

**DIA, DEOGHAR IAS ACADEMY**

# ***Daily News Feed***

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**Last remaining:** A grey seal pup at the Baltic Sea Animal Rehabilitation Centre in Klaipeda. FILE PHOTO

## Lithuania moves to save Baltic seals as ice sheets recede

**Agence France-Presse**

KLAIPEDA

The grey seals slide out of their cages into the Baltic Sea near the Lithuanian coast, swimming off to new lives imperilled by climate change, pollution and shrinking fish stocks.

The seals have been nurtured at a rehabilitation centre in the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda.

Survival rates for cubs in the wild can be as low as 5%, according to local scientists.

The Baltic Sea, which is shared by the European Union and Russia, rarely freezes over now, depriving seals of sanctuaries to rear their cubs.

“Mothers are forced to breed on land in high concentration with other seals,” said Vaida Surviliene, a scientist at Vilnius University.

Rearing cubs ashore also leaves them exposed to humans, other wild animals as well as a higher risk of diseases, according to Arunas Grusas, a biologist at the centre.

At the time in the late 1980s, the seals were close to extinction – there were just around 4,000 to 5,000 left in the sea from a population of around 1,00,000 before the Second World War. “It began to decrease drastically in the 1950s due to hunting amid competition with fishers,” said Ms. Surviliene. The 1960s also saw the use of pesticides in agriculture that were “incredibly toxic for predators”, the scientist said.

The seals at the top of the food chain in the Baltic Sea absorbed the pollution, leaving the females infertile and the entire population with a weak immune system. After a ban on toxic pesticide use, the population survived, with the current estimates putting the number of grey seals in the Baltic Sea at 50,000 to 60,000.



# Smarter, faster, stronger: how Artificial Intelligence is transforming the manufacturing landscape

The Hindu Bureau

Step inside a modern factory and you might find something quietly extraordinary. Machines no longer wait to fail; they signal in advance. Robots don't just repeat tasks; they adapt and respond. And decisions once made on instinct are now driven by real-time data.

This is the new face of manufacturing, where artificial intelligence (AI) is not just an upgrade but a fundamental shift in how things are made, moved and managed.

Across India, from long-established facilities to newly-built plants, AI is being integrated into every layer of production. It is helping manufacturers increase output, reduce waste, adapt to shifting demands and even design more intelligently. Backed by national policy and rising enterprise ambition, India's factories are becoming more agile, more precise and more globally competitive.

## Sector on move

The global AI-in-manufacturing market is projected to grow from \$4.1 billion in 2024 to \$5.8 billion in 2025, and is expected to surpass \$25 billion by 2029, according to The Business Research Company.

**A survey found 44% of manufacturing leaders were cautious about scaling generative AI**

In India, adoption is accelerating. TeamLease data shows AI use across industries stood at 48% in FY2024, with manufacturing alone rising from 8% to 22% in just one year. This is supported by policy initiatives like the Government of India's ₹10,372-crore AI Mission, which is investing in infrastructure, talent and indigenous models.

"From predictive maintenance to intelligent automation, AI and GenAI are turning manufacturing industries into self-optimising systems. Real-time data is being leveraged to drive smarter decisions, higher throughput and more sustainable, customer-centric outcomes. When combined with responsible AI frameworks, this shift drives both operational excellence and enhanced customer value," says Sanjay Mittal, senior partner and industrial sector leader, IBM Consulting India & South Asia.

**Intelligence across floor**  
AI is powering improvements across every layer of the factory. On the shop



**Vaulting to the future:** Artificial Intelligence will be central to India's ambition of becoming a \$5 trillion economy.

floor, predictive maintenance uses sensor data to anticipate equipment failures, reducing downtime by up to 30%, according to McKinsey. AI vision systems identify micro-level defects in real time, improving quality assurance.

Cobots—collaborative robots guided by AI—support workers in physically demanding or repetitive tasks. These machines respond to human cues, enabling safer, more efficient man-machine collaboration.

"Today, CPCL generates about 1 TB of data daily. AI-powered CCTVs are helping

ensure SOP compliance, while machine learning supports predictive maintenance and smart procurement. Digital twins and centralised safety monitoring are our focus to steadily transform our operations," says H. Shankar, managing director, Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited.

Further upstream, generative AI accelerates product development. Digital twins simulate layouts, energy use and asset health, helping engineers optimise operations virtually. In planning and logistics, AI enhances forecasting and enables more agile scheduling. IBM estimates that AI-led planning improves responsiveness by over 20%.

"At ZF Group in India, we're integrating smart manufacturing technologies like AI, robotics, and automation to transform our operations."

"AI is helping us redesign workflows by reducing task complexity and enhancing labour flexibility, empowering shop-floor teams to manage more intricate processes."

"AI-powered vision systems are also improving quality control by eliminating



ing fatigue-related errors and increasing inspection efficiency," says Akash Passey, president, ZF Group India.

## Digital backbone

AI draws strength from a wider digital ecosystem that enables speed, scale, and integration.

At the edge, IoT sensors capture real-time data from machines, materials, and the environment.

Edge computing allows instant responses for tasks like robotic actuation and safety control.

Cloud platforms provide the scale to train models, run digital twins, and coordinate cross-site operations.

These platforms allow AI to be deployed flexibly and integrated into existing enterprise systems.

Emerging technologies such as autonomous control systems and agentic AI

offer even more adaptability. These systems learn, plan and optimise processes with minimal human input. Crucially, these layers are connected through APIs and integration hubs that link AI with ERP, supply chain, and production systems. This ensures insights are shared across the organisation to enable better decision-making.

## More than efficiency

AI creates value at two levels. First, through operational hygiene.

Predictive maintenance, automated inspections, and real-time stock tracking are fast becoming industry norms. These improvements lower costs and improve compliance, but are no longer enough to differentiate.

"We are now exploring AI-driven process optimisation to improve yields and reduce energy use, de-

playing drones for safer inspections, and planning AI-driven logistics.

"As AI and automation evolve, the opportunity to unlock smarter, safer, and more efficient operations continues to grow," adds Mr. Shankar of CPCL.

Second, AI is unlocking innovation. Generative tools speed up design.

AI-driven customisation enables personalisation at scale. Companies that embed AI across their value chain—from R&D to delivery—are more agile, responsive, and future-ready.

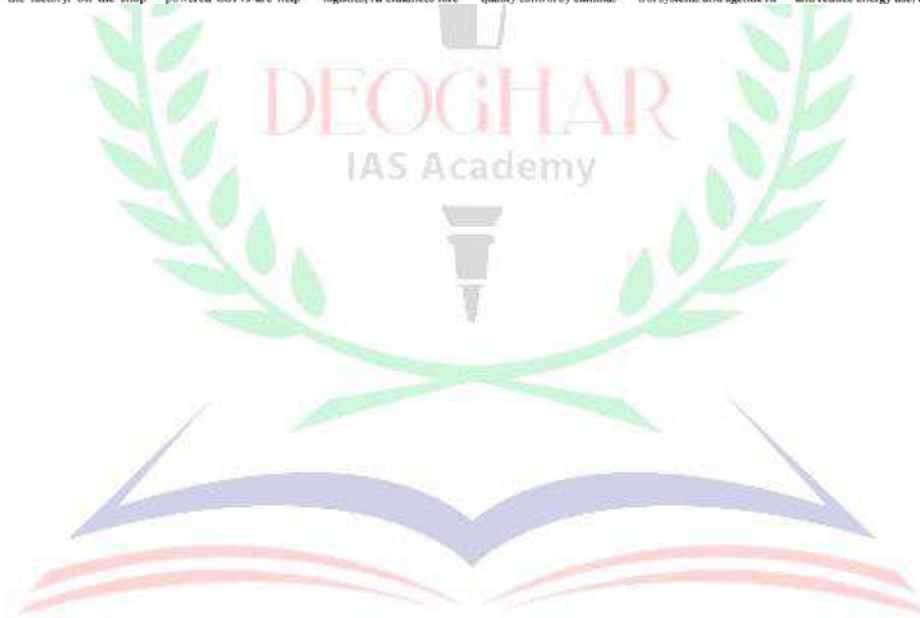
## Looking ahead

Challenges persist. Integration costs, talent shortages and concerns over data governance and model transparency are slowing broader adoption.

## Note of caution

A 2024 Reuters/Ipsos survey found that 44% of manufacturing leaders remain cautious about scaling generative AI due to concerns around hallucinations and explainability.

Still, the direction is clear. AI will be central to India's ambition of becoming a \$5 trillion economy. With the right mix of strategy, skills, and Indian manufacturers are well positioned to lead the next wave of global industrial transformation.





# West Bengal gears up for rare earth mining in Purulia district

**Press Trust of India**

KOLKATA

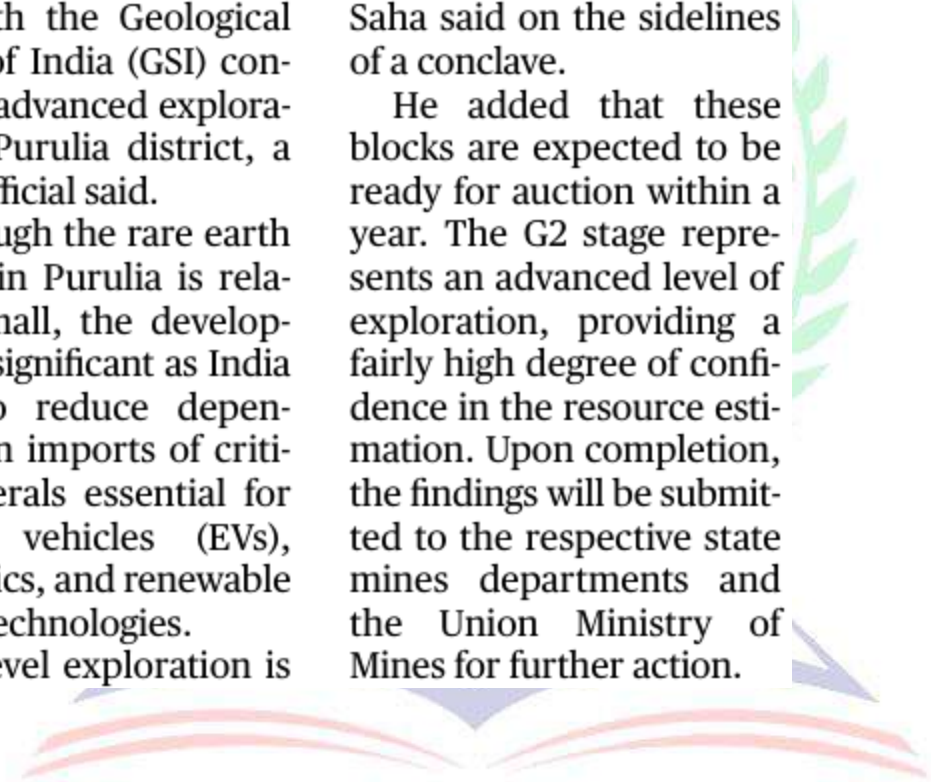
West Bengal is set to join India's rare earth mining map with the Geological Survey of India (GSI) conducting advanced exploration in Purulia district, a senior official said.

Although the rare earth deposit in Purulia is relatively small, the development is significant as India looks to reduce dependence on imports of critical minerals essential for electric vehicles (EVs), electronics, and renewable energy technologies.

"G2-level exploration is

underway in two blocks - one in Karbi Anglong district of Assam and the other in Purulia, West Bengal," GSI Director General Asit Saha said on the sidelines of a conclave.

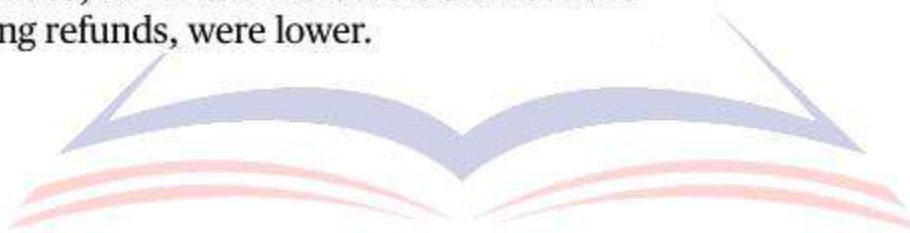
He added that these blocks are expected to be ready for auction within a year. The G2 stage represents an advanced level of exploration, providing a fairly high degree of confidence in the resource estimation. Upon completion, the findings will be submitted to the respective state mines departments and the Union Ministry of Mines for further action.





## Net direct tax collections down 1.3% on higher refunds

The Centre's net direct tax collections up to July 10 have come in lower than in the same period of the previous financial year, according to official data. The data shows that gross collections grew by 3.2% in this financial year up to July 10 to ₹6.6 lakh crore, compared with the year-ago period. However, refunds grew by 38%, which meant the net collections, which are the Centre's collections after paying refunds, were lower.







A booth-level officer verifying documents during the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Purnia district, Bihar. SOURCE: SHREKHA KASHYAP

# The struggle to be counted

Even as political parties gear up for the Bihar Assembly election, due later this year, the Election Commission of India has announced a drive to revise the voter list in the State. With just a month's time for 790 crore adults to fill in the enumeration forms, the entire State machinery has been deployed to carry out this exercise. **Sobhana K. Nair** finds that on the ground, people are angry, confused, and worried about the implications of not 'making it' to the list

It is not yet noon, but the tracks at the Jogbani railway station are dimming in the heat. Jogbani in Bihar's Araria district is the last station on the Indian side. The Indo-Nepal border is just a few metres away. The railway line, in the criss-cross of run-down semi-urbanisation, the stretch from the black refuse gurgling in the open drain overwhelms. The drain runs along a narrow, uneven brick street, down which women and men hurry. They are on their way to meet the booth-level officer (BLO), who sits in a home with the largest courtyard. He has brought enumeration forms issued by the Election Commission of India (ECI) for the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

On June 24, the ECI announced the SIR in Bihar. There are 790 crore electors in the State, all of whom must fill in the enumeration forms if they want their name on the electoral rolls. The Assembly election is due in the last quarter of 2025. All enumeration forms must be submitted by July 25. The exercise, however, is primarily aimed at those whose names were not recorded in the 2003 electoral rolls, the last time that an intensive revision of the voter list was carried out in the State. An estimated 2.53 crore people fall into this category.

At Jogbani, as people line up in front of Jiaz Ashraf (name changed to protect privacy), the BLO assigned to their ward, the anxiety is about documents. They have questions. In the crowd of over a dozen, only one person has a matriculation certificate, one of the II documents that the ECI has listed as proof of identity and place of birth for the SIR. Others have only ration cards, Aadhaar cards, or election photo identity card (EPIC) or voter ID cards, government documents that are so far not listed by the poll body.

A Bench of the Supreme Court is currently hearing at least 10 petitions filed by Opposition leaders, activists, and non-profit organisations challenging the SIR. The Supreme Court has asked the ECI to consider including these documents that are widely available with people.

Academics and activists say a majority of Bihar's population does not possess any of the II documents. Many face possible disenfranchisement. They argue that updated electoral rolls were published in January 2025 under the Special Summary Revision. The rush has caused confusion among the electorate and put stress on the governance system, they say. Many are calling it "votebandi after notebandi", the 2016 demonetisation drive that caused similar chaos.

**An electorate, anxious and panicked** Ashraf tells people that they only need to show their Aadhaar cards and fill in the enumeration form. The public asks, "We got a message on June 5 from the booth-level officer that no documents are needed. We were told to look at the Aadhaar cards of people and fill in the forms," he says. Ashraf is a Shiksha Sahayak, a post created in the 2000s by the then Nitish Kumar government to address teacher shortages in primary and middle schools. Kumar is still in

power in Bihar. These positions are mostly on contract basis. Many BLOs say they got oral instructions between July 5 and 8 to fill the form just on the basis of the EPIC and Aadhaar cards. Ashraf's phone rings endlessly, with residents asking for directions to his location. There is no house-to-house verification taking place that the ECI had said there would be. As of July 8, he had filled only 40-50% of the over 1,000 forms due from the area he covers. He must get at least 90% of the work done over the next two days. "I have been told that my salary will be withheld if I don't meet the target," he says.

The ECI said the SIR was needed because of "rapid urbanisation, frequent migration, young citizens becoming eligible to vote, non-reporting of deaths, and inclusion of the names of foreign illegal immigrants". The poll body's aim was to ensure "all eligible citizens are included" and no "ineligible voter is included" in the rolls.

Over the next few minutes, almost seamlessly, electors are handed over enumeration forms, which they take to the two ASHA (accredited social health activists) workers sitting at a table next to Ashraf's to get them filled. Once the details are filled in, people sign or put a thumbprint on their forms. The process is over in less than five minutes. No documents are attached; no difficult questions are asked, given that several women here were born in Nepal and married men across the border. Some have brought new passport-size photographs; these too are not taken.

On July 6, the office of the Bihar Chief Electoral Officer published an advertisement on the front pages of newspapers in Patna. "Jodi aapkebach dastaveer tabhi photo uplabdh nahi ho, to sirf gunana praputra bhair kar BLO ko uplabdh karna de (If you do not have the necessary docu-

ments, then just submit the enumeration forms to the BLOs)," it had stated. Later that day, the ECI issued a clarification that there was no change in the instructions to carry out the SIR. Bihar Chief Electoral Officer Vinod Singh Samjyal says, "Go through the orders please. There is no change in orders of the commission."

The ECI order of June 24 allows those who cannot produce the necessary documents now to submit them during the "claims and objections" period between August 1 and September 1.

The fact that the documents are still needed and the requirement has only been delayed is yet to percolate to the electors. At Jogbani, 36-year-old Alam Mohammad Raza fishes out his smartphone to show everyone a news clipping from a leading Hindi newspaper on ECI's "no change" clarification. But the relief of not having to supply the documents is stronger than the doubt. The fear that many migrant workers will be left out of the voter list has also been dulled for now as many BLOs are allowing wives and fathers to sign the enumeration form on their behalf.

Raza must produce proof of date and/or place of birth of himself and one parent, since he was born between July 1, 1987 and December 2, 2004. Those born after December 2, 2004 must produce documents that show proof of date and/or place of birth of themselves and both parents.

The reactions to the SIR vary. For each, the significance of having their name on the electoral roll varies. For some, it is about the right to choose their representative; for many, it is about access to government schemes and subsidies; for the minority, it is the fear that if their names are struck off, they will no longer be deemed citizens and sent to detention camps.

At Jogbani, Intiaz Ansari, 38, who runs a ready-made clothing shop, says he spent two days turning his house upside down looking for the school leaving certificate that shows he completed Class 10 in 1982. He hasn't needed it in a while. "Didn't we vote just last year [in the Lok Sabha election]? Didn't we elect this government? Now the very people whom we elected and placed in the high office are probing us, asking whether we are citizens of this country or not."

Ansari's anger pours out in a jumble of questions. "I didn't come from America or Hong Kong. My grandfather died here, my father is buried here, and I too shall be," he says.

"Those born before July 1, 1987 must show a document with proof of date and/or place of birth. These documents must be attached to the enumeration forms. At least five of the II documents listed by the ECI do not indicate the applicants' place or date of birth."

**BLOs, overworked and frustrated**

The filing of enumeration forms has gathered pace over the last few days. As per press state-

ments issued by the ECI, on July 5, only 13.49% of nearly 7.9 crore electors filled and returned their forms. This figure has been steadily growing. By July 9, it was at 57.48%. The ECI has not revealed how many of these forms have documents attached to them.

There is a narrative that repeats itself across the districts that The Hindu visited. At Kamulpur, on the outskirts of Purnia district, BLO Ramnath Sahu (name changed) says before the advertisement appeared asking people to submit forms without documents, only 30 forms were filled over two days because no one could produce the necessary documents.

Diligently rifling through the documents of the restless people surrounding him, Sahu's anxiety is peaking. He throws his hands up in frustration. He says he got the enumeration papers only on July 5 at 2 p.m. There are almost 900 electors in the booth under him.

"For the first three days, I could manage to process only 25 forms per day, since we needed to attach the documents. On June 7, I was told I need not ask for those documents; I could get the forms filled just on the basis of an Aadhaar card. Now each day, I am managing to process 50 to 60 forms," he says. But the pressure is high. Every day he gets three or four calls from his supervisor. "They say they will withhold my salary and seek a written explanation if I don't finish the task quickly," he says.

The entire State administration has been deployed to carry out this exercise. There are 98,498 BLOs at work, assisted by ASHA workers. With patchy Internet coverage, the task of uploading the forms is happening at the block level, where the BLO sends in the signed forms.

Hurrying through the enumeration forms without the documents pushes the onus of verification on to the Electoral Registration Officer. "When the draft electoral rolls are made public on August 1, thousands and thousands of names will be missing. My apprehension is that many won't read the draft rolls too, considering they are working far away from home. It is only when they return home on election day to cast their vote that they will find themselves out of the rolls," says Jagdeep S. Chhokar, founder of the Association for Democratic Reforms, a non-profit working on electoral and political reforms.

**Dalits, angry and worried**

At 2:30 p.m. in Jalalgarh, on the outskirts of Purnia district, paddy saplings are being planted by women in fields with thin high water. A clutch of women takes a break from bending over through the day. They have just finished lunch and are sitting on their haunches.

The government's insistence on documents has the group riled up. "There is a rate list for each document. An Aadhaar card costs ₹200 per person; a birth certificate anything between ₹1,000 and ₹2,000, depending on whether our children were born in hospital or at home. It also means leaving work for that day to chase after these," Puja Devi, who is in her early 20s, says of the bribes she must pay through the system. She is a Mahadalit belonging to the Rishidev community, one of 20 Scheduled Castes that are the most marginalised of the Dalit group. The category was created by the Bihar government during Kumar's earlier term as Chief Minister in 2007.

Everyone chips in with their travails. Ramkha Devi, the eldest in the group, well into her 60s, intervenes. "I have this big pile of documents," she gesticulates. "When they come asking for votes, I will slam it in their faces." Her bluster invites guffaws from the group. How would their daily lives be affected if they are not on the voting list? The answer is unanimous: they will lose all benefits from both Central and State government schemes. "It is as good as being dead," says Parvati Devi, in her 30s, speaking the sobering truth.

Naveen Kumar, 33, at Thariya Bakiya village in Supaul town, in a district of the same name, is from the Rishidev community. "This looks like the government wants to drive us out. Isn't this NRC (National Register of Citizens)? Aren't they asking for the same documents that people would need for NRC?" he says.

Naveen is a graduate, the only one in his village to have been to college. "I have every document that the government needs. But at least 50% of people won't," he says. He is annoyed at the government for sending everyone into this document-hunting spree. As per Bihar's 2022 caste survey, only 14.7% of adults in the State have completed Class 10.

At Kamulpur in Saran district, Mohammad Marhab, 28, says he has been trying to make sense of the ECI's order. His worry is that though he has the school leaving certificate, the elderly at home do not. The worry is further accentuated by the speculation that failure to produce proof of birth and place could lead to not only disenfranchisement but also deportation.

"If the existing electoral roll was good enough to elect the country's Prime Minister, why is it not good enough to pick the Chief Minister? If the existing voter list is unreliable, let the Prime Minister resign," he says, angrily.

Dilip Kumar Yadav, a private school teacher in Phulparas, Madhubani district, has stopped at a wayside stall in the main chowk for his evening cup of tea. As the conversation veers towards SIR, he declares, "I will not get all this done. I am working towards getting citizenship of a different country. I don't want to stay in Bihar." The group around him laughs. "One man rules this State for 30 years, but does nothing. I have voted for the BJP twice. What have we got in return?" he says.

In the Bihar Assembly, of the 243 seats, the BJP has 79 and the Janata Dal (United), which is part of the National Democratic Alliance at both the Centre and in the State, has 45.

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A van spreading awareness of the ECI's Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar's Purnia district. SOURCE: SHREKHA KASHYAP



# English dreams

Imposing any language as the medium of instruction is unacceptable

**E**nglish medium education is an aspiration for many Indians, but state policy regarding the medium of instruction has been uneven across time and regions. The ongoing language debate in India, which stems from the renewed efforts of the Bharatiya Janata Party to enforce a three-language policy, has many components, the medium of instruction being one. Educationists generally argue that instruction in the mother tongue helps children achieve better learning goals in their early stages of development. This view is supported by pedagogical research, but it cannot, and does not, operate in isolation from other factors such as constitutional rights and ground realities. India's linguistic diversity and distribution is such that even the question of what is a child's mother tongue can often be a contested one. There is also the constitutional question of freedom of expression and choice. In 2014, after a protracted legal tussle, the Supreme Court of India held that a Karnataka government order of 1994 that made instruction in Kannada mandatory until Class four was not valid under the Constitution. For, children have a right to choose, and the state cannot enforce its view on what is good for them. The rights of private educational institutions to offer education as per market demand is another related issue.

The National Education Policy that is being aggressively pushed by the Centre has a particularly anti-English edge, which is not in line with popular aspiration. Many States that want to promote their local language and culture also want to promote English education and English as a medium of instruction. In Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, there are aided English medium schools. The demand for English medium education is growing – this includes the Hindi-speaking regions – which is met largely by sub-standard and expensive private institutions. English skills help individuals and the country in gaining a place in the global services sector. India's subaltern caste groups in particular seek to empower themselves through English education, which remains a currency for upward mobility. If state schools do not offer English medium instruction, relatively richer families could still access it through private schools. In this context, education becomes a continuing reproduction and even aggravation of social inequalities, which is the exact opposite of its purpose. The fact is that knowledge of English is empowering and convertible for other outcomes. There can be a debate on whether it should be the medium of instruction at the primary level, but a basic test of any policy is in how it advances the ambitions of the most disadvantaged sections.



# View India's Gender Gap Report ranking as a warning

India is now a global economic power, a digital innovator, and home to the world's largest youth population. But the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (2025) is a sobering reminder that when it comes to gender equality, India remains far behind.

## Structural issues

India ranks 131 out of 148 countries, with particularly low scores in economic participation and health and survival – the pillars essential for meaningful gender parity. These are not just social indicators. They are signs of a structural failure holding back national progress.

Despite progress in educational attainment, India continues to struggle in ensuring women's health and autonomy. The report shows that India's sex ratio at birth remains among the most skewed in the world, reflecting a persistent son preference. The healthy life expectancy for women is now lower than men's.

Such outcomes point to chronic neglect in reproductive health, preventive care and nutrition, especially for women from lower-income and rural backgrounds. Increased Budget allocations for health, especially at the primary care level, are a necessity to improve women's well-being and their access to basic services, such as education and health care. Without good health, economic inclusion becomes impossible. Nearly 57% of Indian women in the 15 to 49 age group are anaemic – as reported by National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5 – which reduces their ability to learn, work, or carry pregnancies safely. Such a widespread and correctable issue is emblematic of the broader failure to treat women's health as a national development priority.

India ranks 143rd on the Economic



**Poonam Muttreja**

is the Executive Director at the Population Foundation of India



**Martand Kaushik**

is Senior Specialist – Media and Communications at the Population Foundation of India

India must treat gender equality as central to its economic and demographic future

Participation and Opportunity subindex. Women continue to earn less than a third of what men do, and female labour force participation remains stubbornly low. The McKinsey Global Institute, in 2015, had projected that closing gender gaps could add \$770 billion to India's GDP by 2025. Yet, in 2025, India appears to have lost out on the opportunity. At the current pace of progress, it may take over a century to close the global economic gender gap – and India lags behind even that trajectory.

## A sidelining

This is not just about employment numbers. Women remain busy in informal and subsistence work and are grossly under-represented in decision-making spaces – from boardrooms to budget committees. The result is a policy ecosystem that repeatedly sidelines women's lived realities. The burden of unpaid care work continues to be a major drag on women's time and agency. Indian women perform nearly seven times more unpaid domestic work than men, as highlighted by the Time Use Survey. Yet, this critical labour remains invisible in national accounting and underfunded in public policy.

Investing in care infrastructure such as childcare centres, elder care services and maternity benefits would not only ease this burden but also enable millions of women to enter or re-enter the workforce. The vacuum in these services reflects both a gender and an economic blind spot.

Central and State governments must begin to account for unpaid care work in their economic and social policy frameworks through time-use surveys, gender budgeting, and direct investment in care infrastructure. India can look to countries such as Uruguay and South Korea, which have

begun integrating care economies into their development plans, with positive results.

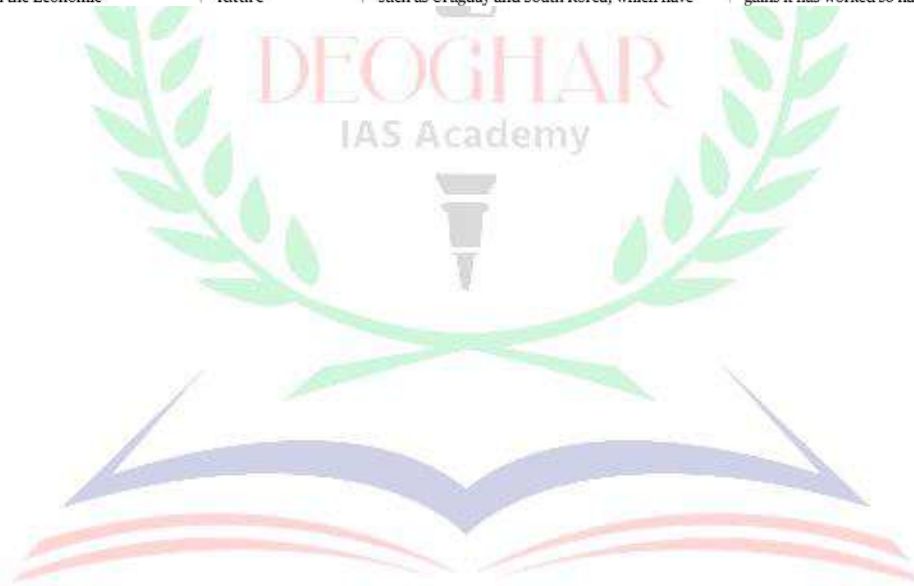
## Supporting senior citizens

India is at a demographic turning point. While it continues to draw benefits from a young population, its percentage of senior citizens is expected to nearly double by 2050, reaching close to 20% of the population. This demographic shift will predominantly comprise very old women, especially widows, who often experience high dependency. At the same time, fertility rates have already fallen below replacement level, as noted in the NFHS-5. This means that the working-age population will shrink and the care needs of the elderly will rise. The only way to sustain economic growth in this context is to ensure women – half the population – are healthy, supported, and economically active. Gender equality is no longer just a rights issue. It is a demographic and economic necessity.

If women continue to exit or be excluded from the workforce, the dependency ratio will rise even faster, placing greater strain on fewer workers and undermining fiscal stability. Reversing this trend demands integrated policies that connect health, labour and social protection.

India does not lack frameworks or ambition – the slogans are there. What is required is real investment: in public health systems that prioritise women's needs; in care services that redistribute unpaid work, and in policies that see women not as beneficiaries, but as builders of the economy.

The Global Gender Gap Report is not just a ranking. It is a warning: unless India treats gender equality as central to its economic and demographic future, it risks squandering the gains it has worked so hard to achieve.





# India to host international conference on manuscript heritage on September 11-13

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**

NEW DELHI

India will host the first international Manuscript Heritage Conference in September, which will be attended by global scholars, thought leaders, and cultural custodians in the subject.

The three-day conference, titled “Reclaiming India’s knowledge legacy through manuscript heritage”, is being organised from September 11 to 13 in the national capital as part of the launch of the “Gyan Bharatam Mission”.

The conference will also commemorate Swami Vivekananda’s Chicago address (September 11, 1893), symbolising India’s intellectual and spiritual global vision, official sources said.

The Centre had announced the Gyan Bharatam Mission in the Union Budget, 2025-26, for reviving and expanding the vi-



The conference will be graced by eminent dignitaries of India, global scholars, thought leaders, and cultural custodians. FILE PHOTO

sion of the National Mission for Manuscripts launched in 2003. The Gyan Bharatam Mission seeks to preserve, digitise, and disseminate manuscript knowledge, integrate it with modern technologies, and foster a new generation of scholars and institutions to carry the legacy forward.

The conference will be graced by eminent dignitaries of India, and will feature keynotes and participation by global scholars,

thought leaders, and cultural custodians. There will be numerous side events such as an exhibition on Indian manuscripts, one on manuscripts inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World, live demonstrations, and workshops, and a special space for startups in the field.

The Union Culture Ministry has also invited original research papers, case studies, and conceptual frameworks to be presented on themes.

# Nine Pakistan sites hit during Operation Sindoor, says Doval

NSA says the entire operation was over in 23 minutes and only terrorist bases were targeted; he also highlights the crucial role played by indigenous systems such as BrahMos, integrated air-control and command systems, the radars in the conflict

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval said on Friday that India hit nine terrorist targets across Pakistan during Operation Sindoor. "We missed none," he said at the 62<sup>nd</sup> convocation of the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.

## Precise to point

"We hit nowhere else except that. It was precise to the point where we knew who was where. The entire operation started at five minutes past one and was over at 28 minutes past one – 23 minutes," he said to

## Taking stock

At IIT-Madras, the NSA urges youth to pursue indigenous technology and knowledge systems

■ On claims of damage to India in Pakistan attacks, Doval dares anyone to show any pictures of damage



We hit nowhere else except that (the targets). It was precise to the point where we knew who was where. The operation started at 5 minutes past one and it was over at 28 minutes past one – 23 minutes



We are really proud of it [Operation Sindoor], not for necessarily what people perceive, [but] that how much of indigenous content was there... our Brahmos systems... our integrated air control and command systems... the radars... – NSA AJIT DOVAL

loud applause from the audience.

"Thereafter, the foreign press had carried several reports saying Pakistan did this or that. You show me any photograph, any imagery – you know, these days

these imageries are from satellites all over the world – which show any Indian damage being done, even a glass pane having been broken," he said.

"Mention was made here of Operation Sindoor.

We are really proud of it, not necessarily for what people perceive, [but] how much of indigenous content was there... whether it was our BrahMos systems... our integrated air-control and command sys-

tems, the radars... [or] all that was being done as battlefield surveillance," he said.

## 'Focus on AI'

Mr. Doval urged the graduates to work towards developing indigenous technology and knowledge systems that could take the country forward in various fields like communication and defence.

"By the time we celebrate 100 years of Independence, you will be at the peak of your careers," he said, urging the audience to focus on emerging fields such as artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing.

