

Armenia–Azerbaijan Peace Agreement Brokered by the United States

The deal aims to bring an **end to decades of conflict** between the two South Caucasus countries.

Key Provisions of the Deal

- **Cessation of Hostilities:** Both nations agreed to end armed conflict, establish diplomatic relations.
- **"Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity" (TRIPP):** New transit route linking Azerbaijan to its exclave **Nakhchivan** through Armenian territory.
 - ⊖ **US** has exclusive **development rights**.
- **US Cooperation Deals:** Both countries also signed separate agreements with the United States to enhance **cooperation in energy, technology, and the economy**.

Background of the Conflict

The Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict is mainly over **Nagorno-Karabakh**, a mountainous region **inside Azerbaijan** but **predominantly populated by ethnic Armenians**.

- **1980s:** Nagorno-Karabakh broke away from Azerbaijan with Armenia's support.
- **1991:** Both countries gained independence from the Soviet Union, but the dispute continued.
- **2023:** Azerbaijan regained full control, causing nearly **100,000 Armenians** to flee to Armenia.

India's Interest

India supports the peace deal, calling it an **"Important Achievement"** for dialogue and diplomacy. The deal is important for India as:

- **Armenia** is the only country in the region with which it has a **Friendship and Cooperation Treaty (signed in 1995)**.
- **Azerbaijan falls on the International North-South Transport Corridor** route, connecting India with Russia through Central Asia.



100th Anniversary of the Kakori Train Action

Happened on **August 9, 1925** at **Kakori**, a village near **Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**.

About the Kakori Incident

- **Incident:** Involved the robbery of the **Number 8 down-train** travelling from Shahjahanpur to Lucknow of its **official cash** to be used for revolutionary activities against the British state.
- **Key Personalities Involved:** **Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqullah Khan, Chandrashekhar Azad, Manmathnath Gupta, Rajendra Lahiri** (Revolutionaries of the **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA)**).
- **Reaction of the British Government**
 - ⊖ **Quick and Hard:** Arrested a large number of revolutionaries and tried them in the **Kakori Conspiracy Case (1925)**.
 - ◆ Led to the **hanging of Ashfaqulla Khan, Ramprasad Bismil, Roshan Singh and Rajendra Lahiri**.
- **Aftermath of the Incident**
 - ⊖ Caused a setback to the revolutionaries of **northern India** but not a fatal blow.
 - ⊖ **Reorganisation of the HRA to Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA)**.

About HRA and HSRA

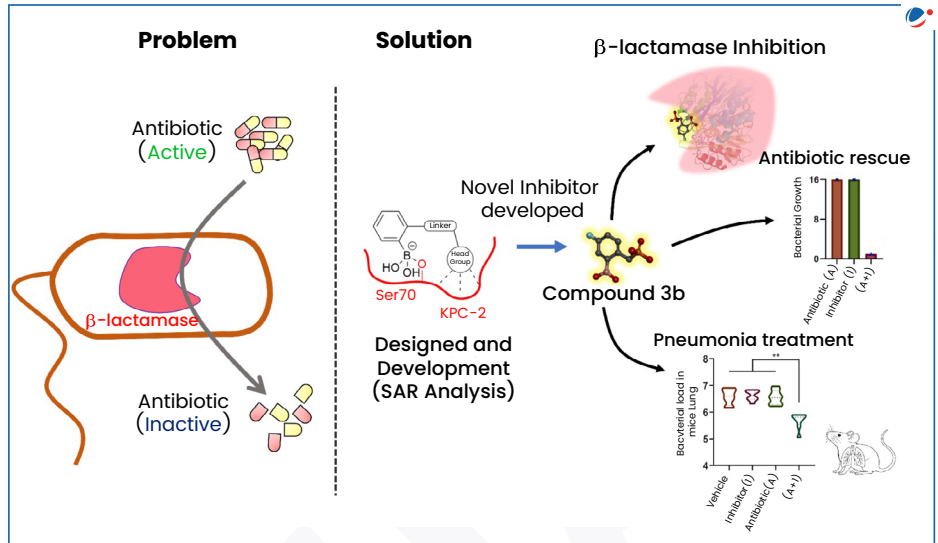
- **HRA** was formed in **Kanpur in 1924**.
 - ⊖ **Key Personalities Associated:** **Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan, Sachindra Nath Bakshi, Sachindranath Sanyal, and Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee**.
 - ⊖ **Basic Principle:** Establishment of a **Federal Republic of the United States of India** where the basic principle would be **adult suffrage**.
- **HSRA** was formed in **Feroz Shah Kotla, Delhi in 1928**.
 - ⊖ **Key Personalities Associated:** **Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Shiv Verma, Chandra Shekhar Azad and Vijay Kumar Sinha**.
 - ⊖ **Basic Principle:** Goal of establishing a **Socialist Republic**.

IIT-Roorkee Researchers Develop Promising Drug Candidate to Fight Antibiotic Resistance

The **novel molecule/drug candidate**, named **Compound 3b**, **neutralizes the resistance mechanism** and shows **strong therapeutic results** in preclinical model.

Key Highlights of the Discovery

- **Compound 3b** works alongside the **antibiotic Meropenem** to treat infections caused by **KPC-2-producing Klebsiella pneumoniae**, a **superbug** listed among the WHO's top-priority threats.
 - ⊖ Compound 3b molecule belongs to a class of **β -lactamase inhibitor drugs**.
 - ◆ **Beta-lactamase inhibitors** (having very little antibiotic activity of its own) are a **class of medicine**, that blocks the activity of **beta-lactamase enzymes** (also called **beta-lactamases**), preventing the degradation of **beta-lactam antimicrobials**.
 - ◆ **Beta-lactamases** are enzymes that inactivate the **beta-lactam ring**, which is a common **chemical structure** to all **beta-lactam antimicrobials**.



About Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR)

- **Meaning:** It occurs **when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites** no longer respond to **antimicrobial medicines**.
 - ⊖ **Antimicrobials** including **antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals, and antiparasitic** – are medicines used to **prevent and treat infectious diseases** in humans, animals and plants.
- **Consequences:** Antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicines become **ineffective** increasing the **risk of spread of diseases**, has significant **economic costs** (As per World Bank, AMR could result in US\$ 1 trillion additional healthcare costs by 2050).
- **Major Factors Contributing to AMR:** **Industrial waste** from production of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), Landfill leachate, untreated wastewater, and sewage effluents etc.
- **Initiatives Taken:** **One Health approach; Global Action Plan (GAP) on AMR** adopted during **2015 World Health Assembly** of the World Health Organisation, etc.

India's Successful Conservation Strategy shows Remarkable Rise in Asiatic Lion Population

From 284 lions (1990) to **891 (2025)**, India witnessed a **70% rise** in the population of Asiatic lion over the **last decade**.

About Asiatic Lion

- **Habitat:** **Dry deciduous forest** and **open grassy scrublands** in southwestern part of Saurashtra region of **Gujarat**.
 - ⊖ At present, **Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary** is their only abode.
- **Conservation Status:** **Vulnerable** (IUCN); **Schedule I** (Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972); **Appendix I** (CITES).
- **Key Characteristics of Asiatic Lion:** **Slightly smaller** than African lions. Have **no particular breeding season**.

Key Conservation Efforts for Asiatic Lions

- **Project Lion (2020):** Focusing on **Habitat improvement, monitoring** through advanced technologies like **radio-collaring** and **camera traps**, and addressing **human-wildlife conflict**.
- **Greater Gir Concept:** Expanding lion habitats beyond Gir to areas like **Girnar, Pania, and Mitiyala**.
- **International Big Cats Alliance:** Reinforces the global commitment to conserving big cats, including lions.
- Covered under **Species Recovery Programme**, part of **Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats Scheme**.

About Barda Wildlife Sanctuary

- **Location:** Porbandar and Devbhumi Dwarka districts, **Gujarat**.
- **Significance:** Despite the small forest area of **192.31 sq. km**, it hosts a number of medicinal plants and is a **significant biodiversity hotspot**.
 - ⊖ Barda is emerging as a **second home** for Asiatic Lions.
- **Declared a Sanctuary:** In 1979.
- **Key Flora:** Gorad, Babul, Dhav, Rayan, Ber, Jamun, Amli, Dhudhlo, Bamboo, etc.
- **Key Fauna:** Sambar, Chital, Chinkara, etc.

Economic Sanctions as A Tool of US Hegemony

A working paper by Dr. Urjit Patel (former governor of RBI) **recognises that** using **economic coercion** to achieve geopolitical goals **has been a longstanding American policy** and is only **expanding under the Trump Presidency**.

➤ Over the years, the US has sanctioned oil exports from Venezuela, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Syria.

Key Highlights of the Paper

➤ **Sanctions as a Tool of Economic Warfare:** Economic sanctions – curbs on trade and shipping, banking, payments channels, etc. are a **substitute for military war for lining up the diplomatic agendas**.

➤ **Rise in Number yet Limited Effectiveness:** Despite a deluge of sanctions in the 21st century, sanctions have been largely **ineffective in achieving the diplomatic objectives of sanctioners**.

⊕ Of 687 sanctions since 2000, **fewer than 20% achieved complete success**.

➤ **Rise of Secondary Sanctions:** They are **extraterritorial**, imposed to impede the economic activity of third countries not directly violating primary sanctions.

⊕ The US and allies (**G7, EU**) use **secondary sanctions** to block third-party trade with sanctioned countries. Key Examples are:

- ◆ **Chabahar Port (Iran):** Indian investment hit by US sanctions.
- ◆ **Oil Investments in Russia:** Indian PSUs unable to access **\$900 million** in dividends due to US/EU payment restrictions.

India should view the **emerging international financial architecture** around BRICS and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as a **"risk mitigant"** and a **rational response to the ever-expanding sanctions regime**.

The effectiveness of US sanctions relies heavily on:



Dollar dominance:
The US dollar's role as the global reserve currency



Financial control:
America's central position in international banking systems



Payment networks:
Using the dollar correspondent banking system as a "switch" to control global transactions

Also in News



Special Development Packages (SDPs) for Assam and Tripura

The Union Cabinet has approved **4 new components under the SDPs for Assam and Tripura**.

➤ The expansion focus on development of **Adivasi, Dimasa, ULFA Areas in Assam and Tribal Communities in Tripura**.

About SDPs for Assam and Tripura

➤ **Type:** Central Sector Scheme

➤ **Purpose:**

- ⊕ **Improve socio-economic conditions** of vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- ⊕ **Boost jobs, healthcare, education, skills**, and livelihoods for youth and women.
- ⊕ **Attract more tourists**, creating additional employment.

It follows **previous Memoranda of Settlement (MoS)-based development packages** announced for groups like the **Bodo and Karbi**, which have shown promising outcomes in **peace-building in the North Eastern Region**.



Science, Health and Innovation for Nextgen Explorers (SHINE) Programme

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Department of Health Research organized the **SHINE Programme**.

About SHINE Programme

- **Aim:** To introduce students to health and biomedical research, motivating young leaders toward science and public health careers.
- **Activities:** It includes **guided laboratory tours, research exhibitions, poster walks, etc.**
- **Participation:** Over 13,000 students of grades 9 to 12 participated in the program.
- **Significance:** Ignite **scientific curiosity, foster innovation** and **inspire the next generation** of health researchers.



Greater One-Horned Rhino

An **IUCN-TRAFFIC** report commends India's improved monitoring and surveillance, which has sharply reduced **Greater One-Horned Rhino** poaching.

➤ **TRAFFIC** is a leading **NGO working globally on trade in wild animals and plants** in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

⊕ It is **jointly run by WWF and IUCN**.

About the Greater One-Horned Rhino

- **Features:** Single horn, thick armor-like skin.
- **Diet:** Grass, leaves, fruits, aquatic plants.
- **Size:** Largest among the five rhino species.
- **Range:** Found in India and Nepal.
- **Habitat:** Forests, grasslands, inland wetlands.
- **Threats:** Loss of genetic diversity, Habitat loss and Degradation.
- **Protection Status**
 - ⊕ **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable.
 - ⊕ **CITES:** Appendix I.
 - ⊕ **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I.
- **Key Indian Initiatives**
 - ⊕ National Conservation Strategy for the Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros (2019).
 - ⊕ Indian Rhino Vision (IRV) 2020.





Cancer AI & Technology Challenge (CATCH) Grant Program

IndiaAI Mission announced the **Cancer AI & Technology Challenge (CATCH)**.

➤ **IndiaAI Mission** is a flagship mission of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.

About CATCH Grant Program

- **Purpose:** To fast-track the validation and deployment of **AI solutions across the cancer care continuum in India**.
- **Collaboration:** Launched as a **joint innovation grant program** in partnership with the **National Cancer Grid (NCG)**.
- **Support:** Selected proposals will receive milestone-based pilot funding up to **₹50 lakhs**, **mentorship support**, access to clinical validation sites, and the **opportunity to scale across** the NCG network and IndiaAI-supported public channels.



Animal Stem Cell Biobank

India's **first state-of-the-art animal stem cell biobank and laboratory** inaugurated at **National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NIAB), Hyderabad**.

➤ Stem cells are **non-specialised cells** with an inherent property of **self-renewal** and **potency**.

About Animal Stem Cell Biobank

- **Key Features:** Stem cell culture unit, 3D bioprinter, bacterial culture lab, cryostorage, etc.
- **Significance:** Focus on **regenerative medicine and cellular therapies for livestock**, advance research in **disease modelling, tissue engineering, etc.**
- **Supported By:** **National Biopharma Mission (NBM)** of Department of Biotechnology – BIRAC.
 - ⊕ NBM was approved in **2017** as **industry-Academia Collaborative Mission** for accelerating biopharmaceutical development.



Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA)

The 5th anniversary of the launch of NMBA is being celebrated.

About NMBA

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE).
- **Genesis:** Launched in 2020 as a key initiative under the **National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR)**.
 - ⊕ **Article 47** of the Constitution directs State to curb the consumption of intoxicating substances that are injurious to health.
- **Purpose:** To **prevent, treat, and rehabilitate** people affected by substance abuse.
- **Coverage:** Initially targeted **272 high-risk districts**, now covers all districts across India.
- **Three-Pronged Strategy**
 - ⊕ **Supply Control:** Led by the **Narcotics Control Bureau**.
 - ⊕ **Demand Reduction & Awareness:** Led by the **MoSJE**.
 - ⊕ **Treatment & Rehabilitation:** Managed by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
- **Local Implementation:** **District Nasha Mukta Committees**, headed by District Collectors/Magistrates, prepare and run local action plans.



PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Scheme

Ministry of Heavy Industries extends the tenure of the PM E-DRIVE Scheme by 2 years from **31 March 2026 to 31 March 2028**.

About PM E-DRIVE Scheme

- **Purpose:** Accelerate EV adoption, build charging infrastructure, and enhance the EV manufacturing ecosystem.
- **Type:** Central Sector Scheme
- **Target:** Incentivize e-2Ws, e-3Ws, e-ambulances, e-trucks, and e-buses.
- **Components:**
 - ⊕ **Subsidies:** **Demand incentives** for EVs like e-2Ws, e-3Ws, e-ambulances, e-trucks, and other emerging EV categories.
 - ⊕ **Grants for Capital Assets:** Funding for e-buses, establishment of charging infrastructure, and modernization of MHI testing agencies.
 - ⊕ **Administrative Support:** Information, Education & Communication (IEC) activities and fees for the Project Management Agency (PMA).



Multidisciplinary Education and Research Improvement in Technical Education (MERITE) Scheme

Union Cabinet approves Budgetary Support for MERITE Scheme.

About MERITE Scheme

- **Type:** Central Sector Scheme
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Education
- **Objective:** To improve the quality, equity and governance in technical education covering all States/UTs.
 - ⊕ Aligned with **National Education Policy 2020**.
- **Budget:** **Rs.4200 crore** for a period from **2025-26 to 2029-30**.
 - ⊕ Includes external assistance of **Rs.2100 crore** from **World Bank** as loan.
- **Beneficiaries:** **275 technical institutions** comprising **175 engineering institutions and 100 polytechnics**.
- **Significance:** Support for Maker Labs, skill hubs, employability, etc.



Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

Union Cabinet approves **continuation** of **Targeted Subsidy** of Rs.300/14.2 kg LPG cylinder for up to 9 refills annually for PMUY Consumers for 2025-26.

About PMUY

- **Launched in:** 2016
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- **Objective:** Make clean cooking fuel like LPG available to the rural and deprived households.
- **Applicant:** **Adult women** from poor households.
- **Target:** Release **8 Crore LPG Connections** to rural poor by March 2020 (Achieved in September, 2019).
 - ⊕ As on 01.07.2025, there are **about 10.33 crore PMUY connections** across the country.



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR