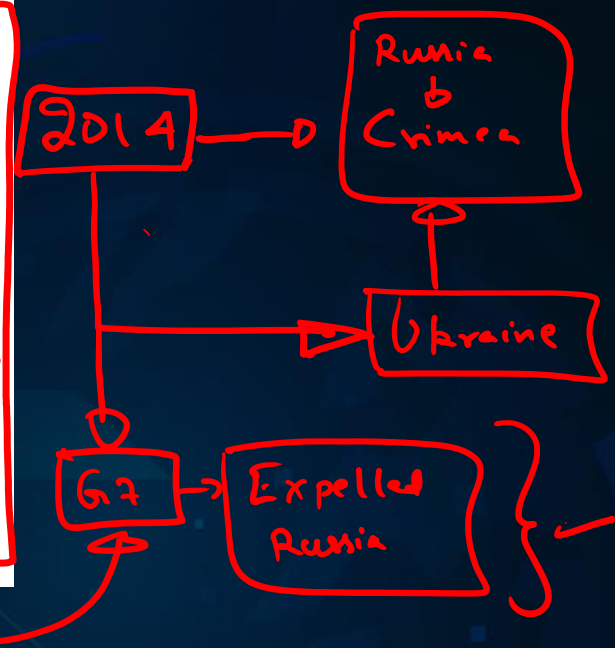
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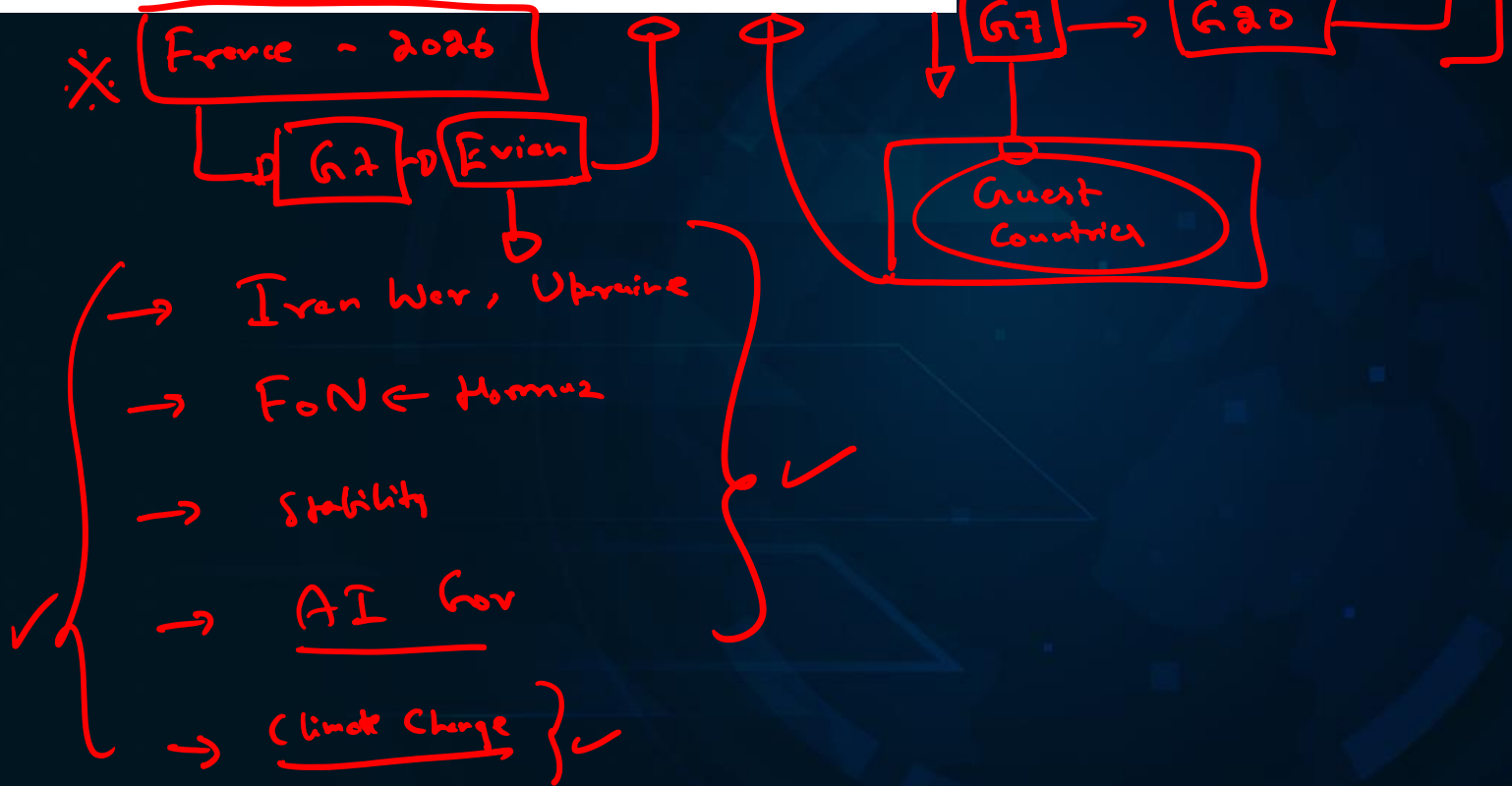
The **end of the Cold War** provided the G7 with the major opportunity to reinvent itself and this it did by **opening its doors to Russia**. Already during the Iraqi crisis of 1990-91, G7 had succeeded in **getting the USSR on board**. The new equation with the USSR was made evident with the **arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev to the G7 London summit** on July 14-16, 1991.

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Russia

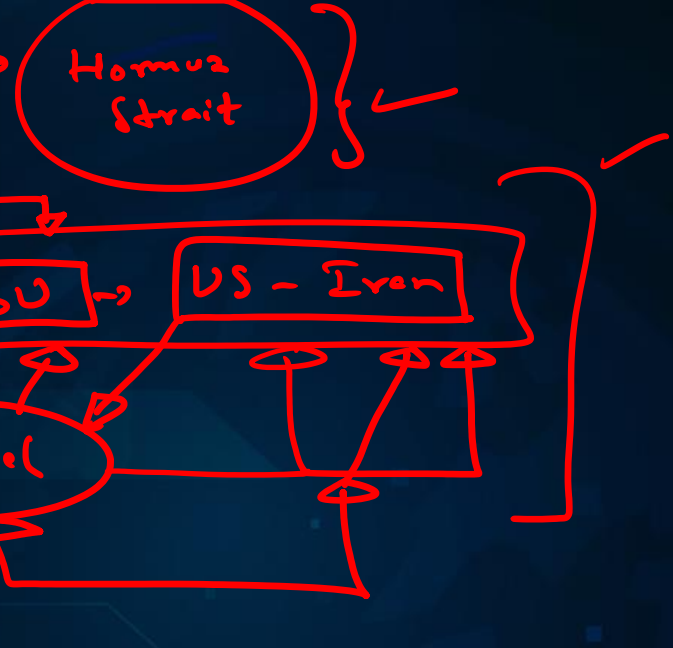


Among the issues that the G7 has prioritised are climate change, pandemic preparedness, energy security, critical minerals and preservation of supply chains. In order to address these vital issues, the G7 has welcomed participation by other important countries such as India, Egypt, South Africa, Brazil, South Korea, Ukraine and the UAE to its summit meetings and consultations.



Mains Practice Question

Q. The Group of Seven (G7) has weathered major geopolitical storms across the 20th and 21st centuries to remain a key forum for discussions and decision-making on global conflicts and economic challenges. Discuss. (250 words; 15 marks)

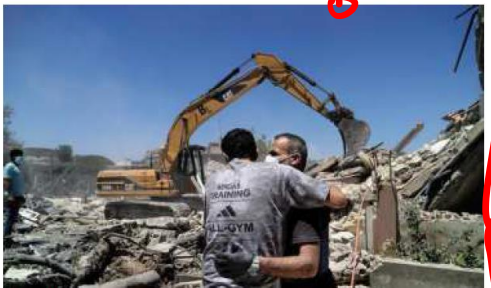


Iran 'closes' Hormuz amid Israeli attacks on Lebanon

Will plan and take further measures if Israeli attacks continue, says Iran while citing 'violations of the ceasefire MoU', according to Pakistan's statement, 'technical talks' were set to restart today

Stanly Johny

Iran's military on Saturday said it had once again closed the Strait of Hormuz, citing "violations" of the first clause of a recently signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the U.S., as Israeli strikes on Lebanon continued.



More damage: Rescue workers react at the site of an Israeli air strike in the city of Barish in southern Lebanon on Saturday. REUTERS

"In light of the United States' clear breach of its commitments on ending the war, and in response to the continuous and relentless violations of the ceasefire by the Zionist regime in southern Lebanon..., as well as considering the failure of the occupying Zionist forces to withdraw from southern Lebanon, it is announced that the Strait of Hormuz will be closed to vessel traffic," Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central

Headquarters said in a statement. The announcement came after Pakistan, which mediated the ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran, said "technical talks" between the two sides were set to restart in Geneva, Switzerland, on Sunday. Talks were expected to resume on Friday, but Iran de-

layed it, citing the Israeli bombing of Lebanon. The MoU, reached between the U.S. and Iran on June 15, states that a ceasefire should come into force on all fronts, "including Lebanon". After the MoU was signed, Iran had eased restrictions on the strait and U.S. President Donald Trump had said the critical

waterway was fully open. The Iranian military command on Saturday said the closure of the strait "is the first step of response to the enemy's breach of trust". If Israel continued the attacks on Lebanon, "further measures will be planned and taken," it added. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps also announced that the strait is closed and issued a warning to all ships to back away. "Do not approach the Strait of Hormuz; otherwise, your security will be jeopardised," the Guards Navy said in a statement.

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Fertilizers in focus as Iran tightens Strait transit rules

Josco Shunzhou, a Hong Kong-registered vessel carrying 50,000 tonnes of urea, crossed the Strait of Hormuz two days ago and is scheduled to reach Krishnapatnam in Andhra Pradesh on June 27

M. Kalyanaraman
CHENNAI

For India, which has now focused on evacuation of bulk fertilizer carriers from Persian Gulf, the peace deal and the subsequent announcement by Iran that it was closing the Strait on developments in Lebanon have come as a mixed bag.

Working with Iran, India had established a process for evacuating ships serving its needs and successfully brought back more than a dozen vessels, largely carrying energy supplies. The government has now earmarked 34 ships for repatriation, including 15 fertilizer-carrying bulk carriers and one ammonia carrier serving domestic fertilizer production, with possible naval escorts as before. Barring Jag Arnav, the remaining 15 bulk carriers are foreign-flagged.

Josco Shunzhou, a Hong Kong-registered vessel carrying 50,000 tonne of urea, crossed the Strait of Hormuz two days ago and is scheduled to reach Krishnapatnam in Andhra Pradesh on June 27, as per marinetransit.com.

While some ships identified by the government are untraceable on vessel-tracking websites, many are anchored west of the Strait of Hormuz. Eight of them are urea carriers transporting a combined 3.3 lakh tonne, four are carrying 2.57 lakh tonne of



Crucial input: India's current stocks of fertilizers stand at about 196 lakh tonne with opening stock of over 200 lakh tonne. REUTERS

DAP, three are carrying 1.1 lakh tonne of sulphur, and one is carrying a tad over 25,000 tonne of ammonia carrier serving domestic fertilizer production, with possible naval escorts as before. Barring Jag Arnav, the remaining 15 bulk carriers are foreign-flagged.

Buffer norm
The government says the standard buffer norm is 33%, but this year advance availability exceeded half of the total requirement aided by domestic production of more than 118 lakh tonne since the current crisis began.

Almost 40 lakh tonne of imports had reached India during the crisis period, mostly not from the Strait

of Hormuz, the government said. Urea imports had come from Oman, Malaysia, Vietnam, Georgia and Russia, among others, while DAP and NPK imports came from Russia, Morocco, Egypt, the United States and Jordan, among others. As per the government, a total of 2 lakh tonne imports are scheduled to come in June.

Iran strengthens grip
On Friday, Iran announced that the Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA), which it set up during the war to manage the transit of ships along its coast, would be the sole official channel for processing transit requests. Applications can be submitted via its website.

Even as some ships transited during the first two days after the signing of the peace deal, the Joint Mari-

The Information Center said a number of vessels "attempting to transit have been challenged by Sepah Navy and turned around midway".

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has been informing ships that the PGSA is the only authority authorised to process and permit transit requests.

No fee
According to the PGSA, it will not levy any fee for "security, safety and environmental services as well as related Iranian insurances" for 60 days. However, a Lloyd's List report quoted PGSA as saying, "The PGSA reserves the right to introduce insurance fee in the future... Owners will then be required to purchase and renew coverage accordingly." The terms have been circulated across the industry and submitted to the International Maritime Organization.

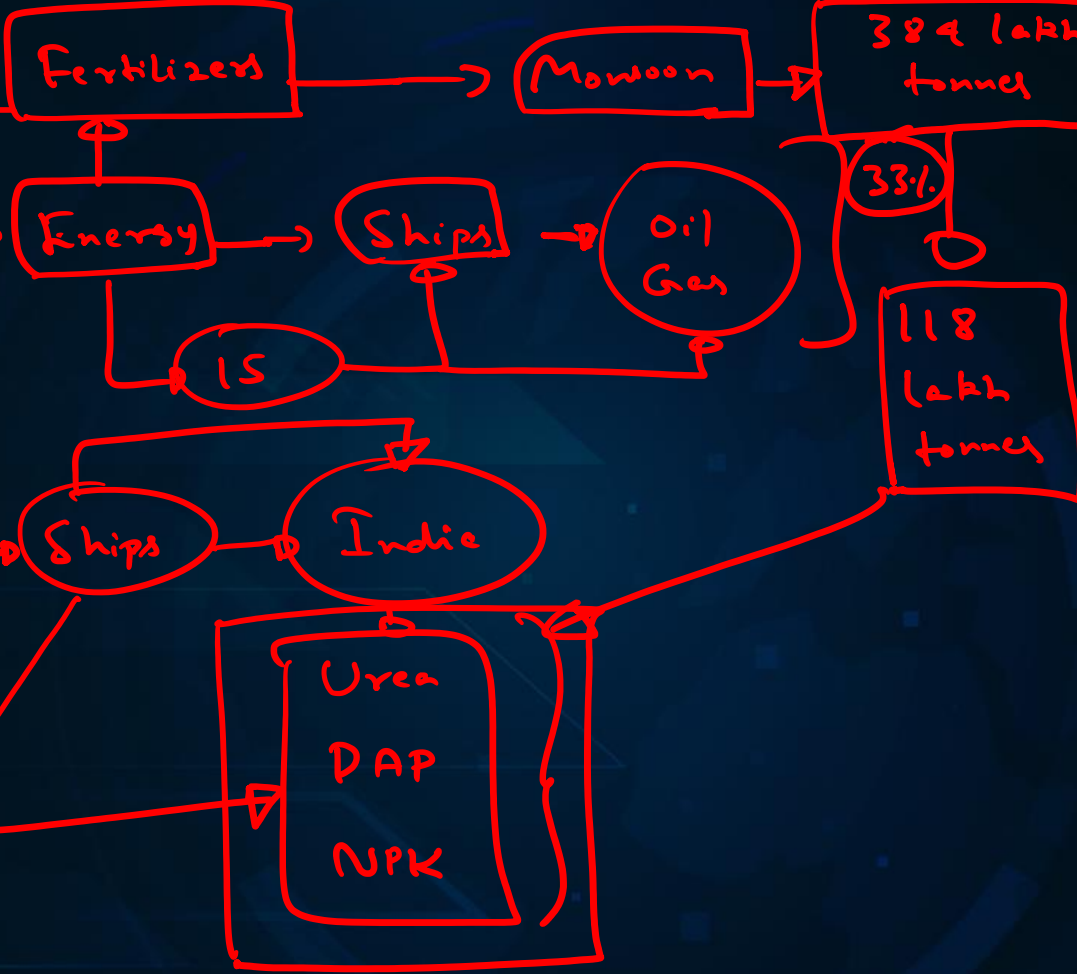
Iran has insisted that, for now, only the passage close to its coast is permitted although ships following U.S. Navy guidance had also been transiting near the Oman coast. Indian ships have been using the Iranian route. Meanwhile, Disha, Petronet LNG's carrier, has reached Dahej.

It was among the first vessels to exit the Strait after the peace deal was announced.

(With inputs from Saptarnano Ghosh)

UNCLOS

Iran → PGSA



4. Pg 11 – GS II (IR) & GS III (Economy)

Lack of investment chapter in India-U.K. trade deal not a concern, says Muscatelli

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The fact that the India-U.K. trade deal does not include a chapter on investments is not a concern since higher trade and more ease of doing business measures are what will encourage these investments anyway, Anton Muscatelli, president of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and U.K. trade and economy expert told *The Hindu* in an interview.

The India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), signed in July last year, will be implemented from July 15, 2025. While the agreement covers several aspects of trade, including tariffs, mobility, and service sectors, it does not include specific provisions on investments like the trade deals with New Zealand and the European Free Trade Association do.

Enabling framework
“What trade does is, it creates an enabling framework to encourage foreign direct investment (FDI),” Mr. Muscatelli said.

“Just simply committing to FDI as part of a trade deal might look more direct and with more direct benefits, but in reality what is really going to drive investment in a major way is going to be those enabling changes.”

He added that one of the most attractive aspects of the deal was that it would allow the U.K. to enter India’s financial services sector, which is an area of strength for the U.K.

“And vice versa, of course, it encourages entry into IT services in the U.K.,



India calling: Anton Muscatelli, President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT.

which is a huge area of strength for India,” Mr. Muscatelli said. “It is creating those mutual benefits that will then drive investment. So, I don’t think not having a commitment to mutual investment is necessarily something that hampers the significance of the trade deal.”

Mr. Muscatelli’s views, however, are at odds with the way the European leadership views the EU’s trade deal with India.

Both, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and the EU’s Ambassador to India Hervé Delphin have separately said the EU does not include a chapter on investments and that a separate investment-related deal should be worked on quickly.

Ease of doing business
Regarding easing doing business, he said that this was a “Journey that India is on” and that companies looking to invest in India are looking at factors such as tax compliance, land acquisition and dispute resolution.

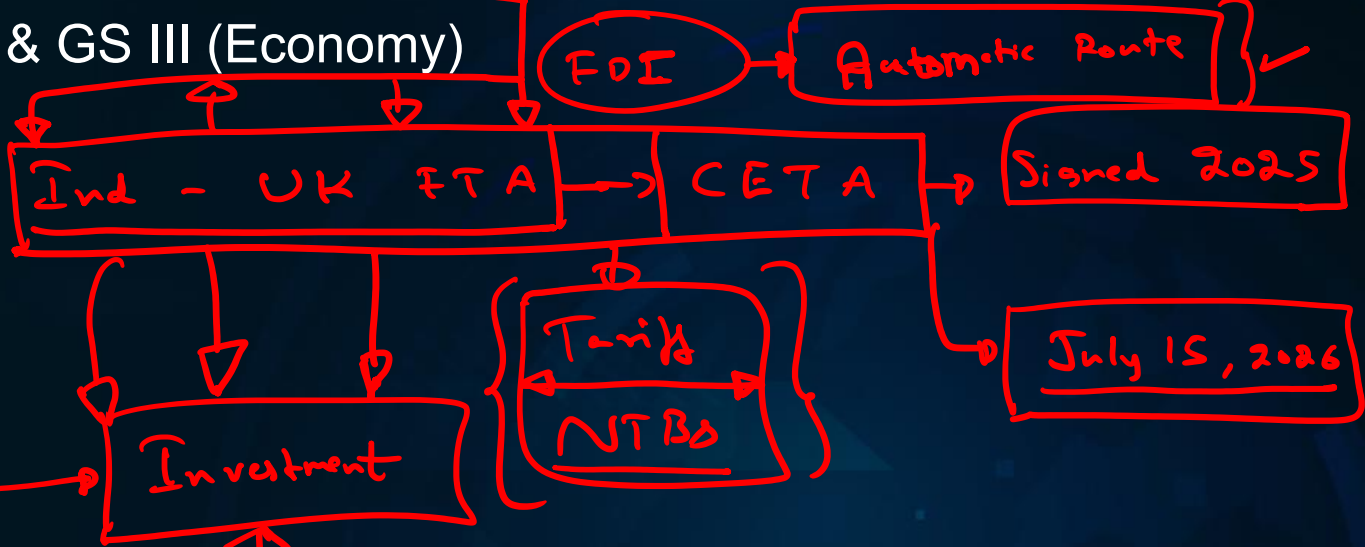
“Some of it is around regulatory bottlenecks, some of it is around improving India’s infrastruc-

ture, reducing transport costs, supply chain reliability, export speed, industrial corridors and logistics hubs, but it’s that last stage connectivity which is really important,” he said.

‘Lot of progress’
“It’s definitely a journey but there’s no doubt that given the size of the internal market in India, the ease of doing business together with these infrastructure investments will really drive foreign direct investments,” he added. “And let’s also not forget there’s been a lot of progress made.”

Mr. Muscatelli pointed out that FDI into India is now already allowed in most sectors through the automatic route and that a lot of compliance and bureaucratic discretion has been reduced.

“When you talk to companies that are thinking about investing in India, they’re still looking at things around tax compliance, land acquisition, dispute resolution, and all these things have to be done, but already quite a bit has been done,” he said. “So, I think India is very much on a journey of being business ready.”



Swiss Iceland
Norway Leich

PIB Backgrounder

TEPA

India-EFTA Trade Pact Boosting \$100 Billion Investment and 1 Million Jobs

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 11 OCT 2025 12:20PM by PIB Delhi

Economy

India – New Zealand Free Trade Agreement Signed

Posted On: 27 APR 2026 5:13PM

Key Takeaways

- India- New Zealand FTA eliminates duty on 100% of Indian Exports
- USD 20 billion investment commitment, strengthening long-term economic and strategic cooperation.
- The agreement places special emphasis on strengthening MSMEs and women-led enterprises.
- India protects its key interests in dairy and agriculture; Huge win for labour intensive sectors like textile and leather.
- New Zealand facilitates Health and Traditional Medicine Services for the first time.
- Student Mobility and Post Study Work Visa for STEM Graduates, Skilled Professionals; opens new visa pathway for 5,000 skilled occupations.

Ready for talks with T.N. on Mekedatu project: Karnataka

Mekedatu

X

Dams in Karnataka across Cauvery and Tributaries



Irrigation Minister says proposed dam will not reduce Tamil Nadu's share of Cauvery water; his statement comes a day after T.N. Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution against the project

The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

Bengaluru

Karnataka is willing to hold a bilateral dialogue with Tamil Nadu on the Mekedatu balancing reservoir project on the Cauvery if the neighbouring State comes forward for discussions, Major Irrigation Minister Ramalinga Reddy said on Saturday.



Karnataka is planning a dam over the Cauvery at Mekedatu to meet the drinking water needs of Bengaluru. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Strressing that the proposed project would not adversely affect Tamil Nadu's share of Cauvery water, Mr. Reddy said the reservoir would, in fact, help regulate river flow, and ensure more efficient release to the downstream State.

Karnataka government's proposal to construct a balancing reservoir at Mekedatu.

regulate release to Tamil Nadu at Biligundlu, and generate 400 MW of hydroelectric power.

On Friday, the Tamil Nadu Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution moved by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay opposing the

Tug-of-war Mr. Reddy said Karnataka has proposed the Mekedatu project within its territory across the Cauvery river primarily to meet the drinking water requirements of the Bengaluru region.

Tamil Nadu had approached the Supreme Court through a miscellaneous application in 2018 questioning Karnataka's right to proceed with the project. In its judgment delivered on November 13, 2025, the apex court reject

ed the plea, holding that the Central Water Commission (CWC) and the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) were empowered to take the necessary steps to regulate the release of water. The court also observed that no State could interfere with the use of water allocated to another State unless such action reduced the quantity of water allotted to it. A review petition filed by Tamil Nadu was subsequently dismissed on April 15, 2026, the Minister noted.

The Minister reiterated that Karnataka remained bound by the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal award, as modified by the Supreme Court in 2018, to ensure annual release of 177.25 tmcft of water to Tamil Nadu at Biligundlu in a normal water year.

Centre
↓
Tribunal

Cauvery Authority set to meet on June 23

T. Ramakrishnan CHENNAI

As the Mekedatu row acquires a new dimension with the Tamil Nadu government's demand for a new tribunal to go into the ₹9,000-crore balancing reservoir-cum-drinking water project, the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) is set to hold its meeting on June 23.

duled as the present period marks the early part of southwest monsoon and to assess the situation in view of the subdued beginning of the rainy season.

As on June 18, the realisation of the Cauvery water at Biligundlu, the measuring point on the inter-State border, was about two tmc ft since June 1 against the State's quota of 5.5 tmc ft for the elapsed period. For the entire month, the State is to get 9.19 tmc ft.

As for the proposed Mekedatu project, the Karnataka government is expected any time to submit a revised Detailed Project Report (DPR).

A perusal of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)'s history reveals that Karnataka had, all along, opposed the constitution of the Tribunal as it preferred negotiations to adjudication. It was not that Tamil Nadu did not want talks, but it revived its

demand, in 1986, for a tribunal to examine the dispute after almost two decades. Eventually, on the Supreme Court's direction, the CWDT was set up in 1990. The upper riparian states have made objections in the Tribunal's interim award of 1991 and final award of 2007. Eight years ago, the CWMA came into being only after the top court gave its verdict on appeals of the riparian States on the final award.



Adjudication of disputes relating to waters of inter-State rivers or river valleys

ISW

(1) Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution or control of the waters of, or in, any inter-State river or river valley.

(2) Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, Parliament may by law provide that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint as is referred to in clause (1).

Prelims Bytes

Bangladeshi among 9 wildlife traffickers arrested in Assam

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A Bangladesh national was among nine wildlife traffickers arrested in western Assam's Chirang district around midnight on Friday.

The Assam Police's Special Task Force (STF) arrested the nine with assistance from the Chirang police. Eight golden langurs were recovered from their possession, and one of them was found dead.

The golden langur is an endangered species notified under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, with a blackmarket value of about ₹16 lakh, officials said.

The arrested Bangladesh national was identified as Mohammed Jamal. He said he was from Dhaka and entered India on June 15. Officials suspect that he entered the country illegally.

An STF spokesperson said five of Jamal's accomplices – Injamamul Hoque Mondal, Abdul Khalek Mondal, Fakir Chand Mandal, Alongir Mulla, and Latibul Shaikh – are from West Bengal. The remaining three, identified as Jackson Biswakarma, Ranjit Narzary, and Pinkush Narzary, are from Assam.

He said the nine were part of a major international



The wildlife traffickers were trying to smuggle golden langurs across the border.

al wildlife trafficking network. They were transporting the primates in two vehicles, which have been seized.

Chirang Divisional Forest Officer Kunjan Basumary said two cages were arranged for the golden langurs, as they had been kept in suffocating sacks.

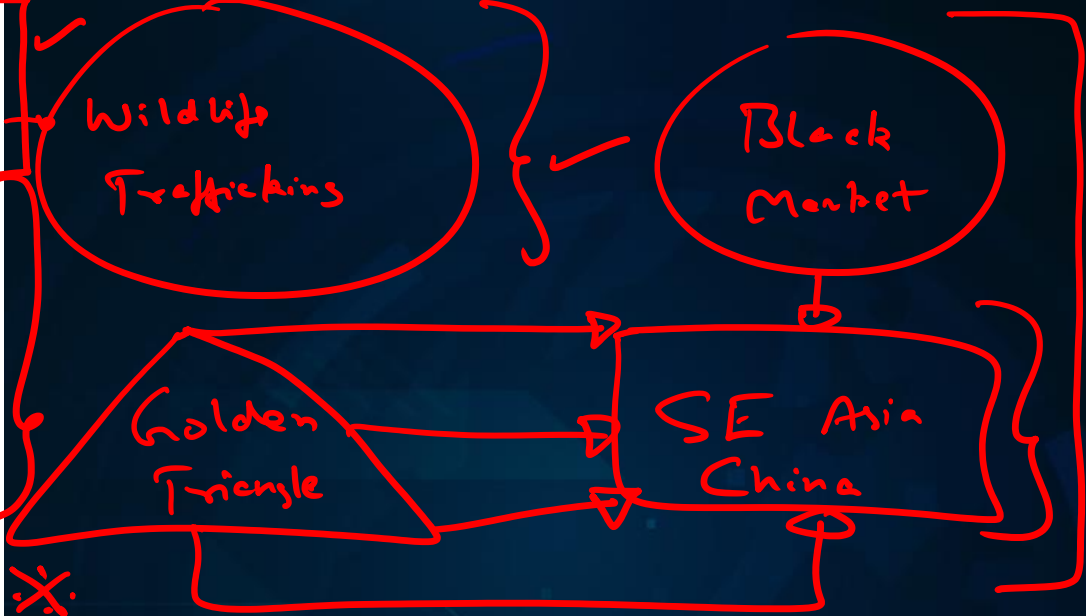
"Considering that a Bangladeshi is involved, we can call it an international wildlife trafficking gang. They had plans to take the animals to West Bengal and from there, to the international black market," he said, adding that the police and the Forest Department would investigate if more people were part of the gang.

Wildlife Trafficking

Black Market

Golden Triangle

SE Asia
China




Gee's golden langur (*Trachypithecus geei*), also known as simply the **golden langur**, is an **Old World monkey** found in a small region of **Western Assam, India** and the neighboring foothills of the **Black Mountains** of **Bhutan**. Long considered sacred by many Himalayan people, the golden langur was first brought to the attention of the Western world by the naturalist **Edward Pritchard Gee** in the 1950s. Adult males have a **cream to golden** coat with darker flanks while the females and juveniles are lighter. The golden langur has a **black face** and a long tail up to 100 cm (39 in) in length. It lives in high trees and has a **herbivorous** diet of fruits, leaves, seeds, buds, and flowers. The average group size is eight individuals, with a ratio of several females to each adult male. It is one of the most endangered primate species of India and Bhutan.

In 2008–09, there were 6,000 golden langurs in India, which has grown to 7,396 by 2020–21.^[4]

Discovery and etymology [\[edit\]](#)

Gee's golden langur^[1]



Conservation status

Extinct Threatened Least Concern

EX EW CR **EN** VU NT LC

Endangered (IUCN 3.1)^[2]

CITES Appendix I^[3]

Schedule I → WPA, 1972





Kailash Mansarovar Yatra via Nathu La flagged off in Sikkim

Sikkim Governor Om Prakash Mathur flagged off the first batch of pilgrims of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2026 through the Nathu La Pass on Saturday. The contingent of 44 pilgrims, including four liaison officers and a medical officer, entered Tibet after completing a four-day acclimatisation programme in Sikkim.

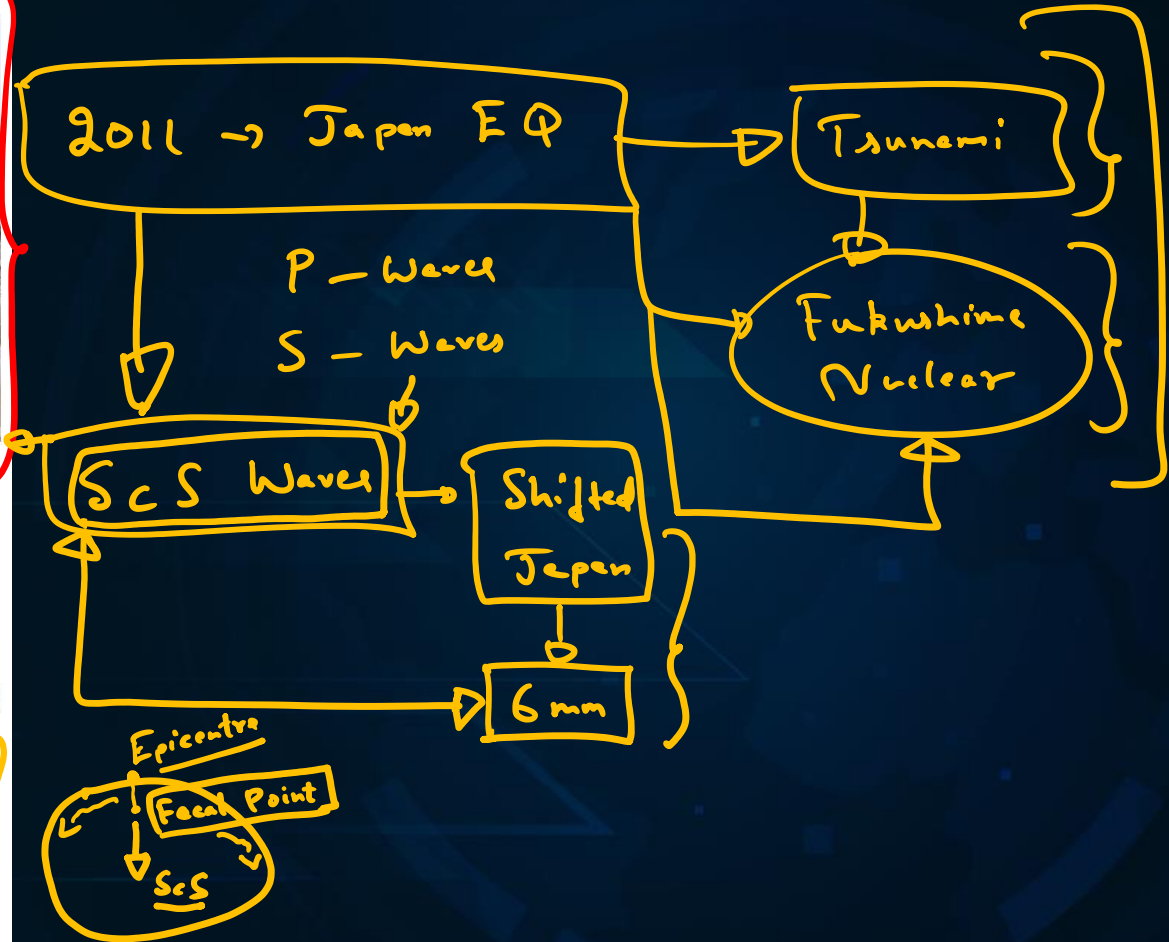
Comprising 32 men and 12 women from States across India, the group proceeded towards Gyangze in Tibet Autonomous Region, a key halt on the route to the revered Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar. The pilgrims were flagged off from Nathu La by Mr. Mathur in the presence of senior government officials. PTI

8. Pg 12 – Geography & DM



New seismic hazard spotted in Japan's 2011 quake

Following the 2011 earthquake, 15 minutes after the main shock, the ground across Japan shifted east by up to 6 mm. Using satellite data, scientists have now found this movement was triggered by ScS waves, seismic waves that travel down from the earthquake source, bounce off the planet's core, and return to the surface. Because these waves travel nearly vertically, they hit Japan's tectonic plate boundaries all at once. The scientists called this a new seismic hazard.



Bolivia declares state of emergency; major military deployment to follow

Reuters

LA PAZ

Bolivia's crisis intensified on Saturday as President Rodrigo Paz declared a state of emergency, enabling wider military deployment to clear blockades and restore order after protests brought the economy to a halt over the past 50 days.

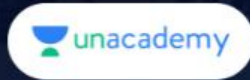
The move came in a live message to the nation just hours after Mr. Paz unveiled a deal struck on Friday with the main union, the Bolivian Workers' Confederation, (COB) that aimed to ease tension.

The conflict initially erupted after Mr. Paz abruptly cut long-standing fuel subsidies to shrink the deficit, amid a worsening dollar crunch and talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Despite later steps to stabilise fuel prices and reverse unpopular land reforms, protests intensified into broader discontent, with unions demanding wage increases, an end to fuel and dollar shortages, and Mr. Paz's resignation.

Protesting groups have cut off key roads, stranding trucks and choking supplies of food, fuel and medicines to many areas.





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ANALYSIS