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ANALYSIS

Topics (7) + 3 PIB = (10) ✓

Detailed Analysis for Prelims & Mains:

1. The real barriers to trade are no longer tariffs - Pg 10
2. In India, regulatory oversight for pharmaceuticals needs to improve - Pg 10
3. Telegram ban, govt says its the new dark web & Section 69A of the IT Act - Pg 1 & 14
4. Revised Double Contribution Convention with UK will save \$500 mn for Indians - Pg 17
5. MoU opens door for Iran to stake claims in Strait of Hormuz - Pg 17

Prelims:

1. Kerala's risk profile for Nipah - Pg 12
2. Japanese encephalitis - Pg 16

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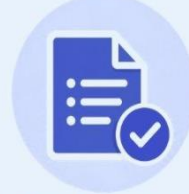
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The real barriers to trade are no longer tariffs



Anuj Gupta
Managing Director
of BowerGroupAsia

Recently, the CEO of a large multinational called to ask whether the upcoming visit of the United States Trade Representative to India could result in tariff rates returning to around 18% or settling at a different level.

Such conversations reflect the extent to which trade negotiations are often viewed through the prism of headline tariff numbers. Yet, in practice, tariff rates are only one part of the picture. The more significant determinants of market access and competitiveness frequently lie elsewhere. This presents an opportunity for India to move beyond a narrow focus on tariff bargaining and instead address the broader set of factors that shape trade outcomes.

When India and the U.S. issued a joint statement in February 2026 agreeing on a framework for an interim trade agreement, the headlines highlighted the obvious: the tariff numbers. The U.S. reciprocal rate cut to 18%. India's pledge to move toward zero duties on American goods. The "\$500 billion" purchase commitment. But the White House fact sheet buried the more consequential admission – that both sides needed to negotiate the removal of non-tariff barriers. The U.S. deploys its own formidable non-tariff barriers arsenal while India has its quality regulations. The tariff headline was the press release. The NTBs on both sides are the actual problem.

For decades, trade diplomacy revolved around tariffs. Governments negotiated reductions in import duties, and success in trade talks was measured in percentage points shaved off customs rates. In today's hyper-regulated global economy, tariffs barely matter. The real obstacles are faced in the laboratory and the law offices through NTBs.

NTBs are the regulations, certifications, licensing rules, and product requirements that goods must meet before entering a market. They include technical regulations, environmental rules, health and safety requirements, packaging standards and testing procedures. Unlike tariffs, which are transparent and easy to measure, these regulatory hurdles operate within the system and exert a far-reaching influence on trade.

Tariffs dominate the headlines, but regulations increasingly determine trade outcomes

among its members have fallen by nearly half, yet governments have not abandoned protectionism. As tariffs declined, NTBs surged. Today, they affect around 90% of global trade – a sixfold increase over the past three decades.

The regulatory landscape has expanded just as rapidly. More than half of the 20,000 global product and safety regulations introduced over the past 70 years have emerged since 2000, creating a dense web of overlapping rules that complicates cross-border commerce and raises compliance costs, particularly for smaller exporters. The WTO itself reflects this shift. In 2025 alone, governments submitted over 7,700 notifications of NTBs and health-related trade measures, 10 times more than in 1995.

Among major economies, the European Union (EU) is the most extensive user of these regulatory tools. According to the World Trade Organization and World Bank data, non-tariff measures cover roughly about 94% of imports entering the EU, compared with about 77% in the U.S. and nearly 45% in India. Each major economy deploys these barriers differently. The EU has built the world's most expansive regulatory architecture for trade, with NTBs concentrated in environmental rules, chemical safety regulations, product standards, packaging requirements and climate-related policies such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the EU Deforestation Regulation. These rules are justified as protections, often acting as powerful filters on trade.

The American NTBs are driven by strategic competition, security concerns and technological dominance. Export controls, entity lists and restrictions on semiconductors, AI chips and advanced computing hardware increasingly limit rivals' access to critical technology supply chains. India has traditionally relied more on tariffs, but this is changing. As part of its industrial strategy, New Delhi is expanding quality regulations on imports of electronics, machinery and chemicals to boost domestic manufacturing and reduce dependence on external supply chains.

The Indian experience

India's own FTA record makes the point sharply. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-India agreement has been in force since 2010, yet preferential tariff utilisation among Indian businesses remains below 50%, largely

because non-tariff barriers (NTBs) make claiming these benefits commercially impractical.

Indonesian registration requirements restrict Indian pharmaceutical exports, while Thai customs procedures force gems and jewellery exporters to reroute shipments through Hong Kong. Tariffs have fallen, but trade barriers remain.

Japan and South Korea tell a similar story. Despite an FTA with Japan since 2011, Indian pharmaceutical exports remain negligible because market approvals can take five to seven years and Japan has resisted recognising international testing standards. With South Korea, bilateral trade reached \$27 billion in 2024-25, but India accounted for only \$6.5 billion. Overall, India's FTA utilisation rate is about 25%, compared with 70%-80% for developed economies. The agreements existed on paper; the barriers remained in practice.

The next frontier of trade

This does not mean abandoning legitimate environmental or consumer protections, but regulatory systems must be transparent and proportionate. Otherwise, they risk fragmenting global markets at precisely the moment when supply chains are being re-organised.

India's newer agreements signal a genuine shift. The United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement explicitly mandates automatic recognition of medicines approved by major global regulators, and requires mutual acceptance of laboratory testing that eliminates duplicate compliance costs. The India-European Free Trade Association Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, in force since October 2025, goes further with mutual recognition of standards, streamlined conformity assessment, and a dedicated sub-committee mandated to address NTBs on an ongoing basis. For the first time, NTB reduction is a legally binding obligation.

The politics of trade still talks about tariffs. The economics of trade has already moved on. In the 21st century, the real barriers are regulatory. If the West wants a serious economic pivot to the east, addressing those barriers will matter far more than cutting tariffs ever did.

For decades, trade diplomacy revolved around tariffs. Governments negotiated reductions in import duties, and success in trade talks was measured in percentage points shaved off customs rates. In today's hyper-regulated global economy, tariffs barely matter. The real obstacles are faced in the laboratory and the law offices through

NTBs.

Tariffs

Barriers to Trade

Foreign Trade → 2 Types

50% → 18% ✓

Tariff Barriers

Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs)

Regulations

Health & Hygiene

Sanitary
Phytosanitary

Import Duties

Custom Duties

→ CVD

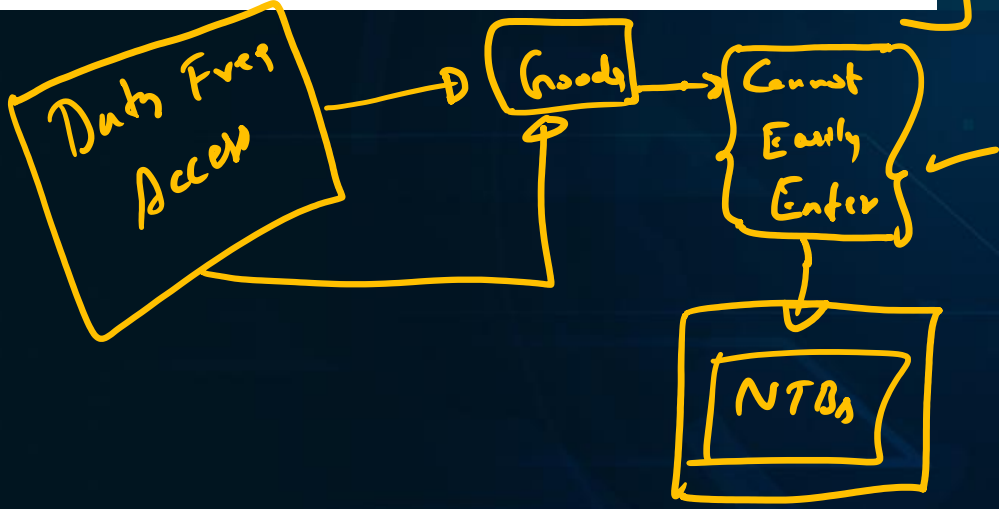
→ ADD

- Quality
- Certification
- Licensing
- Env
- IPR

Non-Tariff Barriers

Technical Barriers to Trade

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NTBs, the quiet trade weapon

GATT

Since the establishment of the **World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995**, average tariff rates among its members have fallen by nearly half, yet governments have not abandoned protectionism. **As tariffs declined, NTBs surged.** Today, they **affect around 90% of global trade** — a **sixfold increase over the past three decades.**

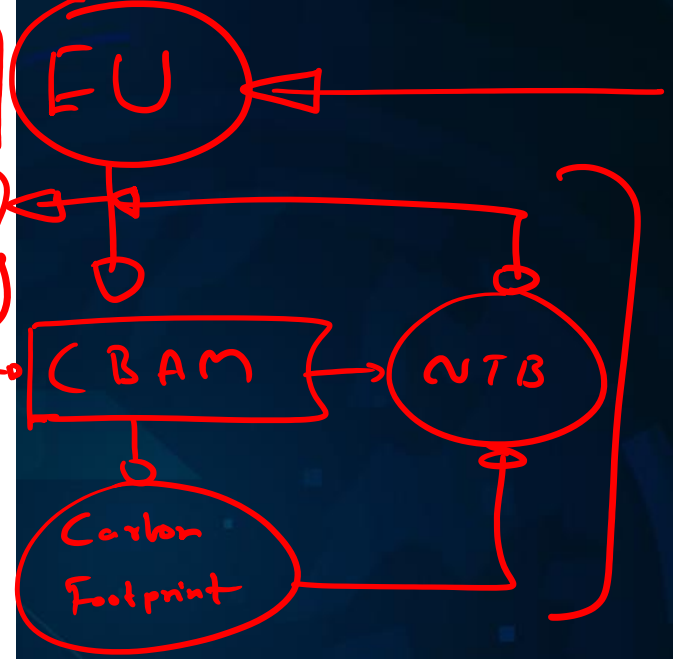
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Protectionist

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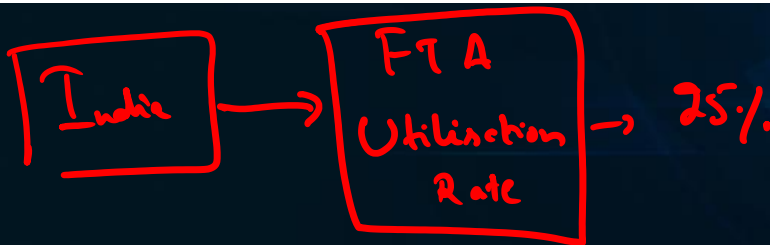
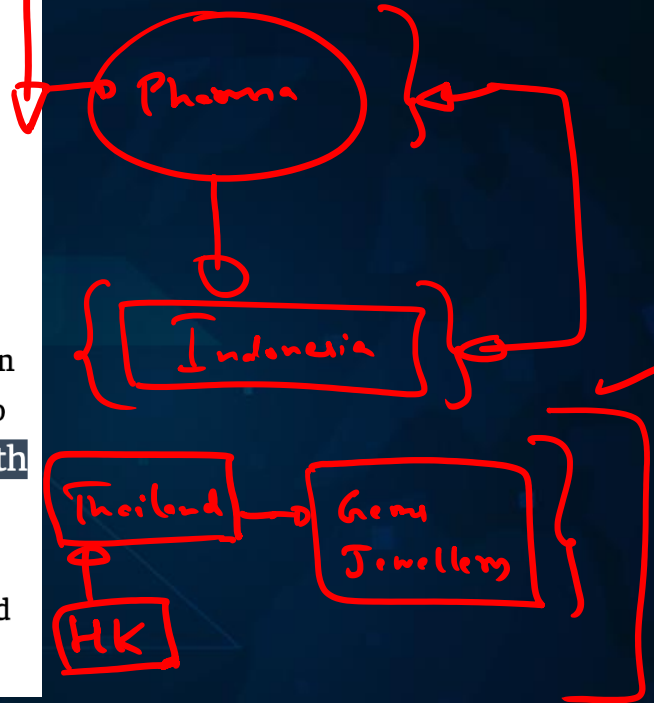
The Indian experience

ASEAN - Ind → 2010

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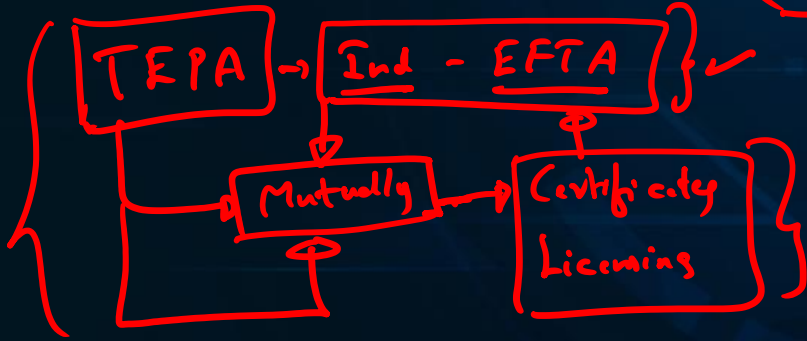
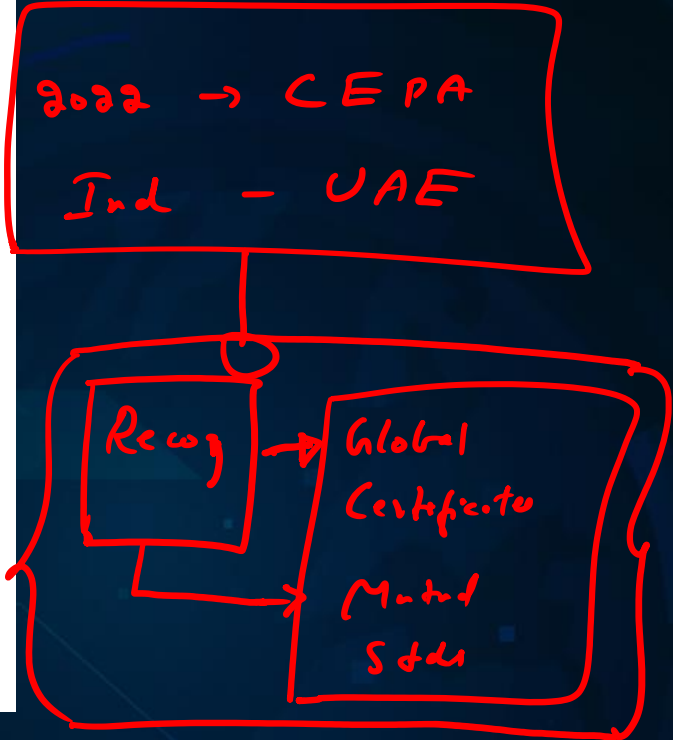
2011 → CEPA - Japan
Drug



The next frontier of trade

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Mains Practice Question

Q. Tariffs dominate the headlines, but non-tariff barriers increasingly determine trade outcomes. In the light of this statement, examine India's utilization of FTAs.

(250 words; 15 marks)

Lopsided solution

In India, regulatory oversight for pharmaceuticals needs to improve

As part of an overarching attempt to restore confidence in India's pharmaceutical supply chain after a series of deaths damaged the country's reputation as a drug exporter, the government has required a doctor's prescription for individuals to purchase syrup-based medicines. However, while it seems like a credible measure, it is also defensive rather than reformist. The Union Health Ministry has removed the term "syrup" from Schedule K of the Drugs Rules 1945, a change it had signalled when it issued the draft notification in December 2025, thus requiring cough syrups to be sold only with a prescription, through licensed pharmacies. These products were singled out after ethylene glycol (EG) and diethylene glycol (DEG) contamination in India-made cough syrups killed over 300 children across several countries since 2022. The WHO's warnings in 2022 and 2023 also undermined assumptions that India's export quality controls were effective and functioning independently. But beyond contamination, doctors have long raised concerns about how cough syrups are formulated and used. Many over-the-counter (OTC) cough syrups are 'cocktails' of bronchodilators, antihistamines, and decongestants, which can cause tremors and heart palpitations, extreme sedation or paradoxical agitation in infants, and blood pressure effects. The American Academy of Pediatrics has said that cough suppressants are quite ineffective for children under six years and may even be dangerous, as they can mask underlying conditions such as pneumonia or asthma. Yet, India's entrenched OTC culture makes pharmacists de facto primary care providers in many rural and semi-urban areas.

Most importantly, however, the contamination was the result of failures in manufacturing quality control, testing of raw materials, and regulatory oversight rather than consumer access. Even now, requiring a prescription may reduce inappropriate use and push patients away from self-medication, but it could never prevent contaminated products from reaching the market in the first place. The fundamental issue is that the government continues to tolerate the pharmaceutical lobby's argument that high-end testing requirements – for stronger quality control and ultimately better drugs – will bankrupt smaller manufacturers. Second, while the *Indian Pharmacopoeia* and the *Pharmacopoeia Internationalis* updated their analytical methods to detect EG/DEG following the deaths, failures in batch testing and enforcement persist. As a result, while India has around three dozen State drug controllers, they are chronically understaffed – so without a large increase in the inspectorate, the notification is likely to be ignored sans consequence in rural areas. In a globalised economy, subpar enforcement for medicines in even one country is dangerous; that is infinitely more so in a country aspiring to remain the world's pharmacy.

Indian Government banned the over-the-counter sale of all syrup-based medicines, including cough syrups, requiring a doctor's prescription for purchase



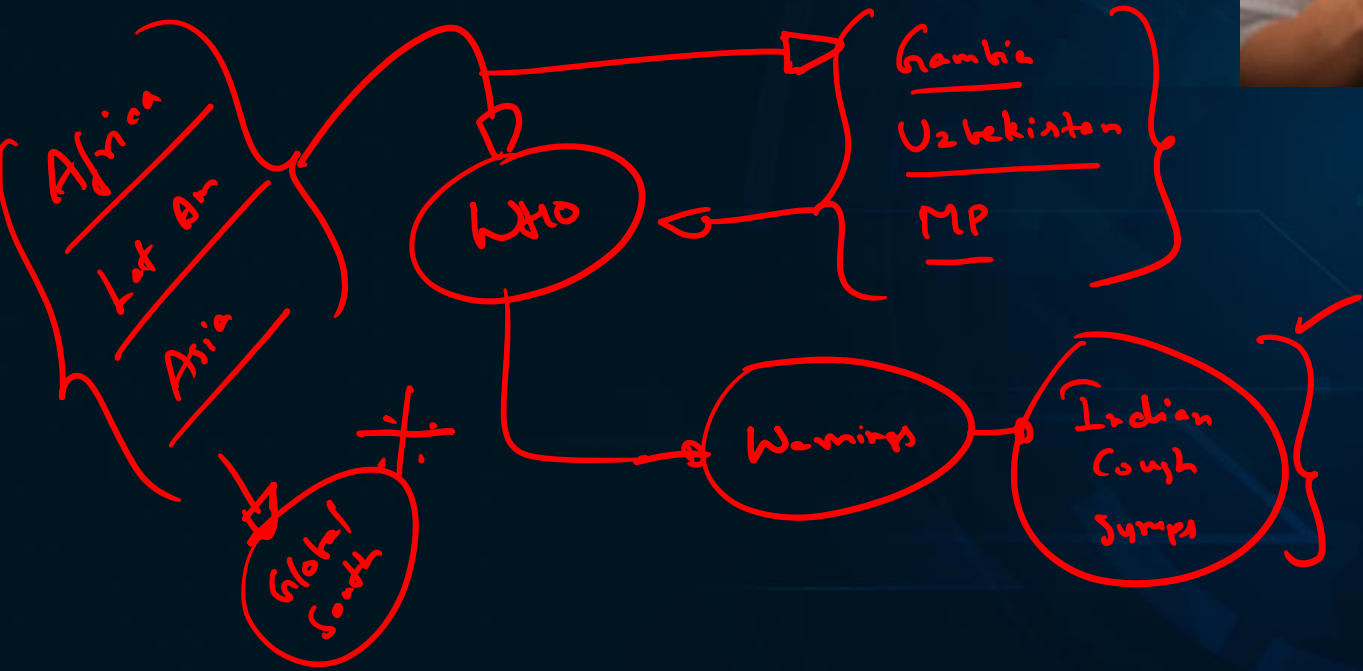
Cough Syrups

No longer

OTC
Medicine

Doc. Prescription

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INDIA EXPLORED

THE INDIA-GAMBIA COUGH SYRUP DEATHS

BBC NEWS | INDIA

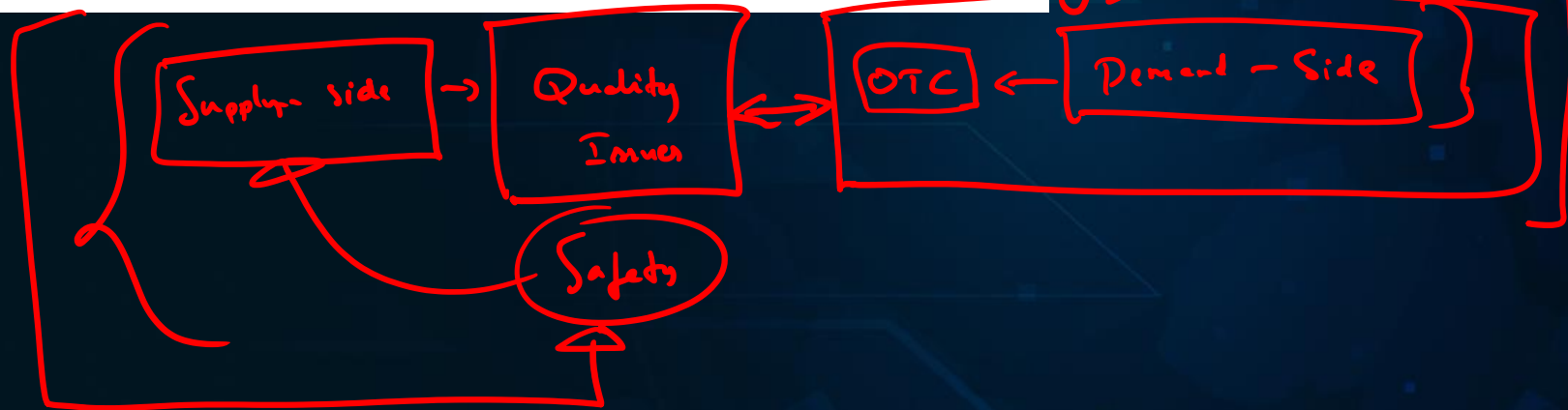


At least 22 children have died in India this month after consuming a contaminated cough syrup found to contain nearly 45% diethylene glycol (DEG), a toxic industrial solvent used in brake fluid and antifreeze. The concentration is hundreds of times above the permissible limit of 0.1% set by pharmacopeial safety standards.

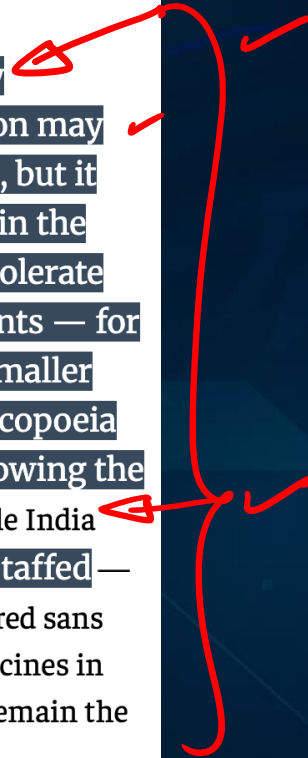
{ EG & DEG }

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Mains Practice Question



Q. India's aspiration to remain the "pharmacy of the world" is constrained by persistent weaknesses in pharmaceutical regulation and quality assurance mechanisms. Critically examine. (250 words; 15 marks)

Telegram evolved into 'new dark web', govt. tells Delhi HC

Govt. says the app is used by cybercriminals, exam paper leak operators; court questions the platform-wide ban as it hears Telegram's challenge

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Thursday submitted before the Delhi High Court that the messaging platform Telegram had evolved into the "new dark web", arguing that its architecture and privacy features had made it a preferred tool for cybercriminals, fraud networks, extremist and terror groups, and operators involved in examination paper leaks.

The government's submissions relied heavily on an Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) assessment that the platform was a growing hub for illicit online activity. The government has restricted access to the platform

Telegram on trial

The messaging platform contests restrictions imposed under Section 69A of the IT Act

Govt's stand

- Used by cybercriminals, fraud networks, extremist groups, and exam leak operators
- Fails to act against illegal and suspicious channels despite repeated requests

Telegram's stand

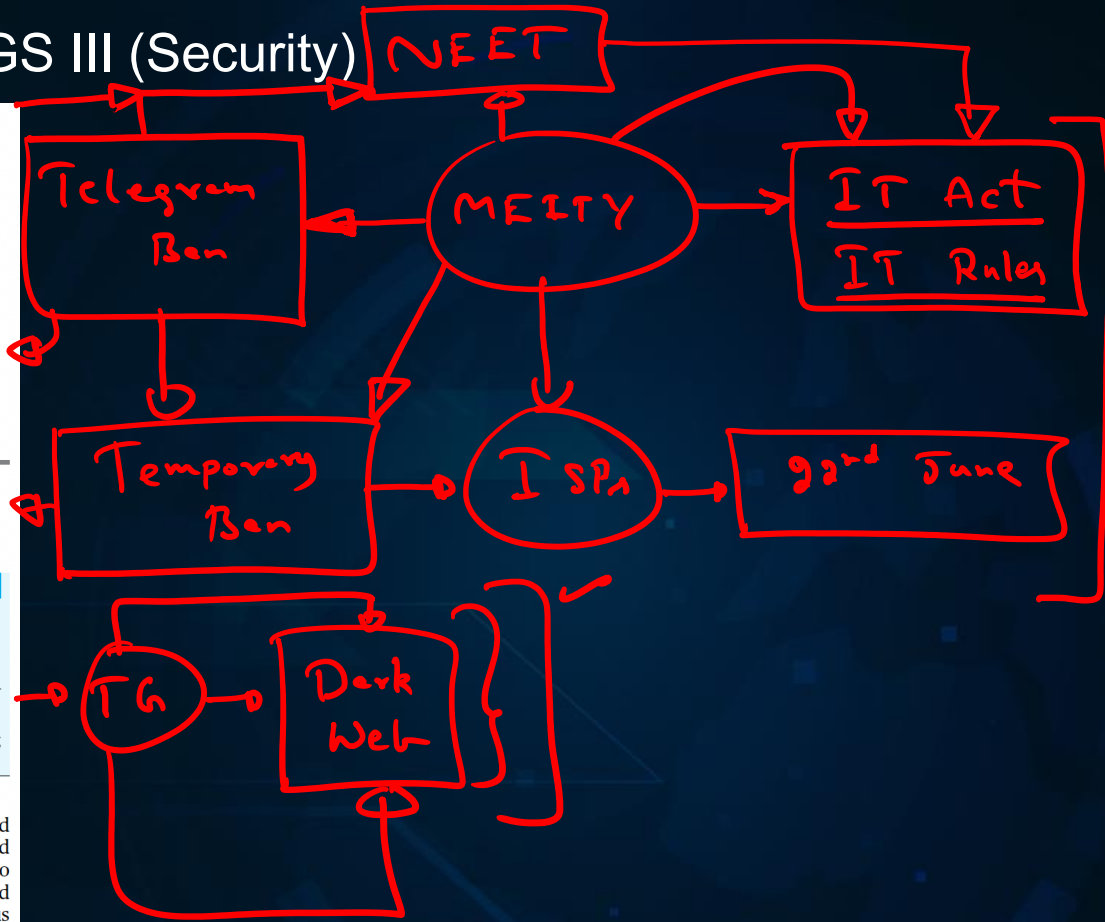
- Centre fails to justify emergency powers or a platform-wide ban
- Specific content can be blocked instead of restricting the entire platform

ahead of the June 21 NEET re-examination.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre during the hearing on Telegram's petition challenging the temporary ban imposed till June 22 under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, told the court

that the enterprise behind the messaging app had been repeatedly asked to proactively monitor and curb illegal and suspicious channels on the platform.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10
ON SECTION 69A
» PAGE 10



SURFACE WEB, DARK WEB, DEEP WEB

SURFACE WEB

Facebook
Google
Instagram
YouTube

DEEP WEB

Pay Wall
Limited Access

Medical Records
Legal Documents
Private Forums
Research Papers
Non Indexed Content

DARK WEB

Private Communication Forums
TOR
Illegal Trade
Illegal Activities

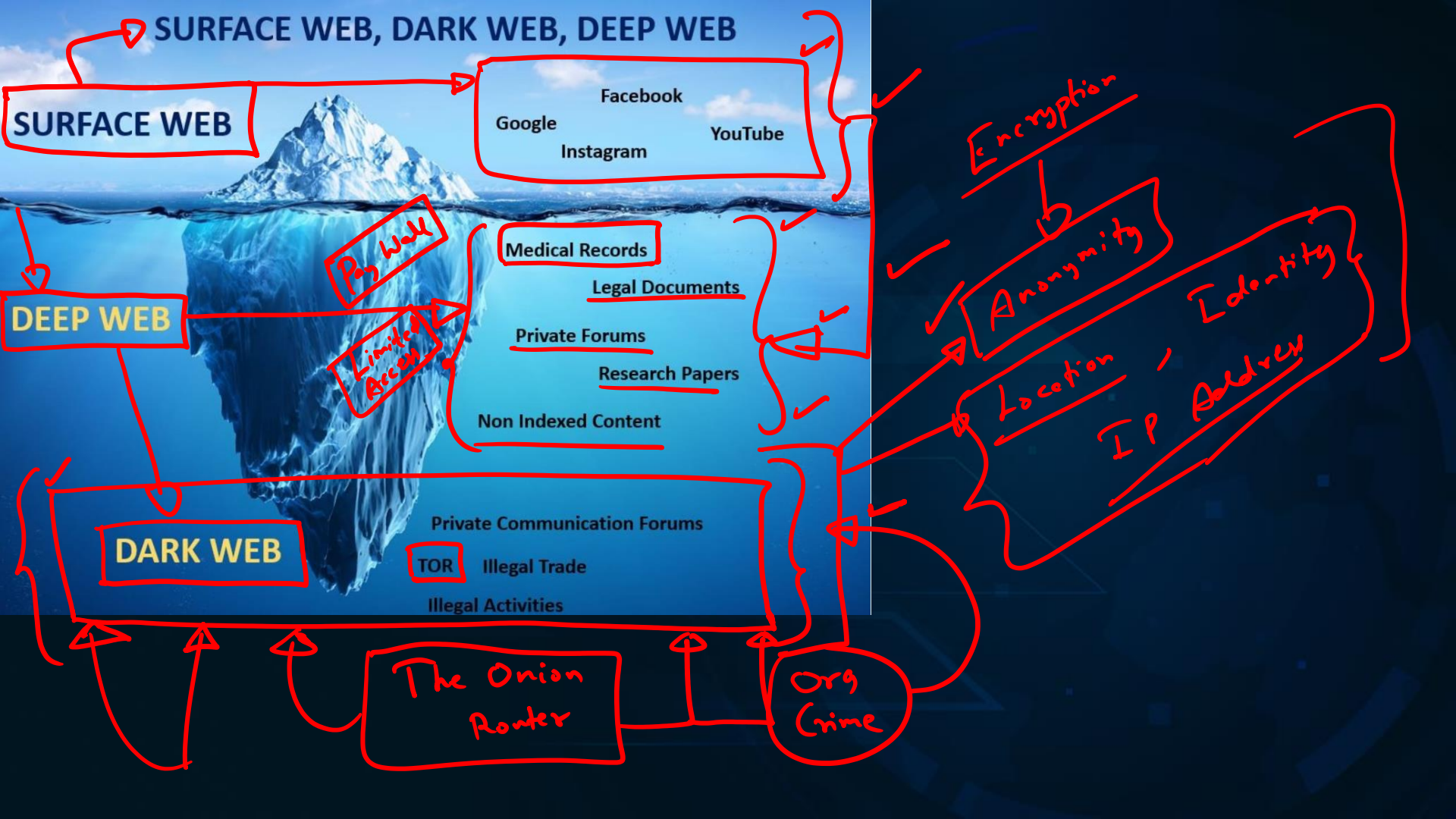
The Onion Router

Org Crime

Encryption

Anonymity

Location
Identity
IP Address



Telegram challenge once again puts spotlight on Section 69A of IT Act

NEWS ANALYSIS

Rizmi Lia M.
CHENNAI



Telegram has approached the Delhi HC challenging the ban, which is set to last till June 22.

authorises the Union government to block public access to any information via any computer resource, including applications and websites, if it is satisfied that such blocking is necessary "in the interest of India's sovereignty and integrity, defence of India, security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence".

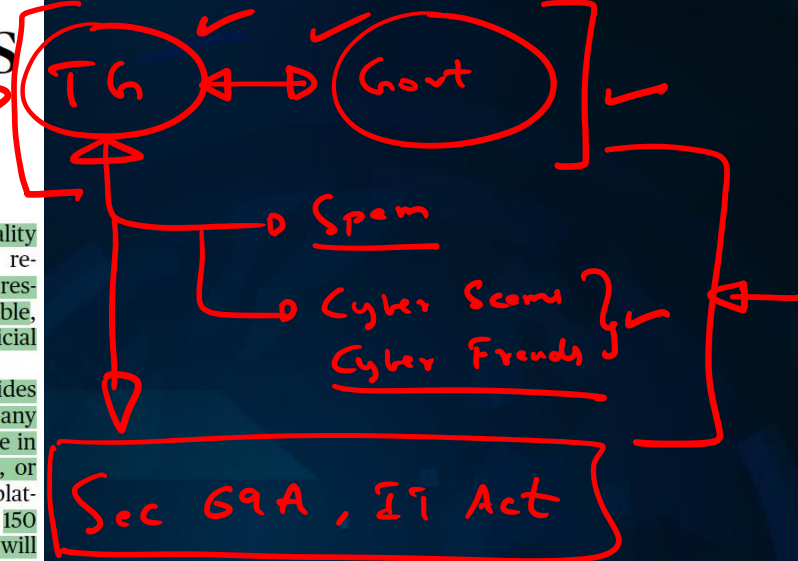
But the restriction may interfere with Article 19(1) (a) of the Constitution, which protects freedom of speech and expression. Therefore, the orders under Section 69A must be issued with the procedural safeguards established by the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking Access to Information by the Public) Rules, 2009.

In *Anuradha Bhasin v Union of India*, the Supreme Court examined the validity of the indefinite blanket ban on internet services in the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir, and the court held that freedom of speech and expression, as well as freedom to practice any profession or carry on any trade, business, or occupation over the internet, are protected by Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g). The court also concluded that orders restricting internet access must

meet the proportionality test: they must be required, use the least restrictive measures available, and be open to judicial review.

Article 19(1)(g) provides the right to practice any profession or to engage in any occupation, trade, or business. A ban on a platform that has about 150 million users in India will disrupt many creators, educators, and entrepreneurs running broadcast groups, and prevent them from maintaining communication with their subscribers. It thus limits one's ability to earn a living.

Section 79 of the IT Act also establishes intermediary safe harbour provision, which means platforms are not liable for third-party content if they exercise due diligence, follow the Information Technology Rules, 2021, and act quickly upon receiving knowledge of illegal content.



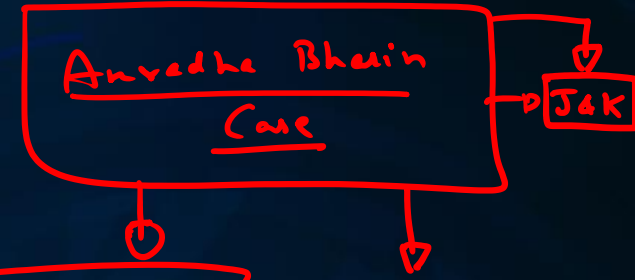
Art 19(1)(a)

Art 19(1)(g)

Section 69A of the IT Act

✓
Art 19 (1) (a) → Freedom of Exp

Art 19 (2) (g) → {Trade, Prof, Business}



✓
No I

✓
Safe Harbor

✓
Sec 79, IT Act

✓
IT Rules, 2021

✓
Take Down Block

SC - 3 Step Process

1. Proportionality Test
2. Min Restriction
3. Judicial Review

4. Pg 17 – GS II (IR) & GS III (Economy)

Revised pact with U.K. could save \$500 million for Indians

The agreement on social security, effective July 15, will save Indian firms and workers there about \$500 million worth of social security payments they otherwise would have had to pay in the U.K.

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The agreement on social security that India and the U.K. have signed and that will come into force on July 15 will save Indian companies and workers there about \$500 million worth of social security payments that they otherwise would have had to pay in the U.K., according to sources in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.



Shot in the arm: There are more than 900 Indian companies at present operational in the U.K., an official said. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

The original Agreement on Social Security, also referred to as the Double Contribution Convention (DCC), was signed in July 2025. It exempted companies in the U.K. from paying social security for the temporary Indian workers they employed for a period of three years, as long as they paid social security in India during that period.

On Wednesday, both governments announced that the DCC would come into effect on July 15 along with the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between India and the U.K.

As per the revised agreement, the social security exemption limit has now been increased to five years which will cover about 90-95% of the Indian workers in the U.K. and stands to significantly reduce costs for Indian companies operating in the U.K. "We have more than 75,000 workers from India

working in the U.K. and there are more than 900 Indian companies that are at present operational in the U.K.," a Commerce Ministry official explained on condition of anonymity since the matter is confidential until July 15. "On the basis of their minimum salary levels, the savings to Indian companies in the U.K. employing temporary Indian workers will come to more than half a billion dollars," the official added.

Imbalances rectified

The issue that had arisen was that, in the absence of a DCC, companies employing Indian workers had to pay social security for these workers in India as well as in the U.K. Most of these workers were in the U.K. for up to a period of five years. However, the benefits from social security in the U.K. accrue only after 10 consecutive years

brought the trade deal proceedings to a halt as both countries scrambled to find a solution without having to redo the CETA itself.

"If you look at this steel measure in detail, 85% of our steel exports to the U.K. was out of this," a second official explained. "Out of about \$890 million of steel export that we do to the U.K., only \$137 million was getting affected."

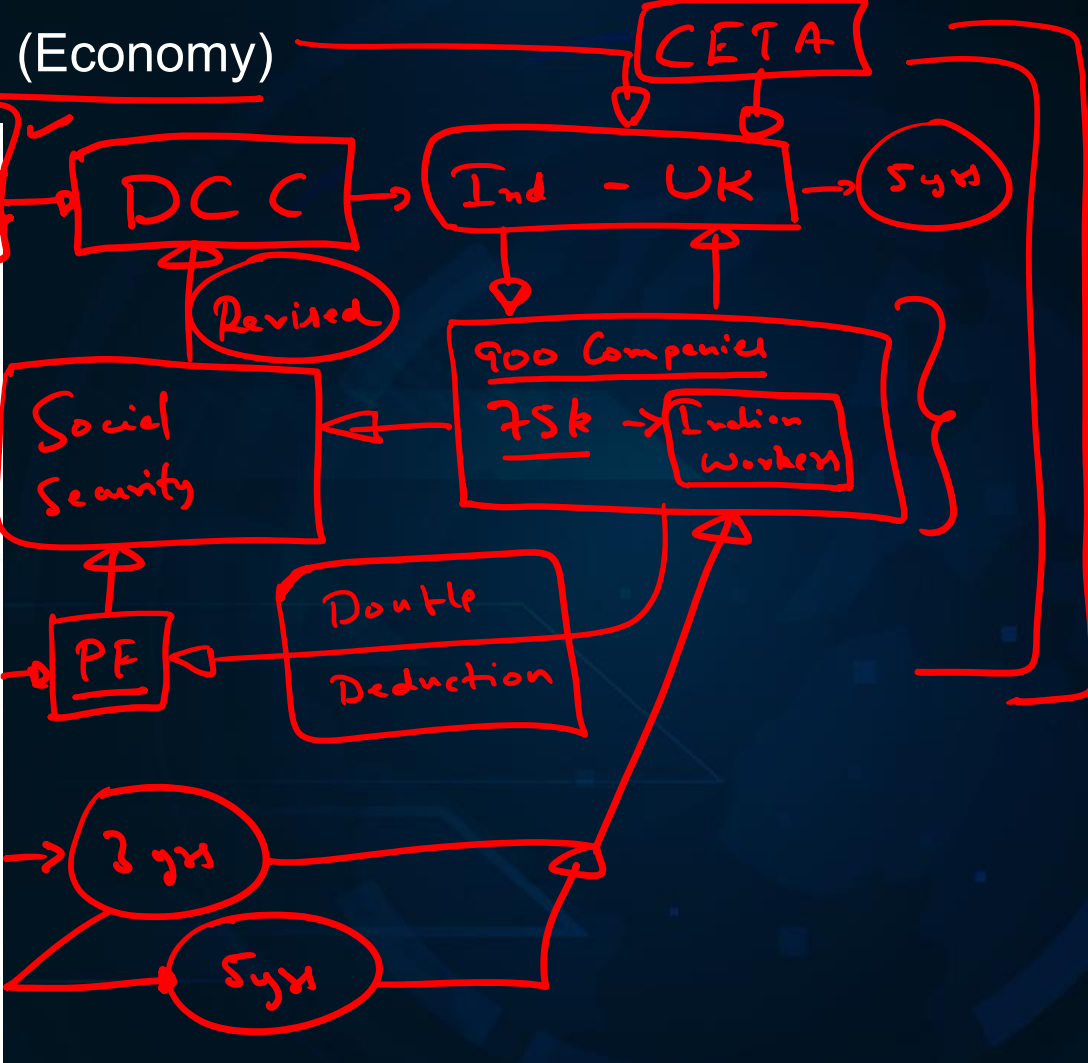
"We have arrived at a deal on this steel measure, which has taken care of our concerns," they added. "It was finalised only yesterday afternoon [hours before the deal was announced]. India will not lose any market access, and will have a decent market access in the affected portions. We are satisfied with the overall deal. We are happy that our concerns on steel have been addressed."

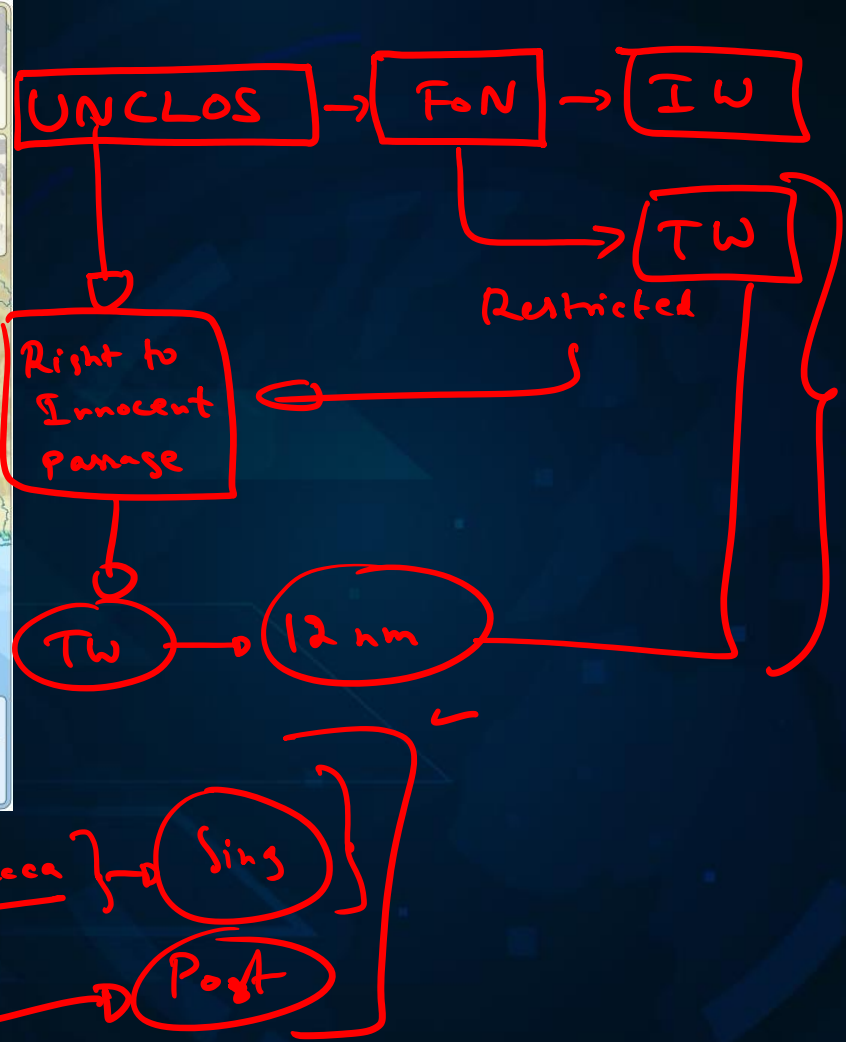
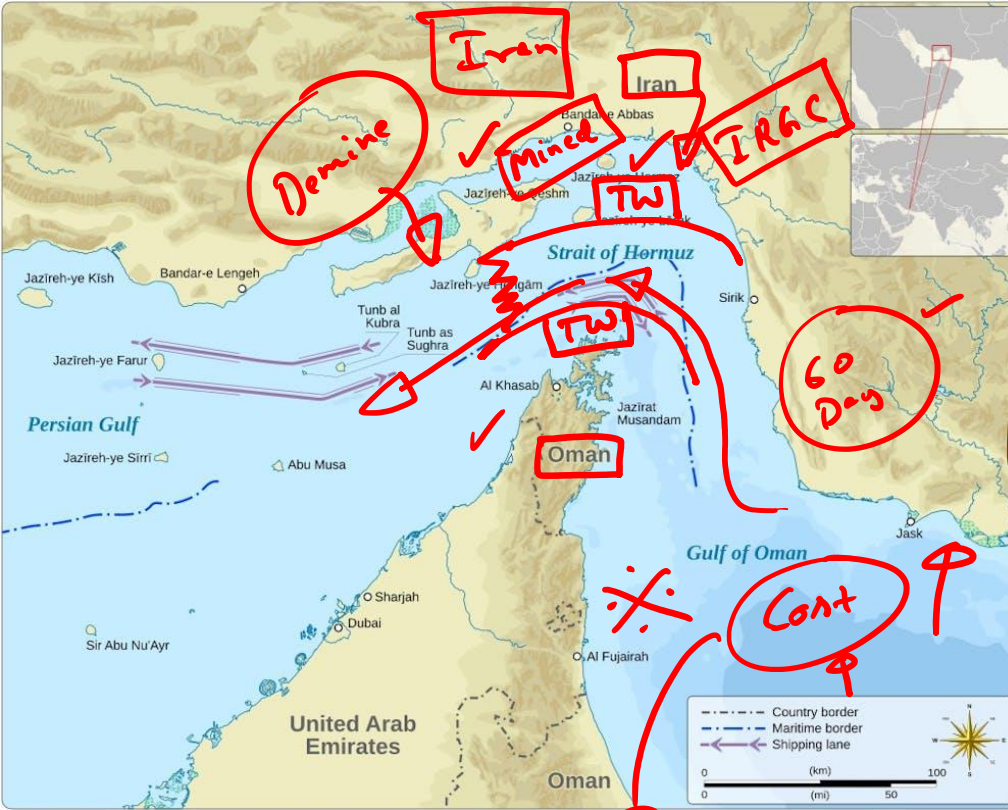
The two officials would not reveal details of what concessions India has obtained regarding the steel tariffs as the matter was still extremely sensitive for the U.K., which was still negotiating with other countries on the matter.

However, they said that the leeway granted to India would be in the form of a mix of country-specific quotas, residual quotas and access under authorised-use schemes.

The details will be available on July 1, when the U.K.'s tariffs come into effect.

The CETA was also signed in July last year and was supposed to be implemented by early May 2026. However, a fresh U.K. regulation on steel import tariffs temporarily – which had not been part of the CETA negotiations –





Prelims Bytes

What is Kerala's risk profile for Nipah?

Apr - Sep *

How do ecological and human factors intersect in driving spillovers? Will it be possible to prevent recurrent spillovers events? What has Kerala learnt from the multiple outbreaks? What makes Kerala's Nipah response effective in containing outbreaks? Why is Nipah classified as a high-threat pathogen within Kerala's zoonotic landscape?

- Nipah virus is a virus found in animals but can also affect humans. Zoonotic
- People with infection can develop a fever, and symptoms involving the brain (such as headache or confusion), and/or the lungs (such as difficulty breathing or cough).
- Cases of Nipah virus infection were first reported in 1998 and since then have been reported in Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore. The case fatality rate is estimated at 40% to 75%. Nipah
- Fruit bats of the Pteropodidae family are the natural host of Nipah virus. Nipah virus usually transmits from infected bats and other animals to humans and can also be transmitted directly between people. Fruit Bats
- There is currently no treatment or vaccine available for Nipah virus, however several candidate products are under development. Early intensive supportive care can improve survival.

Why is Nipah recurring in Kerala?

Research has consistently identified the Indian flying fox bat (*Pteropus medius*) or the fruit bat as the natural reservoir of Nipah virus in Kerala. Serological studies and viral detection in bats have shown that the virus is circulating in bat colonies in the State, particularly in northern districts.

In the 2018 Kerala outbreak, about 25% of the sampled bats were found to be positive for Nipah viral RNA and in subsequent events too, bat samples had revealed the presence of NiV.

The *Pteropus* species are found across the State and very near human settlements. A mapping study of bat-roosting sites by Kerala Forest Research Institute's Department of Wildlife Biology had found that almost all of the roosts were near human habitats, increasing the risk of zoonotic exposure.

Why is Nipah spillover risk highest in Kerala between April and September?

The recurrent NiV spillovers in Kerala with fair regularity suggest that the virus has established itself in the environment. The peak Nipah virus spillover risk in the State is from April to September, when the abundance of seasonal fruit-laden trees, increased bat foraging activity, bat breeding season and viral shedding dynamics coincide, increasing the risk of human exposure. This pattern has not changed in Kerala since the very first outbreak.

Because of the perennial natural virus reservoir in the State, it might not be possible to prevent recurrent NiV spillover events in Kerala.

What makes Kerala particularly vulnerable to zoonotic diseases?

It is the convergence of ecological, demographic, climatic factors and increased human-wildlife interface that makes Kerala a special lab for zoonotic diseases.

The Western Ghats, which stretches along the State's eastern flank, is one of the world's richest biodiversity spots and the tropical rainforest climate sustains

Rains → Fruits

Human

Fruit Bat

Assam NHM confirms seven Japanese encephalitis deaths

Seven people have died of Japanese encephalitis (JE) in Assam since the beginning of the year, while 32 others have died of acute encephalitis syndrome (AES), as of June 17, the State unit of the National Health Mission (NHM) said in a statement on Thursday. Almost 62% of all JE deaths in India since 2018 have been in Assam, according to national data, and outbreaks usually occur between May and October, peaking in July and August. Noting that the two distinct conditions are not interchangeable, Assam NHM executive director Abhijit Sarma clarified that JE is one cause of acute encephalitis syndrome (AES), but not all AES cases are of JE.

Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) is a flavivirus related to dengue, yellow fever and West Nile viruses, and is spread by mosquitoes (especially *Culex tritaeniorhynchus*).

• JEV is the main cause of viral encephalitis in many countries of Asia with an estimated 100 000 clinical cases every year (1).

Although symptomatic Japanese encephalitis (JE) is rare, the case-fatality rate among those with encephalitis can be as high as 30%. Permanent neurologic, cognitive and behavioural sequelae occur in 30–50% of those with encephalitis.

• The majority of cases occur in children below 15 years of age.

• Twenty-four countries in the WHO South-East Asia and Western Pacific Regions have endemic JEV transmission, exposing more than 3 billion people to risks of infection.

• There is no cure for the disease. Treatment is focused on relieving severe clinical signs and supporting the patient to overcome the infection.

• Safe and effective vaccines are available to prevent JE. WHO recommends that JE vaccination be integrated into national immunization schedules in all areas where JE disease is recognized as a public health issue.

Prime Minister condoles the passing of eminent Buddhist scholar Robert A. F. Thurman

Posted On: 18 JUN 2026 5:30AM by PIB Delhi

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has expressed deep sorrow over the passing of Mr. Robert A. F. Thurman.

The Prime Minister described Mr. Thurman as an eminent scholar of Buddhism, a distinguished teacher and a lifelong friend. His works, Mr. Thurman popularised Buddhist thoughts globally and built enduring bridges of understanding between cultures.

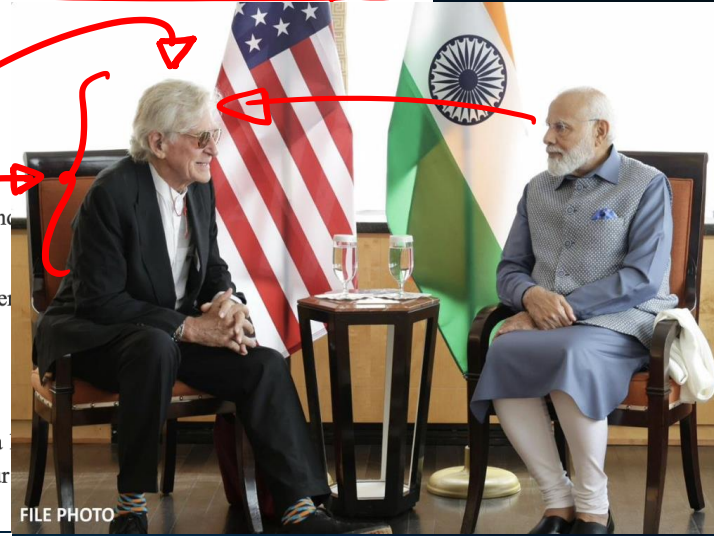
Recalling his meeting with Mr. Thurman in New York City a few years ago, the Prime Minister said they had an excellent conversation.

The Prime Minister conveyed his thoughts to Mr. Thurman's family, friends and admirers in this hour of grief.

In a post on X, Shri Modi said;

"Deeply saddened by the passing of Mr. Robert A. F. Thurman, an eminent scholar of Buddhism, a distinguished teacher and a friend who popularised Buddhist thoughts globally and also built enduring bridges of understanding between cultures. I fondly recall our conversations where we had an excellent conversation. My thoughts are with his family, friends and admirers in this hour of grief."

Robert Alexander Farrar Thurman (August 3, 1941 – June 16, 2026) was an American Buddhist author and academic who wrote, edited, and translated books about Tibetan Buddhism. He was the Je Tsongkhapa Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies at Columbia University, before retiring in 2019.^[1] He held the first endowed chair in Buddhist Studies in the West.^[1] He was the co-founder and president of Tibet House US, New York and its Menla Retreat & Dewa Spa in Phoenicia, NY. He translated the Vimalakirti Sutra from the Tibetan Kangyur into English. He was the father of actress Uma Thurman, and grandfather of Maya Hawke.



Bharat Buildcon 2026 Inaugurated Under the Theme 'One Nation, One Expo'

Minister of State Shri Jitin Prasada Highlights Role of FTAs in Boosting Economic Growth and Expanding Global Opportunities for Indian Industry

Bharat Buildcon 2026 Brings Together Participants from Over 90 Countries and 100 Indian Cities, Showcasing Innovations across 24 Building Material Segments

Posted On: 18 JUN 2026 5:08PM by PIB Delhi

Bharat Buildcon 2026 – One Nation, One Expo, an exhibition for the building materials and construction industry, was inaugurated today at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, New Delhi, by Minister of State for Commerce & Industry and Electronics & Information Technology Shri Jitin Prasada, Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Shri Manohar Lal, and Member of Parliament Shri Parshottam Rupala, in the presence of representatives of the construction and building materials industry.

More than 25,000 visitors attended the exhibition on the inaugural day. The exhibition brings together architects, builders, developers, contractors, manufacturers, traders, policymakers, industry associations and international buyers from different parts of India and abroad, providing a platform for industry interaction and business engagement.

Addressing the gathering, Minister of State for Commerce & Industry and Electronics & Information Technology Shri Jitin Prasada highlighted the role of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in supporting economic growth and expanding opportunities for Indian industries in international markets. Referring to the India–UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), he said the agreement is expected to provide enhanced market access and strengthen trade relations between the two countries, creating opportunities for Indian manufacturers and exporters.

Shri Prasada also referred to the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi of positioning India as a trusted global manufacturing and sourcing destination through a focus on quality. He noted that India has the capabilities and resources to strengthen its presence across sectors, including construction and building materials.

Shri Prasada said that platforms such as Bharat Buildcon facilitate interaction among manufacturers, innovators, buyers, policymakers and industry stakeholders, while contributing to greater collaboration and business opportunities within the sector.

Bharat Buildcon 2026 has participation from more than 90 countries and over 100 cities across India. The exhibition showcases products, technologies and innovations across 24 segments, including ceramics and stone, hardware, cement and steel, plywood and laminates, furniture, sanitaryware, electricals, paints, construction technologies and other allied sectors.

INDIAN ARMY CONTINGENT SET TO DEPART FOR MULTILATERAL MILITARY EXERCISE KHAAN QUEST

Posted On: 18 JUN 2026 5:01PM by PIB Delhi

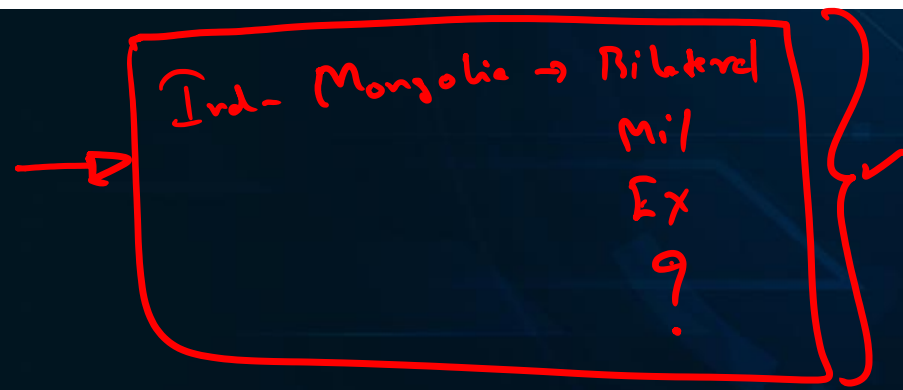
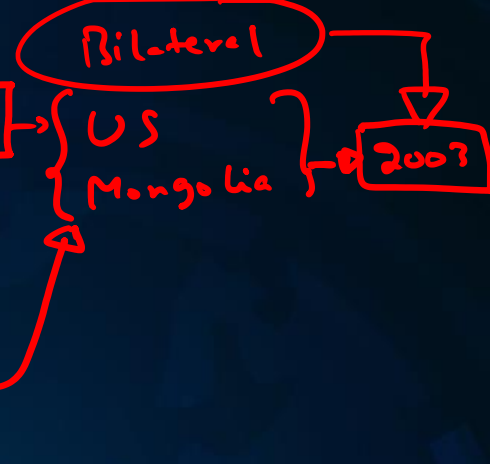
The Indian Army contingent is set to depart today to participate in the multilateral joint military exercise - Exercise KHAAN QUEST. The Exercise is scheduled to be conducted from 20 June to 03 July 2026 at Five Hills Training Area, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The Exercise will bring together military forces from across the world to collaborate and enhance interoperability in peace support operations under Chapter VII of United Nations Charter. The previous edition of the exercise was conducted from 14-28 June 2025 at Mongolia.

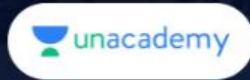
The exercise first started as a bilateral event between USA and Mongolian Defence Forces in the year 2003. Subsequently, from the year 2006 onwards the exercise graduated to a Multilateral Peacekeeping Exercise with current one being the 23rd iteration. The participation by an Indian contingent reflects India's steadfast commitment to global peace and strategic partnership with Mongolia.

The Indian Army contingent comprising 40 personnel is being represented by troops from a Battalion of the JAT REGIMENT along with personnel from other Arms and Services.

The aim of Exercise KHAAN QUEST is to prepare contingents of participating Defence Forces for peacekeeping missions while operating in a multilateral environment. The exercise will focus on conduct of joint planning and tactical drills such as establishment of static and mobile check points, cordon and search operations, patrolling, evacuation of civilians from hostile area, counter improvised explosive device drills, combat first aid and casualty evacuation.

Exercise KHAAN QUEST will enable the participating countries to share their best practices in tactics, techniques and procedures for conduct of joint operations. The exercise will facilitate operational readiness, bonhomie and camaraderie between soldiers of the participating countries.





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