

India and Canada agree on restoration of High Commissioners: Foreign Secretary

The **Prime Ministers** of India and Canada **reaffirmed the importance of India-Canada ties** during a **meeting** on the sidelines of the **G7 Summit**.

- It is being seen as the **first** among the **calibrated steps** towards **restoration of stable India-Canada bilateral relations** after disruptions in ties in 2024.

Other key Outcomes of the meeting

- Both the leaders reaffirmed their shared interest in promoting a **free and open Indo-Pacific**.
- They also discussed **opportunities** for **future collaboration** in areas like clean energy, education, supply chain resilience etc., and restarting negotiations on **trade agreements**.

Factors behind the Fallout in India-Canada Relations

- **Issue of Khalistani extremism:** Canada harbouring Khalistani separatist elements that threaten **India's sovereignty**.
 - ⊕ E.g., An **unofficial referendum** on forming an independent Sikh state took place in Canada in 2023.
- **Diplomatic tensions:** In the context of the killing of a Sikh separatist leader in Canada, Canada alleged involvement of Indian diplomats, leading to **expelling of diplomats by both sides in October, 2024**.
- **Security cooperation:** Canada has been **unresponsive** towards India's multiple **extradition requests** for **terrorists** living in Canada.

India-Canada Relations

- **Shared values:** Relations are based on shared values of democracy, cultural diversity, expanding economic engagement, and long-standing people-to-people ties.
- **Economic ties:** In 2023, India's exports to Canada were worth USD 7.53 billion and imports from Canada were worth CAD 5.12 billion.
- **Consular Matters:** Signed **Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in 1994** and **Extradition Treaty in 1987**.
- **Science and Technology:** Collaborations in fields of Polar/Arctic studies, sustainable fuels, etc.
 - ⊕ **ISRO** flew **Canada's first Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite** during launch of the 100th Satellite from PSLV in 2018.
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:** A Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (NCA) was signed in 2010 (came into force in 2013).

Global Ocean Darkening threatens underwater Ecosystems

A study done by researchers from a UK University found that **21% of the global ocean had become darker** between 2003 and 2022, especially in the Arctic, Antarctic, and Gulf Stream region.

What is the Darkening of the Ocean?

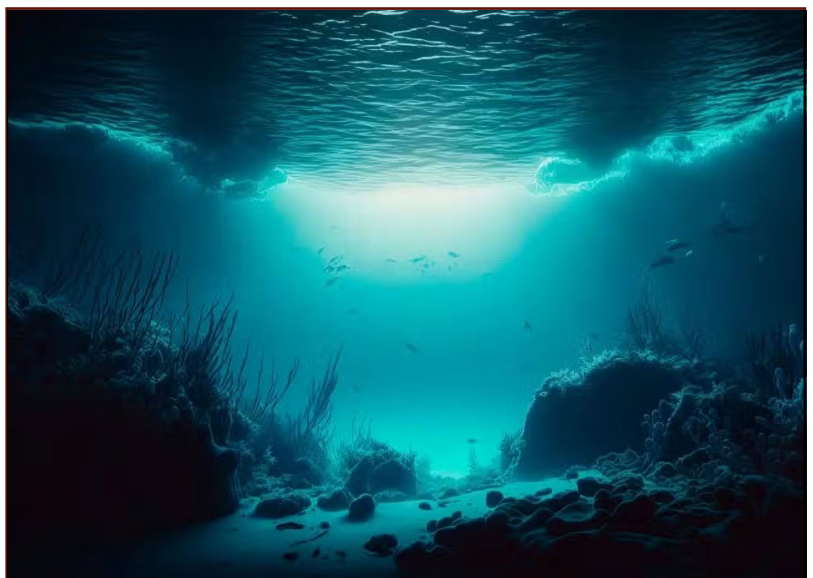
- It refers to a **reduction in light penetration** into the global oceans, **shrinking the photic zone**.
 - ⊕ The photic zone is the **sunlit layer (about 200 meters in depth)** where most marine life (nearly 90%) thrives.
- As per the study, the current darkening of the oceans could be due to **ecological shifts**, potentially driven by **phytoplankton and zooplankton blooms**.

Reasons behind darkening of the Ocean

- **In Coastal Oceans:** Combination of **nutrient, organic material and sediment loading** near the coasts, caused by factors such as **agricultural runoff and increased rainfall**.
- **In Open Oceans:** Driven by **warming of the surface oceans** (leading to algal bloom) and climate-driven changes in the **ocean circulation patterns**.

Impact of the Ocean Darkening

- **Marine ecology and productivity:** Ocean darkening **limits light-dependent processes** such as **growth, communication, reproduction, photosynthesis**, etc., thus, limiting ocean productivity.
- **Fisheries industry:** Fish stocks decline due to habitat compression and disrupted reproductive cycles.
- **Regulation of climate:** hampers carbon absorption and oxygen production, affecting climate regulation.



Bihar set to become 1st State to adopt E-Voting for Urban Polls

Recently, the **Bihar State Election Commission** has decided to roll out an **e-voting system using an Android-based mobile** for the **upcoming municipal and urban body polls** scheduled later this month in the state.

➤ **Electronic voting** (e-voting) systems allow people to vote using electronic devices like computers, voting machines (DREs), and smartcards.

Key Features of the Bihar's E-Voting

- **Mobile Applications:** The e-voting process will use **two Android-based mobile apps (namely "e-Voting SECBHR")** - one by C-DAC and another by the Bihar State Election Commission.
- **Security:** The system includes Blockchain, liveness detection, and facial verification (face match, live scan, and comparison) to ensure secure and authentic voting.
- **Audit Trail:** Like VVPAT with EVMs, an audit trail is included to track and verify each vote, ensuring transparency and tamper-proof records.

Significance of e-Voting

- **Improved Accessibility:** Enables participation for groups who often face barriers in traditional voting - such as migrant workers, persons with disabilities etc.
- **Young and Mobile Voters:** Online voting is ideal for tech-savvy youth. It makes voting easier for first-time voters and helps build long-term voting habits.
- **Increase in Voter Turnout:** By lowering the time and effort required to vote, online voting can help increase overall turnout, especially among marginalized or mobile populations.

Concerns with e-Voting: Vulnerable to hacking, manipulation, and fraud; voting from home makes it hard to ensure privacy and a coercion-free environment; may exclude citizens without internet access or digital literacy, etc.

Conclusion

Adoption of e-voting marks a significant stride towards electoral modernization, promising greater accessibility and convenience. However, its success hinges on addressing concerns related to cybersecurity, digital exclusion, and voter coercion to ensure trust and inclusivity in the democratic process.

Maharashtra Government has issued Government Resolution (GR) making Hindi the third Language in Schools

The step was taken as part of the implementation of the '**State Curriculum Framework for School Education 2024**', aligned with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

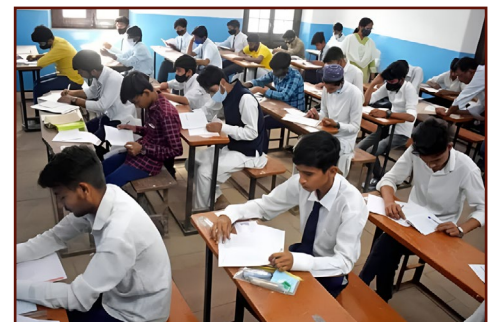
- Order states that **Hindi** will be taught as the **third language** to students of **Classes 1-5** in Marathi and English medium schools.
- It provides for **option to opt out** from Hindi, if 20 students per grade in a school wish to **learn any other Indian language**.

Three Language Formula

- **Origin: Introduced** in the **NEP 1968** based on the recommendations of the **Kothari Commission**.
 - ⊕ It mandated **mother tongue or regional language, official language and a modern Indian or European language**
- **NEP 2020:** Promotes **three-language formula (having at least two native languages)** without imposition of any language and taking into consideration **choices** of States, regions and children.
 - ⊕ It states that wherever possible, the **medium of instruction until at least Grade 5**, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the **home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language**.

Need for Three Language Policy

- **Constitutional provisions:** State to facilitate **instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage** especially for linguistic minorities (**Article 350A**) and Directives for development of Hindi language (**Article 351**).
- **Cultural Significance:** Promotion of multilingualism, multiculturalism, national unity and associated cognitive benefits to young students.



Challenges in implementing Three Language Policy

- **Politicisation:** Multilingual education is seen to endanger linguistic identity. **E.g. Son-of-the-soils protests in Maharashtra, Karnataka.**
- **Choice v. imposition:** Learning languages should be a choice rather than imposition.
- **Overburdening Primary students:** Including three languages in primary education burdens children in an already stressed education system with basic literacy issues.
- **Implementation challenges:** Especially in **linguistically diverse states** (e.g. Nagaland), **tribal communities**; limited resources with States etc.

Ministry of Education releases 'Performance Grade Index (PGI) 2.0' for 2022-23 & 2023-24

PGI holistically assesses the performance of school education systems across States and UTs utilizing data from the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+), National Achievement Survey (NAS), PM-POSHAN portal, PRABAND portal and Vidyanjali Portal.

About PGI 2.0

- **Genesis:** PGI was launched in 2017 and later revamped as PGI 2.0 in 2021.
- **Structure:** PGI structure comprises of total weightage of 1000 points across 73 indicators, which are grouped under 2 Categories viz., Outcome and Governance & Management.
 - ⊕ These categories are further divided into 6 domains, viz., Learning Outcomes (LO), Access (A), Infrastructure & Facilities (IF), Equity (E), Governance Processes (GP) and Teacher Education & Training (TET).
- **Evaluation:** Across 10 Grades out of 1000 points. (Refer Infographic).

Key Findings of the Report

- **No state/UT** achieved the top four grades (Daksh, Utkarsh, Atti-Uttam, Uttam).
- **Top Performer:** Only Chandigarh attained Grade Prachesta-1.
- **Lowest Performer:** Meghalaya is the only state in the tenth grade (Akanshi-3).
- **Overall Trends:**

- ⊕ 24 states/UTs improved scores in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23.
- ⊕ 12 states/UTs including Bihar, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, etc. saw score declines.

Scores (% of total points)	Score range	Grade
91% to 100%	941-1000	Daksh
81% to 90%	881-940	Utkarsh
71% to 80%	821-880	Atti-Uttam
61% to 70%	761-820	Uttam
51% to 60%	701-760	Prachesta -1
41% to 50%	641-700	Prachesta -2
31% to 40%	581-640	Prachesta -3
21% to 30%	521-580	Akanshi-1
11% to 20%	461-520	Akanshi-2
Up to 10%	401-460	Akanshi-3



Also In News



Front Running

Recently, SEBI has banned the Director of IIFL Securities among others for front running.

About Front Running

- It is an illegal practice of purchasing a security based on advanced non-public information regarding an expected large transaction that will affect the price of a security.
- It is considered a form of market manipulation as it leads to security price movements being manipulated based on non-public information.
 - ⊕ E.g., Broker executes own order based on the client's large stock order.
- It can undermine market integrity and erode investor confidence.



INS Arnala

Recently, INS Arnala was commissioned into the Indian Navy.

About INS Arnala

- Named after the historic coastal fort off Maharashtra, it is India's first Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC).
 - ⊕ It showcases indigenous design, engineering, and manufacturing (signifying transition from a "Buyer's Navy" to a "Builder's Navy").
- It has also become the largest Indian Naval warship (77 meters) to be propelled by a Diesel Engine-Waterjet combination.
- It is equipped to conduct Sub-Surface Surveillance and Interdiction, Search and Rescue Missions and Low-Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO).

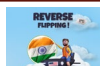


Agarwood

A recent study finds **global agarwood trade** dependent on **wild endangered trees** threatens their conservation.

About Agarwood (Audh or Gaharu)

- It is a **fragrant resinous wood** derived from trees of **Aquilaria** and **Gyrinops** genuses from **Thymelaeaceae** family.
- It is **created** when trees are **wounded and infected by fungi**, producing **resin** as a **defense mechanism**.
- Found in: India's Northeast** (Tripura's capital **Agartala** derives its name from Agarwood).
 - India is home to **Aquilaria khasiana** and **Aquilaria malaccensis** species of Agarwood.
- Conservation:** Appendix II of the CITES, Schedule IV of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
 - Aquilaria malaccensis** is listed as **Critically Endangered** in the IUCN Red List.
- India has successfully prevented inclusion of **Aquilaria malaccensis** in the **Review of Significant Trade (RST) of the CITES**, easing trade restrictions.
- Uses:** Perfume-making, traditional medicine, etc. (References in ancient Ayurvedic texts like **Charaka Samhita**; **Chinese Medicine** and **Unani**.)



Reverse Flipping

SEBI has relaxed a few compliance burdens in the stock market to encourage 'Reverse Flipping' to boost startup IPOs in the country.

About Reverse Flipping

- It describes the practice where startups that had earlier established organizational structure in offshore jurisdictions **shift their domicile back to their home country**.
- Reverse flipping is **gaining traction in India** for potential listing in Indian stock exchanges, robust economic policies, expanding local market, favorable tax regime, growing investor landscape etc.



Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki

Recently, Indonesia's Mount Lewotobi Lakilaki volcano erupted.

About Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki

- Type:** Mount Lewotobi is made up of two closely situated stratovolcanoes—Lewotobi Lakilaki (man) and Lewotobi Perempuan (woman).
- Location:** It is located on Flores Island in Indonesia.
- Geological Setting:** The volcano is part of the Pacific Ring of Fire, a zone known for intense volcanic and earthquake activity.



FASTag

Recently, **FASTag annual pass** was launched by the Union Ministry of Road and Transport to enable seamless highway travel.

About FASTag Technology

- It is a **device that employs Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology** for making toll payments directly while the vehicle is in motion.
- It is **affixed on the windscreen of the vehicle** and enables a customer to make the toll payments directly from the account which is linked to FASTag.
- Developed by:** NPCI under National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC) program.
 - NETC Program** has been launched by **NPCI, NHAI, & IHMCL**.



Operation Sindhu

India launched **Operation Sindhu** to evacuate **Indian nationals** from **Iran** in the backdrop of rising tensions between **Iran and Israel**.

About Operation Sindhu

- 110 Indian Nationals evacuated with the assistance of **Iran and Armenia**.
- With Iranian airspace shut down, a land route from northern Iran to **Yerevan, Armenia** through the **Nurdaz-Agarak border crossing** was used.
- India has **amicable ties with two other neighbouring countries** of Iran – **Turkmenistan and Iraq** while ties with other neighbouring countries of Iran – **Turkey, Azerbaijan and Pakistan** – **deteriorated** during Operation Sindoor.
- India has no diplomatic ties with Taliban regime in Afghanistan, another neighbour of Iran.



Sahitya Akademi

Sahitya Akademi has recently named 23 winners for Yuva Puraskar and 24 for Bal Puraskar.

About Sahitya Akademi

- Overview:** It is India's National Academy of Letters and the only institution that promotes literary activities across 24 Indian languages (22 Scheduled Languages and English and Rajasthani).
- Established:** It was formally established in 1954 and registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- Ministry:** Functions as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture.

Place in News



Croatia (Capital: Zagreb)

Prime Minister of India recently visited Croatia.

Political Features

- Located in **South Eastern Europe** on the **Balkan Peninsula**.
- Neighbours:** Shares borders with five countries: **Hungary** (North), **Montenegro** (South), **Slovenia** (West), and **Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina** (East).
- It has long coastal strip along the **Adriatic Sea**.
- It is a **member of both the EU and NATO**.

Geographical Features

- Major mountain range:** Dinaric Alps.
- Major rivers:** Sava and Drava.
- Climate:** Two major types of climate –
 - continental climate of warm summers and cold winters; and
 - mild Mediterranean climate.



Errata:

- In 'News Today' dated June 18, 2025, in the News titled '**Revised Mission Document of the National Mission for a Green India (or Green India Mission (GIM) unveiled**', it was incorrectly mentioned that **Green India Mission** was launched in 2011.
 - Correct information is that **Green India Mission** was launched in 2014.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI