

SC slams T.N. Governor, fixes time for assent

Polity & Governance

On the clock

SC sets time frame for Governors, saying the phrase 'as soon as possible' permeates Article 200 with a sense of expediency

■ A Governor has a maximum of **one month** to withhold assent on the aid and advice of the State Cabinet

■ A maximum of **three months** is given to return the Bill with a message specifying reasons if the Governor withholds assent contrary to the Cabinet's advice

■ The Governor has **three months** to reserve a Bill for the President's consideration against the advice of the Cabinet

■ The Governor 'must' grant assent to a Bill re-passed by the State Legislature under Article 200 within a **maximum of one month**



The Supreme Court strongly criticised Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi for his unconstitutional delay in acting on 10 State Legislature Bills. The court held that he failed to act for months and only referred the Bills to the President after they were re-passed and challenged in court. It declared the President's selective assent to the Bills void and ruled that all 10 had effectively received assent.

The Bench, led by Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan, emphasised that a Governor should be a supportive advisor, not a roadblock. The judgment clarified that under Article 200 of the Constitution, a Governor must act promptly—either by assenting, withholding assent, or referring the Bill to the President—and cannot indefinitely delay action.

The court also set a time frame of one to three months for future gubernatorial decisions on Bills and

called for Governors to act in line with Constitutional values and public expectations.

Time limits

The Supreme Court set strict time limits for Governors to act on Bills, ranging from one to three months, to prevent indefinite delays. A Governor must:

- Withhold assent within one month if acting on the State Cabinet's advice.
- If withholding assent against Cabinet advice, return the Bill with reasons within three months.
- Reserve a Bill for the President within three months if done against Cabinet advice.
- Give assent to a re-passed Bill within one month.

Justice Pardiwala stressed that Governors are bound by constitutional timelines under Article 200, and any delay could be subject to judicial review. The court found Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi in violation of Article 200 by not promptly communicating reasons for withholding assent. It ruled that Governors do not have an absolute or pocket veto and cannot arbitrarily withhold assent or act on personal discretion, especially when a Bill is re-passed by the Legislature.

'Historic' SC verdict is a victory for all State governments, says Stalin

Polity & Governance

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin hailed the Supreme Court's judgment declaring 10 Bills withheld by Governor R.N. Ravi as effectively approved as a historic victory for all State governments. Addressing the Assembly, he emphasized that the verdict upholds the principles of State autonomy and federalism, which the DMK has long championed. Stalin thanked the Supreme Court on behalf of the Tamil Nadu government, MLAs, and the people for protecting the constitutional rights of State Legislatures.

Welcomes verdict

All political parties in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, except the AIADMK and BJP, welcomed the Supreme Court's judgment and praised Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and the DMK government for their efforts. The court had criticised Governor R.N. Ravi for unconstitutionally reserving 10 Bills for the President.

CM Stalin called the verdict “historic” and highlighted the DMK’s legal battle to uphold State rights. Minister Duraimurugan also called it historic, drawing parallels between Stalin and past Tamil emperors, saying he had made his father, M. Karunanidhi, proud. The judgment was met with applause in the Assembly, and after adjournment, DMK MLAs celebrated by distributing sweets.

China vows ‘fight to the end’ in tariff war

International Relations

China firmly rejected U.S. President Donald Trump’s tariff threats, accusing the U.S. of “blackmail” amid an escalating trade war. In response to Trump’s plan to raise tariffs on Chinese imports to over 100%, China’s Commerce Ministry warned it would “fight to the end” if the U.S. persisted. Despite market turbulence, global stocks began to recover, with Japan’s Nikkei rebounding 6% after Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba agreed to begin trade talks.

RGI flags delay by hospitals in reporting births and deaths

Polity & Governance

The Registrar-General of India (RGI) has warned private and government hospitals to report all births and deaths within 21 days, as required by law. Many hospitals have been delaying this by waiting for families to request registration or asking them to do it themselves. In a circular issued on March 17, the RGI noted that while 90% of such events are being registered, full compliance is still lacking. The delay by hospitals is a key reason for not achieving universal registration of births and deaths in India.

‘Punishable negligence’

The Registrar-General of India (RGI), under the Union Home Ministry, reminded all States that under Section 23(2) of the Registration of Birth and Death (RBD) Act, negligence by registrars in registering births or deaths is punishable by a fine. Following amendments in 2023, the RBD Act now requires all such events to be registered on the Centre’s online portal from October 1, 2023.

Government hospitals, designated as registrars under the Civil Registration System (CRS), have been found delaying registrations by waiting for families to initiate the process. The RGI noted that some private hospitals also fail to report these events, or even deny responsibility, directing relatives to register the events themselves—violating legal obligations.

Certificates in 7 days

With the Census delayed since 2021, civil registration records have become crucial for estimating population. The Registrar-General of India (RGI) directed registrars to issue birth and death certificates within seven days. Since October 1, 2023, the digital birth certificate has become the sole document for verifying date of birth for services like education, government jobs, and marriage registration.

The centralised database will also help update the National Population Register (NPR), ration cards, property records, and electoral rolls. However, the RGI has not released key reports—Vital Statistics of India and Report on Medical Certification of Cause of Death—since 2020, with the last available data from 2019.

Governor cannot change his mind second time: SC

Polity & Governance



The Supreme Court ruled that a Governor cannot reserve a Bill for the President’s consideration if the State Legislature re-passes it after it was previously returned by the Governor. The verdict came in the context of Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi, who withheld assent to 10 Bills initially and later referred them to the President after they were re-passed by the Assembly.

Justice J.B. Pardiwala stated that if the Governor intended to refer the Bill to the President, he should have

done so during the first instance. Once a Bill is re-passed under the first proviso of Article 200, the Governor is constitutionally obligated to give assent within a maximum of one month. The court emphasized that the Governor has no discretion in this matter, as the Constitution removed the phrase “in his discretion” that existed in the 1935 Government of India Act, making such discretionary power invalid under the current framework.

Shah says terror network crippled, comprehensive changes under way in J&K

Internal Security

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, during his three-day visit to Jammu & Kashmir, reviewed preparations for the annual Amarnath Yatra and declared that the terror ecosystem in the region had been crippled due to the Modi government's sustained efforts. He emphasized the government's commitment to developing J&K and highlighted significant progress across various sectors.

Shah chaired a Unified Headquarters meeting on security, attended by top officials but notably without Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. However, earlier, Shah held a development review meeting at Raj Bhavan with both Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha and Omar Abdullah, despite recent tensions between their offices.

This was Shah's first visit since an elected government returned to J&K. He also met BJP and RSS leaders in Jammu to assess the new government's functioning and the BJP's role as Opposition. Shah welcomed the disassociation of three former separatist leaders from the Hurriyat.

Genome study: 180 million genetic variants found in 9,772 individuals

Science & Technology

The preliminary findings of the GenomeIndia project, published in Nature Genetics, are based on whole genome sequencing of 10,074 healthy, unrelated individuals from 85 populations across India—32 tribal and 53 non-tribal groups. Blood samples were collected from around 20,000 people, but the study focused on 9,772 participants after excluding two populations. The project aimed to identify rare genetic variants important for understanding complex diseases. Sequencing covered major tribal and non-tribal genetic groups, including Tibeto-Burman, Indo-European, Dravidian, and Austro-Asiatic populations. The genomic data is stored in the Indian Biological Data Centre in Faridabad.

Different variants

Sequencing the genomes of 9,772 individuals in the GenomeIndia project revealed 180 million genetic variants. Some are disease-linked, rare, unique to India, or specific to certain communities. Dr. Kumarasamy Thangaraj from CSIR-CCMB stated that researchers are now analyzing these variants for their functional relevance—particularly those affecting disease risk, drug responses, and adverse reactions.

The findings have the potential to support the development of affordable diagnostic tools and personalized medicine in India. The combination of genetic data with blood biochemistry and anthropometric information is expected to enhance disease diagnosis and enable precision medicine. A detailed research paper is expected to follow soon.

Skymet forecasts 'normal' monsoon; 'La Nina weak'

Geography

Private weather agency Skymet has forecast a “normal” monsoon for June to September, predicting 3% more rainfall than the long-term average of 868.6 mm, with a 5% error margin. La Niña conditions, which usually enhance rainfall, are fading, and El Niño, typically associated with weaker monsoons, is ruled out.

Skymet expects better rainfall in the latter half of the season. Adequate rainfall is predicted for Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and the Western Ghats, particularly Kerala, coastal Karnataka, and Goa. However, below-normal rainfall is expected in the northeast and hilly northern states.

Monthly predictions indicate June may see 4% less rain, while July, August, and September are expected to receive 2%, 8%, and 4% more rainfall, respectively. The India Meteorological Department will release its own forecast soon, with a regional breakdown due in mid-May. Last year, India recorded 8% excess rainfall.

Scientists demonstrate clear quantum advantage using simple game

Science & Technology

Researchers from the University of Oxford and Universidad de Sevilla have demonstrated quantum supremacy using a simple game based on the odd-cycle graph, where it's impossible to colour adjacent points on a circle with two colours without repetition. This new approach, published in Physical Review Letters in February, offers a simpler and more verifiable way to showcase quantum advantage, compared to previous complex methods like Google's random circuit sampling and China's Gaussian boson sampling. The new method could help make quantum supremacy easier to test and confirm.

The colouring problem

The odd-cycle problem involves colouring an odd number of points (e.g., three) on a circle using two colours so that no adjacent points share the same colour—a task that's mathematically impossible. In an experiment, researchers used this setup as a game between two players, Alice and Bob, who can't communicate. A referee asks them questions about point colours, and they win if they give the same answer for the same point and different answers for adjacent points. In a classical setup, pre-agreed strategies allow a maximum success rate of 83.3% for a three-point circle.

Playing the quantum game

To demonstrate the quantum version of the odd-cycle game, researchers entangled two strontium atoms placed 2 meters apart using lasers. A computer acted as the referee, sending questions to control systems for Alice and Bob, who then used laser pulses to perform quantum operations (rotations) on their atoms based on the question. Each atom's measurement yielded a 0 or 1, mapped to a colour (blue or red), and the result was sent back to the referee. The game was played 101,000 times for circles with 3 to 27 points in about a minute. Additional tests confirmed the quantum nature of the correlations.

The quantum advantage

In the 3-point circle game, the quantum setup achieved a win rate significantly higher than the classical 83.3%, demonstrating quantum supremacy — a result the researchers extended to circles with up to 19 points. Overall, the experiment achieved a 97.8% success rate across 101,000 games, with the 2.2% shortfall attributed to noise during entanglement. Additionally, the entanglement test showed the strongest correlation ever recorded between two separated quantum systems.

Why this matters

The study highlights that the odd-cycle game is a simpler method to demonstrate quantum supremacy compared to previous efforts like Google's Sycamore processor, which used 53 qubits. In contrast, the researchers achieved quantum supremacy using just two entangled qubits. Their approach may have practical uses in scenarios like the rendezvous task, where agents must coordinate without communication. Unlike classical computers that must explore all possibilities, quantum computers can use entanglement and Grover's algorithm to drastically reduce the steps needed to find solutions. The odd-cycle game showcases the potential of quantum computing in an accessible way.

The gradual transformation of the Home Ministry

Internal Security

Governments are often evaluated based on their crisis response, but true leadership lies in implementing long-term reforms. While ministries like the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) have traditionally focused on reacting to crises such as riots or insurgencies, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for "Reform, Perform, and Transform" emphasizes the importance of structural reforms. This marks a shift in the MHA's role from reactive interventions to proactive governance and institutional reform.

A new focus

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has shifted from a reactive crisis-response role to proactively building a robust security framework. It now emphasizes counter-terror laws, modernising agencies, technology adoption, and intelligence coordination. As the core of India's internal security and federal governance, the MHA integrates security and administration, with constitutional backing through Articles 355, 256, and 356 to ensure effective Centre-State coordination.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has evolved in response to security challenges like terrorism and insurgency since the 1980s, leading to increased reliance on Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) due to under-equipped State police. Forces like the RAF, CISF, and others became crucial in addressing unrest, including industrial strikes in West Bengal and Kerala. Over time, administrative changes reallocated departments such as northeast affairs and justice, while Disaster Management and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) were brought under the MHA's purview.

For nearly 40 years, India's internal security focus under the MHA has centered on conflict zones like Kashmir, the North-East, and Naxal-affected areas, resulting in around 36,000 security personnel and civilian deaths. This emphasis on insurgency and terrorism led to neglect of areas like police modernisation, narcotics control, and disaster management. Frequent leadership changes further hindered long-term reforms, except during stable tenures under Prime Ministers Rao, Vajpayee, and now Modi, who has ensured continuity and a long-term vision in internal security policymaking.

Reforms and a shift in responses

Earlier, the MHA's legislative actions were mostly reactive, with laws like TADA, POTA, and the creation of the NIA introduced in response to major terror events. However, since 2019, the Ministry has shifted to a more structured approach, introducing over 27 legislative reforms aimed at strengthening national security, terror laws, Kashmir integration, and criminal justice. A "whole-of-government" strategy now ensures these reforms are supported by improved operations, funding, and performance-based reviews.

India's previous responses to terrorism were often temporary, but the current Home Ministry has adopted a long-term approach by amending key laws like the NIA Act and UAPA to define terrorism and cut terror financing. These legal reforms are supported by expanding the NIA, creating tech databases, revamping the Multi-Agency Centre, and encouraging intelligence sharing. Similarly, criminal justice reforms include the introduction of three new criminal laws, establishment of the National Forensic Sciences University, and full rollout of CCTNS to integrate police and judicial systems. States are also being urged to separate forensics from investigation to further improve justice delivery.

In 2019, for the first time, the MHA budget crossed ₹1 lakh crore. The 2025 Budget allocation has surged to ₹2.33 lakh crore, reflecting the government's focus on internal security and modernisation. The expenditure on the Central Paramilitary Forces has also risen, from ₹38,000 crore in 2013-14 to ₹97,000 crore in 2024-25, highlighting the enhanced investment in national security and force modernisation.

Impact on the ground

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has shifted from reactive crisis management to a proactive and strategic approach, leading to a 70% decline in violence in Kashmir, the North-East, and Naxal-affected areas. Key initiatives like the dilution of Article 370, peace accords, and a dual focus on security and development have fostered integration, stability, and growth in these regions. The MHA now prioritizes long-term reforms over short-term fixes, transforming India's internal security architecture into a future-ready and threat pre-emptive framework.

The Trump effect and a possible exodus of expertise

International Relations

The U.S. has for long been the world leader in almost every area of research. The National Science Foundation (NSF), which was established in 1950, marked the beginning of the modern American research university. The National Institutes of Health (NIH), which go back to the late-19th century, saw significant expansion in the post-war years. Together, these two organisations transformed previously underperforming American scientific institutions into becoming the world's pre-eminent research universities.

Disastrous disruptions

Since Donald Trump's return to the White House, the U.S. higher education system has faced significant challenges. His administration's actions—such as undermining science, cutting research funding, targeting federal science agencies, and interfering in university affairs—have threatened academic freedom and democratic values. Institutions like Columbia University have been forced to change policies under pressure, while major agencies like NIH, EPA, NOAA, CDC, and NASA have faced layoffs and program cuts.

Scientists in the U.S. are uncertain about their future under Donald Trump's administration, fearing further job cuts, funding freezes, censorship, and restrictions on research topics like gender studies, vaccines, and

climate change. This has created a cultural divide that could last for generations. Early-career researchers face heightened competition and instability, while international students may be discouraged from pursuing doctoral studies in the U.S. due to the growing uncertainty.

There could be a 'research brain drain'

An editorial in *Nature* calls Donald Trump's actions an "assault on science," warning of a likely academic exodus from the U.S. due to his policies. This potential brain drain creates opportunities for other regions, especially Europe, to attract top scientific talent. Leaders like Patrick Cramer of Germany's Max Planck Society see this as a chance to position their institutions as safe havens for free and unrestricted research.

In response to Donald Trump's policies, European institutions and countries like China and South Korea are taking steps to attract displaced U.S. scientists. Michiel Scheffer of the EIC mentioned a plan to invite such researchers, while France's Aix-Marseille University launched a "Safe Place for Science" initiative. Efforts are underway to expand this into broader "scientific asylum" programs. Some American academics, like Yale's Jason Stanley, are already relocating to countries like Canada.

The repercussions

The passage draws parallels between 1930s Nazi Germany and present-day America, suggesting Donald Trump's "assault on science" could trigger a reverse academic exodus from the U.S., with global consequences. As researchers seek refuge elsewhere, universities worldwide — including in Europe and India — may face pressure to accommodate them. However, challenges like European budget deficits, potential NATO instability, and shifting priorities may limit their capacity. India might see returning scholars, but uncertainty looms globally across academic and research landscapes.

A regional revival

International Relations

The sixth BIMSTEC summit in Bangkok marked a revival of the regional grouping after years of stagnation. Initially intended to bridge South Asia's SAARC and Southeast Asia's ASEAN, BIMSTEC gained importance as SAARC stalled and other sub-groupings failed. Despite challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and a recent earthquake, the summit was held successfully. Key outcomes included agreements on a BIMSTEC chamber of commerce, progress on the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, disaster management cooperation, and plans for a free trade agreement, as outlined in the newly adopted 'Vision 2030' document.

Beyond multilateral outcomes, the BIMSTEC summit facilitated key bilateral meetings. Prime Minister Modi and Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus addressed tensions over minority rights, border issues, and Sheikh Hasina's stay in India, with Modi urging restraint in rhetoric. Modi also met Nepal's K.P. Sharma Oli after a period of strained ties, raising hopes for improved relations. Myanmar's inclusion signalled diplomatic outreach, with Modi advising its leader, General Min Aung Hlaing, to restore democracy. While the summit was productive, many initiatives echoed past SAARC efforts, emphasizing the need for BIMSTEC to maintain unity and avoid the stagnation that befell SAARC.

Strengthening enforcement of judicial orders

Polity & Governance

Residents of central Jaipur continue to suffer from air horn noise despite regulations and an NGT order restricting their use between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. Due to poor enforcement by authorities, the issue remains unresolved after over two years. The NGT failed to propose a fully implementable solution, such as a complete air horn ban. Effective judicial orders should include practical enforcement strategies to ensure results and public trust. Kathmandu serves as a model, where strict enforcement and public awareness have led to success. Weak enforcement undermines governance and erodes faith in the judiciary.

Anticipating hurdles

Enforcing judicial decisions often faces systemic challenges, with enforcement agencies hesitant to act on perceived "minor" violations, creating a gap between judicial intent and practical implementation. The 2017 State of Tamil Nadu v. K. Balu case illustrates this issue, where the Supreme Court banned liquor sales within 500 metres of highways to reduce drink driving. However, enforcement was weak, with measures like reclassifying

highways and relocating outlets used to bypass the ruling. The case highlights the need for judicial foresight to anticipate enforcement hurdles and design realistic implementation frameworks.

While Indian law, through Section 38 and Order 21 of the Code of Civil Procedure (CPC), provides courts the authority to execute decrees, enforcement often fails due to concerns over decree validity and judicial misconduct. However, successful enforcement cases do exist. In *Common Cause v. Union of India* (2018), the Supreme Court legalized passive euthanasia with clear guidelines and oversight mechanisms, ensuring effective implementation. Similarly, the Taj Trapezium Zone case demonstrated the importance of inter-agency coordination, leading to the creation of a green belt and regular air quality checks. These cases highlight that enforcement succeeds when directives are clear, actionable, and continuously monitored.

How to ensure enforcement

To ensure effective enforcement of judicial orders, a structured system is needed where dedicated officers in each government department are made accountable for implementation, regular audits, and reporting. Leveraging technology can help identify relevant agencies and ensure timely compliance. Transparency and positive measures can further promote adherence to judicial directives. The current weakness in enforcement undermines judicial reform in India. Strengthening accountability, using tech-driven monitoring, and enhancing inter-agency coordination are crucial to translating judicial rulings into real-world impact.

Why is active mobility necessary in India?

Polity & Governance

Accidental deaths and injuries of pedestrians, cyclists, and street-hawkers are increasing in India's metro cities. Though some urban areas have dedicated lanes for non-motorised users, these are often encroached by motor vehicles, making them equally dangerous. Given this situation, promoting active mobility has become crucial.

What is active mobility?

Active mobility involves human-powered transport like walking, cycling, and skateboarding for travel purposes. In India, it is gaining importance due to rising traffic, pollution, health issues, and pedestrian fatalities. National policies like the NTOD and Smart Cities Mission, along with global agreements like the Paris Agreement, support sustainable and eco-friendly mobility.

Bengaluru's first Bicycle Mayor, Sathya Sankaran, has championed active mobility, contributing to the Karnataka Active Mobility Bill, 2022, which aims to protect pedestrian and cyclist rights. The bill addresses safety concerns, especially as Karnataka recorded the highest pedestrian deaths in 2020. Other states are also promoting active mobility: Delhi is expanding cycling infrastructure, Pune has created 300 km of cycling lanes, Chennai is redesigning roads for pedestrian safety, and Kochi has introduced a Public Bicycle Sharing system for last-mile connectivity.

What is its significance?

According to the WHO, active mobility offers economic, social, environmental, and health benefits. Economically, it reduces household transport and healthcare costs, while also supporting local businesses through increased foot traffic. Walking and cycling are sustainable transport modes with minimal carbon emissions, enhancing energy security and reducing India's road transport emissions. They improve air quality, reduce congestion, and offer health benefits like lower disease risk and better mental well-being, making cities healthier and more climate-conscious.

What are the barriers?

Active mobility is underutilised due to inadequate pedestrian and cyclist-friendly infrastructure, with over 85% of roads failing to meet safety standards as of 2021. Contributing factors include the availability of cheap motorised transport, extreme weather, and long travel distances, all of which discourage walking and cycling. Social perceptions hinder active mobility, as cars and bikes are seen as status symbols. In India, rising private vehicle ownership—over 12,000 cars sold daily—contributes to traffic congestion. Weak traffic law enforcement further makes walking and cycling unsafe.

How have other countries fared?

The Netherlands leads in active mobility with over 35,000 km of cycling lanes. The EU promotes walking and cycling for sustainable transport, supported by the Vision Zero initiative to reduce accidents. Germany's Berlin

Mobility Act mandates wider sidewalks, dedicated cycling lanes, lower speed limits, and prioritises pedestrians and cyclists in urban planning.

When law enforcement officers endorse fear and force

Polity & Governance

Police practices

Data for the tables were sourced from Lokniti-CSDS. Sanjay Kumar is a professor at CSDS. Devesh Kumar and Priyanka Mittal are researchers with Lokniti-CSDS.

Table 1: How important is it for the police to use tough methods to create fear among the public?

	%
Very important	20
Somewhat important	35
Not very important	13
Not at all important. Police should be a friendly force and there is no need to instil fear	30

Table 2: Sometimes there are instances when mobs punish crime suspects with violence. In your opinion, to what extent is it justified for a mob to punish suspects in the following cases?

When there is a case of...	To a great extent	To some extent	Not really justified	Not at all justified
...sexual harassment and assault	27	22	15	34
...child lifting/kidnapping	25	22	16	36
...petty thefts like pickpocketing	16	30	15	38
...cow slaughter	16	22	16	43



Table 4: In your experience, how often are these procedures followed when a person is being arrested?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Have a female police personnel present at the time of a woman's arrest	80	11	6	3
Inform the arrested person of the reasons for their arrest	72	18	7	2
Complete an inspection memo	72	17	7	2
Complete an arrest memo with all the required signatures	71	17	6	4
Inform their family members about the arrest	70	17	7	4
Take the arrested person to a doctor for a medical examination	70	16	8	4
Identify yourself as a police officer with your name tag visible	65	19	9	3
Release the person on bail immediately at the police station in bailable offences	62	19	9	4
Inform the arrested person that they can contact a lawyer	59	20	11	5

Table 3: Which of the two statements do you agree with the most?

For the greater good of the society, killing dangerous criminals during encounters is sometimes more effective than giving them a legal trial	22
No matter how dangerous a criminal is, the police should try to catch them and follow proper legal procedures	74

Table 5: How feasible/practical is it for police personnel to produce a person before a judge/magistrate within 24 hours of his/her arrest?

Always	56
Sometimes	30
Rarely	8
Never	3

Table 6: Which is the most important reason for delays in producing an arrested person before a magistrate within 24 hours?

More time needed for interrogation of the accused	30
Inadequate infrastructure (vehicles, fuels, escorts)	25
The first 24 hours are inadequate for proper investigation	23

Note:

A recent Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) and Common Cause survey of 8,276 police personnel sheds light on the acceptance of force, fear tactics, and extrajudicial measures among India's police personnel.

It reveals that a majority of police personnel believe in using intimidation as a law enforcement tool.

Misuse of force by the police has long been a contentious issue in India. It often surfaces in public discourse following high-profile cases of custodial deaths or excessive violence. India lacks a specific law to prevent torture, but there is an extensive framework of legal procedures to ensure rights and safeguards of arrested people. The legality of arrest is dependent on full compliance with these procedures.

A Lokniti-CSDS and Common Cause survey of 8,276 Indian police personnel reveals widespread support for the use of intimidation and extrajudicial tactics. Over half believe creating fear is important for law enforcement, while only 30% reject this approach, advocating for a more friendly and approachable police force. (Table 1).

The survey found significant support among Indian police personnel for vigilante justice. Over a quarter strongly justified mob violence in cases of sexual harassment (27%) and child kidnapping (25%). Even for minor crimes

like pickpocketing, 16% fully supported mob action. In alleged cow slaughter cases, 16% strongly justified such violence, with another 22% offering partial support. (Table 2). Police personnel from Gujarat, Odisha, and Rajasthan offered the highest support to mobs punishing people in case of alleged cow slaughter (51%, 32% and 31% respectively).

The survey shows that while a majority of police personnel (74%) prefer following legal procedures over encounter killings, nearly one-fourth (22%) believe that killing dangerous criminals in encounters is sometimes necessary for the greater good of society. **(Table 3).**

The survey found that while most police personnel reported following legal arrest procedures—80% said a female officer was always present during a woman's arrest and 72% claimed they always informed suspects of the arrest reasons and completed inspection memos—only 75% reported full compliance overall. Around 10% admitted they rarely or never followed all procedures. **(Table 4).**

Only 56% of police personnel said it was always feasible to produce an arrested person before a judge or magistrate within 24 hours, indicating limited adherence to this legal requirement. **(Table 5).**

Around one-third (30%) of police personnel said they needed more time to interrogate the accused, while 23% felt the first 24 hours were insufficient for proper investigation, highlighting concerns over time constraints in early-stage policing. **(Table 6).** Similarly, the study examined the feasibility of taking arrested people for a medical examination. Close to six in 10 (57%) said that it was always practical to take an arrested person for a medical exam, while about one-third said it was feasible only sometimes.

What is the current political situation in South Korea?

International Relations

On April 4, South Korea's constitutional court upheld the impeachment of former President Yoon Suk Yeol. The Court unanimously (8-0) agreed in favour of the impeachment. Mr. Yoon is the second president to be removed from office in the last eight years. According to the constitution, South Korea will have to elect a new President within 60 days.

What led to his impeachment?

On December 3, 2024, South Korean President Yoon declared martial law to counter alleged "anti-state forces." It marked the country's 17th imposition of martial law. Within six hours, the National Assembly voted to lift it under Article 77. On December 14, a second motion led to President Yoon's removal from office, with 204 votes in favor. The Democratic Party of Korea holds a majority with 170 seats, while Yoon's People's Power Party has 108 out of the 300-member Assembly.

What happened after impeachment?

The declaration of martial law and President Yoon's impeachment sparked widespread protests across South Korea, deeply dividing public opinion. While thousands backed Yoon, around 200,000 people supported his removal outside parliament. On January 17, the Corruption Investigation Office secured an arrest warrant against Yoon, prompting his supporters to attack the courthouse. The final hearing on the martial law decree occurred on February 25, where Yoon claimed his intent was merely to warn the public about anti-state forces.

What does the verdict say?

The Constitutional Court upheld President Yoon's impeachment, rejecting his justification for declaring martial law. The court found that Yoon violated constitutional procedures to bypass the opposition-led National Assembly, thereby undermining military neutrality and endangering democracy. It emphasized that the cost of impeachment was preferable to the damage caused by constitutional violations. His claims of election fraud were dismissed, and the court concluded that Yoon had betrayed the trust of the people. He will now face multiple criminal charges previously shielded by his presidential immunity.

What is next for South Korea?

South Korea will hold presidential elections on June 3 amid heightened security and public tensions following President Yoon's impeachment. The ruling People's Power Party (PPP) is in disarray, with Yoon still backed by loyal supporters. Lee Jae-Myung of the opposition Democratic Party (DPK), who led the party to a parliamentary victory last year, is the leading candidate. The next president will face significant political and economic challenges, including managing U.S.-imposed 25% reciprocal tariffs.

Govt. notifies ₹22,919-cr. sop scheme for electronic parts

Economics & Development

The Ministry of Electronics and IT has launched a ₹22,919-crore Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme to boost domestic production of electronic components. The scheme offers capex- and turnover-linked incentives (1–10%) to firms manufacturing passive components. With most smartphones now assembled in India,

the government aims to enhance domestic value addition in electronics, which currently stands at 18% compared to China's 38%. The goal is to double this value addition by 2030.

How the oil price plunge complicates Saudi Arabia's economic agenda

International Relations

Saudi Arabia is under pressure to raise debt or cut spending as falling oil prices threaten its revenue and economic diversification plans. Oil prices have dropped to near four-year lows due to trade war fears and increased output by OPEC+ members, including Saudi Arabia. This decline could cost the kingdom tens of billions in revenue and reduce dividends from state-owned Aramco. The IMF estimates that Saudi Arabia needs oil prices above \$90 per barrel to balance its budget, but prices have fallen below \$65.

Vision 2030

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 reform programme, aimed at reducing dependence on oil, requires significant infrastructure spending, much of which is off-budget but still oil-linked through the \$925 billion Public Investment Fund. With declining oil prices, the kingdom is expected to rely more on debt, possibly delaying or scaling back projects due to existing fiscal and current account deficits. Public debt surged 16% in 2024 to over \$324 billion, and analysts predict it could rise by another \$100 billion in three years. Aramco's dividends are projected to drop by a third, reducing funds for both the government and PIF. Oil accounted for 62% of revenue last year, but total revenue is expected to fall 3.7% in 2025.

Recalibrating finance

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) is expected to seek more financing to support its increased investment target of \$70 billion annually from 2025 to 2030, up from \$40–50 billion. While PIF did not comment, it has already raised \$11 billion in 2025 after borrowing \$24.8 billion in 2024. The Saudi government has also raised \$14.4 billion in bonds this year, continuing its trend as a major emerging market debt issuer. PIF has heavily invested in domestic projects, including NEOM and a camel dairy firm. Upcoming mega-projects include the 2029 Asian Winter Games and the 2034 World Cup, involving large-scale infrastructure like artificial snow facilities and 11 new stadiums.

Saudi Arabia's Finance Ministry is reassessing and reprioritizing spending to support economic growth without triggering inflation, while ensuring fiscal stability. Despite falling oil prices and global uncertainty, the government remains confident in achieving its Vision 2030 goals and hosting major upcoming events. The oil price plunge comes amid shifting geopolitics, with U.S. President Donald Trump pressing OPEC to lower prices and urging Saudi Arabia to invest \$1 trillion in the U.S. He is scheduled to visit Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE in May.

Gold gallops

Gold has surged to record highs, surpassing \$3,000 an ounce, amid global political and economic turmoil reminiscent of 1980. However, analysts believe this rally is more sustainable due to persistent geopolitical tensions, such as U.S. tariffs and conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, with little hope for swift resolution. Spot gold recently hit \$3,167.57 per ounce and has risen 16% this year, following a 27% increase in 2024. Analysts suggest the current rise, driven by uncertainty and risk aversion, marks a more enduring shift in the gold market.

China braces for an economic war of attrition

International Relations

China is preparing for a prolonged economic standoff with the U.S. amid escalating tariffs. Washington has imposed broad tariffs, including higher duties on countries like Vietnam, prompting Chinese retaliation and further threats from President Trump. With limited options, China aims to expand trade with other regions, but these markets are smaller and cautious about cheap Chinese imports. Domestically, devaluing the yuan could offset tariff impacts but risks capital flight and straining relations with potential trade partners. So far, China has allowed only minor currency depreciation.

Tax rebates risky

China may resort to subsidies, export tax rebates, or other stimulus measures in response to U.S. tariffs, though these risk worsening industrial overcapacity and deflation. Despite calls to boost domestic demand, Beijing

has made little progress due to potential disruption to manufacturing. Retaliatory tariffs and export controls may have limited impact, as China's exports to the U.S. far exceed its imports, but Beijing may still pursue them if it believes it can endure the economic strain longer than the U.S. So far, China has matched recent U.S. tariffs and pledged to continue fighting amid threats of further escalation.

Trade surplus

Despite China's limited ability to inflict equal economic damage on the U.S. due to its trade surplus and greater vulnerability to export controls, Beijing's recent actions signal a willingness to resist U.S. dominance. According to analyst Arthur Kroeber, China appears ready to engage in a prolonged economic standoff, accepting the costs of a war of attrition.

'Precision strikes'

Beijing is leveraging its control over strategic resources to counter U.S. pressure, recently adding seven rare earths to its export control list—materials vital to U.S. defense and tech industries. China may expand restrictions to 10 more rare earths or impose a full export ban to increase pressure on Washington.

Tariff-whipped Wall Street wonders: will Trump blink?

International Relations

Investors are questioning U.S. President Donald Trump's tolerance for stock market losses after his recent tariffs triggered a sharp market decline. During his first term, Trump often celebrated market gains, with the S&P 500 rising 68%. However, current hopes for a "Trump put" — a perceived Presidential support for markets — are fading, as the S&P and Nasdaq have dropped over 15% and 20% respectively since his second inauguration.

Experts believe U.S. President Donald Trump is unlikely to abandon his tariff-driven trade policy, which is deeply tied to his political identity. Although markets once expected his pro-business stance to support risk assets, recent aggressive tariffs have intensified market selloffs, leading investors to doubt the return of the "Trump put." Analysts like Bob Elliott suggest that significant further market declines may be needed before any policy reversal occurs.

Not big enough

Despite speculation that President Trump is deliberately crashing the stock market to pressure the Federal Reserve or benefit middle-class investors, he denied these claims, stating the selloff is a necessary "medicine" to fix the U.S. trade deficit. While some investors remain hopeful for a policy shift, experts argue that a deeper market decline—20-30%—may be required to prompt any change. The recent market drop, the worst since the COVID-19 pandemic, has intensified debate over Trump's economic strategy.

Investors worry that declining consumer confidence, a growing trade war, and rising inflation could severely harm the U.S. economy. Economist Brian Bethune warned that the abrupt impact of tariffs may overwhelm resilient businesses. Hopes for support from the Federal Reserve also dimmed after Chairman Powell stated that tariffs could raise inflation and slow growth, making a rate cut unlikely, despite President Trump urging one. As a result, stock market losses deepened.

China's military expansion is 'staggering', says NATO chief

International Relations

NATO chief Mark Rutte, during a visit to Japan, called China's military expansion "staggering" and emphasized the need for stronger NATO-Japan cooperation amid growing global threats. He highlighted shared values and challenges posed by China, North Korea, and Russia. Rutte visited a naval base and met Japanese Defence Minister Gen Nakatani, who supported deeper ties as Japan works to double its military spending.

U.K. court refuses India's plea to appeal Bhandari's discharge

International Relations

The London High Court on Tuesday rejected the Indian government's request to appeal to the U.K. Supreme Court against the discharge of Sanjay Bhandari, a defence consultant wanted in India for alleged tax evasion and money laundering. Justice Timothy Holroyde ruled that the application did not raise points of law of general importance. This follows a February decision by the High Court granting Bhandari's appeal against extradition on

human rights grounds. It remains unclear if India will pursue the next step of seeking direct permission from the U.K. Supreme Court.

Countries scramble for ways to cope with tariffs as China-U.S. tensions rise

International Relations

U.S. President Donald Trump and China escalated their trade conflict on Tuesday, with China vowing to "fight to the end" and take countermeasures after Trump threatened an additional 50% tariff on Chinese imports. This followed Beijing's response to earlier U.S. tariffs of 34% imposed on April 2. Meanwhile, other governments began formulating strategies to deal with the intensifying U.S.-China trade war.

Mistake over mistake

China has strongly criticized the U.S. threat to raise tariffs, calling it a "mistake on top of a mistake" and accusing the U.S. of blackmail. China's Commerce Ministry and Foreign Ministry emphasized that true dialogue requires equality and mutual respect. In response to market turmoil, Chinese state-run firms were instructed to stabilize financial markets. Meanwhile, Japan moved into damage control mode after the U.S. imposed 24% tariffs, with Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba speaking to President Trump and forming a task force. Japan aims to persuade the U.S. to reconsider the tariffs and reduce their economic impact.

India hopes concession

Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar spoke with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio to push for a swift conclusion of a bilateral trade deal, seeking relief from a 26% tariff on Indian exports. The U.S. wants greater market access for its agricultural goods, but India is resisting due to its large farming population. Trade Minister Piyush Goyal is set to consult exporters on the impact. A U.S. statement confirmed discussions on tariffs and fair trade. Meanwhile, Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim criticized the 24% U.S. tariff on Malaysian imports, calling for a unified ASEAN response and advocating trade diversification. Hong Kong's Chief Executive John Lee condemned the tariffs as "bullying" that harmed global trade.

Illegal mining on Indigenous lands in Brazil dropped under Lula: report

Ecology & Environment

Illegal gold mining in Brazil's Indigenous territories has significantly declined since President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva took office in January 2023, according to a Greenpeace report. Satellite data shows mining-related deforestation halved compared to the previous Bolsonaro government, dropping from 16,000 to 4,219 hectares. Lula's administration has taken stronger action against illegal mining by dismantling camps and machinery, contrasting with Bolsonaro's pro-mining stance. However, despite progress, mining remains a major threat to the Amazon, causing deforestation, mercury pollution, and biodiversity loss. Notably, mining activity surged 93% in Sarare, Mato Grosso, from 2023 to 2024. Lula aims to position Brazil as a leader in combating climate change.

Remove defamatory content about ANI, Delhi HC tells Wikimedia Foundation

Polity & Governance

The Delhi High Court directed the Wikimedia Foundation to remove allegedly defamatory content on Wikipedia that labelled ANI a "propaganda tool." The court emphasized that as an intermediary under IT Rules, Wikipedia must avoid publishing objectionable content. This decision came in response to Wikimedia's appeal against an earlier order mandating content removal. The court also expressed concern about Wikipedia's neutrality, especially regarding edits on ANI's page.

The Delhi High Court stated that the Wikimedia Foundation cannot avoid responsibility for Wikipedia content by claiming to be merely an intermediary. Emphasizing that Wikipedia should maintain encyclopaedic neutrality, the court revised its April 2 order, directing the removal of the allegedly defamatory content against ANI and allowing ANI to report similar future content, which Wikipedia must then address.

'Malicious conduct'

ANI approached the court against the Wikimedia Foundation, alleging that the Wikipedia page about it was locked from public editing, preventing any rebuttal or correction. ANI claimed this action showed malicious intent to defame the agency through false and misleading content.



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