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World's highest bird death rates at Thar Desert wind farms

Across seven multi-season surveys, Wildlife Institute of India researchers searched for bird carcasses within a 150-m radius of 90 randomly selected wind turbines and found 124

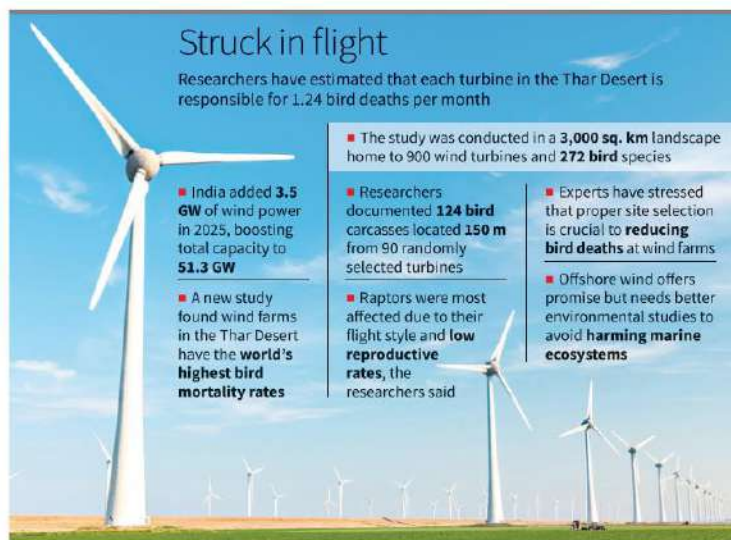
Nikhil Sreekandan

In the first half of 2025, India added around 3.5 GW to the wind sector – an 82% year-on-year growth – taking the total installed capacity to 51.3 GW. According to the National Institute of Wind Energy, India's gross wind power potential is 1163.9 GW at 150 m above ground level. India's ambitious climate goals and surging energy demands mean renewable energy development will continue to accelerate.

Experts are concerned, however, that the addition of wind power capacity has been coming at the expense of avian welfare. For years, researchers have raised concerns about the impact of wind turbines on fauna, particularly birds. A study by the Wildlife Institute of India, published recently in *Scientific Reports*, has estimated that bird mortality rates at wind farms are the highest in the world in India's Thar Desert.

The study was conducted in a 3,000 sq. km desert landscape in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, home to around 900 wind turbines and 272 bird species, including the critically endangered great Indian bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*). Across seven multi-season surveys, Wildlife Institute researchers searched for bird carcasses within a 150-m radius of 90 randomly selected wind turbines and found 124.

The estimated annual bird mortality per 1,000 sq. km came up to 4,464



birds after correcting for non-detection due to vegetation cover or carcass degradation during the survey and due to carcass scavenging before the survey. The researchers conducted similar surveys at 28 randomly selected control sites (between 500 and 2,000 m of any turbine) to account for the natural mortality of birds and found no carcasses.

"Very few studies have robust data to have accurate assessments that correct for detection issues and have controls for comparison," Yadvendra Dev Jhala, one of the authors of the study, said.

A 2019 study documented bird deaths at wind farms in Kutch and Davanagere. However, the estimate of 0.47 bird deaths per turbine per year at both sites now pale in com-

parison to the 1.24 bird deaths per turbine per month in Thar.

"It's quite a high estimate, but that's quite possible," Ramesh Kumar Selvaraj, an independent consultant and author of the 2019 paper, said. The mortality rate "will vary depending on geography, season, and other factors."

Bird density, infrastructure density, and configuration are also crucial factors, according to Jhala. The Thar Desert is also part of the Central Asian Flyway, a major migration route for birds across Eurasia, and a prominent wintering destination.

The desert mortality estimates also included bird collisions with power lines linked to the wind turbines. The Gujarat and Karnataka study didn't include this cause.

Per both studies, raptors were the most affected group of birds, echoing findings worldwide.

Organisations like BirdLife International have proposed several mitigation measures to reduce bird collisions with wind turbines, including painting one of the turbine blades to increase visibility and shutting turbines down at a certain time of day or season. However, Selvaraj said the most crucial step in mitigation is to carefully select the site of a wind farm.

From land to ocean

Offshore wind farms are emerging as a valuable renewable energy resource worldwide. According to the Global Wind Energy Council, operational offshore wind capacity worldwide is currently around

83 GW. With a coastline stretching across 7,600 km and exclusive economic zones covering 2.3 million sq. km, India has considerable offshore potential of its own. It aims to install 30 GW of capacity by 2030.

However, despite the growing interest, there has been limited research on the environmental consequences of offshore wind farms. Offshore wind energy is a complex infrastructure asset that requires detailed marine spatial planning exercises to assess environmental and social impacts, according to Gopal K. Sarangi, head of the Department of Policy and Management Studies at the TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi.

According to the National Offshore Wind Energy Policy, unlike other renewable energy developments in the country, environmental impact assessments are essential for offshore wind energy.

The rapid environmental impact assessment report of the proposed offshore wind farm in the Gulf of Kambhat in Gujarat documented five marine mammals, including dolphins, sharks, and a reptile within the study area. While the report recognised that increased turbidity and noise levels during the construction phase of the wind farm may drive away highly sensitive species, it deemed the noise and vibrations during the operation phase to be "limited".

(Nikhil Sreekandan is an independent journalist)



Potatoes evolved from tomatoes 9M years ago

Scientists studied the DNA of over 100 potato and related plants and found that every potato species is a genetic mix that formed when wild tomatoes and *Etuberosum* plants crossed about 90 lakh years ago. Each modern potato still carries roughly 40% tomato-type and 60% *Etuberosum* genes. The new lineage could survive drought, cold mountain climates, and reproduce asexually. The cross triggered a burst of evolution: today potatoes include 107 wild species and form the crop that feeds millions.



Friendless in Dravidian politics

O. Panneerselvam

The former Jayalalithaa loyalist and three-time Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, who revolted against Sasikala within the AIADMK and joined hands with the BJP, is now facing a moment of uncertainty after he was expelled from his party and became estranged from the BJP-led alliance

T. Ramakrishnan

Three-time Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and former coordinator of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), O. Panneerselvam, could scarcely have imagined, even at the time of his expulsion from the party in July 2022, that he would one day visit the residence of Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and interact with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) president twice in 12 hours.

On July 31, both met at the historic and notorious Theosophical Society in Adyar during their morning walk. In the evening, accompanied by his son and former Thei MP P. Ravindhranath Kumar, Mr. Panneerselvam held discussions with the Chief Minister and his son and Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin for about 45 minutes at Mr. Stalin's residence in south Chennai's upmarket Alwarpet. The actions of the ten seller-turned-politician raised many eyebrows because he had all along fashioned himself as a quintessential loyalist of Jayalalithaa, who wore anti-DMKism on her sleeve on the lines of the AIADMK's founder and former Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran.

For the 74-year-old, who hails from the caste and communally sensitive southern region of the State, time seems to be running out for stitching the right alliance to face the Assembly election, due for April-May next year. Mr. Panneerselvam, widely known as OPS, is still considered a persona non grata, as far as the AIADMK general secretary, Edappadi K. Palaniswami, is concerned. As for the Bharathya Janata Party (BJP), a party which Mr. Panneerselvam and his son had assiduously cultivated after Jayalalithaa's death in December 2016, the "spell of love" towards the septuagenarian does not appear to exist any more. It has been sometime since Mr. Panneerselvam met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister for Home Affairs Amit Shah.

When Mr. Modi visited Tamil Nadu to take part in the Aadi Thiruvathirai

festival in Gangaiyandacholapuram on July 26-27, Mr. Panneerselvam's request for a meeting was not granted. But Mr. Palaniswami, once a colleague turned foe of Mr. Panneerselvam, met PM Modi at the Tiruchi airport, along with his senior colleagues. At the time of announcing the revival of ties between his party and the AIADMK in April, Mr. Shah made it clear that the BJP would not like to "interfere in the internal affairs" of the Dravidian party.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha poll, Mr. Panneerselvam contested unsuccessfully from the Ramanathapuram constituency as part of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance. Before holding the July 31 evening meeting with Mr. Stalin came the announcement that the 'OPS' camp had decided to exit the Alliance, a move that was attributed to the Union government's refusal to provide funds to Tamil Nadu under the Samagra Shiksha scheme.

Modi's man

All the recent developments must have been odd for the Mr. Panneerselvam, who was not long ago seen as Mr. Modi's loyal supporter. He was present when Mr. Modi filed his nomination papers in Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency in 2019. He surprised many in November 2020 when he used a government function, where Amit Shah and Mr. Palaniswami were present, to announce that the AIADMK, for which he was the coordinator then, and the BJP would continue their alliance for the 2021 Assembly polls. At the function, the veteran political leader, who joined the AIADMK in 1977, had hailed the Union Minister as a "modern day Chanakya".

The perception generated by Mr. Panneerselvam's meetings with Mr. Stalin may be hard to digest for the traditional supporters of the AIADMK, who have been schooled in viewing the DMK as an "evil force". But he seems to be having limited options. Even though he still has the option of going along with the fledgling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) led by actor Vijay, the seasoned leader knows fully



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

well that given the grip of the bipolar system in the State, it is next to impossible for a third force to capture even a handful of seats.

Not everyone views Mr. Panneerselvam sympathetically and there are critics who say he has "proved yet again" that he is "unreliable". Originally, he drew his strength from his proximity to former interim general secretary of the AIADMK V.K. Sasikala, who had served as an aide of Jayalalithaa for about 30 years, and her nephew T.T.V. Dhinakaran, who is now heading the

Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK). All of them belong to the same caste group - Mukkulathor - though they are from different sub-groups. Mr. Panneerselvam from Maravar and Ms. Sasikala and Mr. Dhinakaran from Kallar.

Once called 'Mr. Faithful', Mr. Panneerselvam, who was with the Janaki Ramchandran group of the party at the time of the party split in 1988, came to be noted for qualities such as humility and fierce loyalty. No wonder, he became the party's nominee for the chairmanship of the

Periyakulam Municipality in 1996. His stock in the party began growing, particularly after he served as a key member of the campaign team when Mr. Dhinakaran contested from the Periyakulam Lok Sabha constituency in 1999 and won. Next year, Mr. Panneerselvam became the Theiil district secretary of the AIADMK.

His qualities and the reputation of an archetypal feudal supplicant had stood him in good stead. He was the party's "natural choice" for the CM post in September 2001 after the Supreme Court unseated Jayalalithaa; in September 2004, when she was convicted in a disproportionate assets case; and in December 2016 after her death. In Jayalalithaa's Cabinet, he was, at one time, Minister in charge of 13 portfolios.

'Righteous war'

The high point in his political career came in February 2017 when he went out all guns blazing against Ms. Sasikala. After quitting the CM post and a 40-minute long "meditation" at the Jayalalithaa mausoleum on the Marina, he made a dramatic announcement, claiming that he was "compelled to quit the post". This marked the launch of his 'dharma yudham' (righteous war) against the "domination" of Ms. Sasikala's family in the party affairs. In no time, he patched up with Mr. Palaniswami, and became the Deputy Chief Minister six months later. Feeling that he had only a limited space to operate in the party and the government under Mr. Palaniswami, he swiftly re-established ties with Mr. Dhinakaran. At the time of the 2021 Assembly polls, he tried hard for the AMMK's accommodation under the AIADMK fold, but to no avail.

As he seems to have exhausted the "goodwill of his benefactors", including Mr. Modi, Mr. Panneerselvam, a survivor of many trials, is now at the mercy of Mr. Stalin to keep himself and his loyalists afloat. The traditional supporters of the AIADMK may not like it, but for Mr. Panneerselvam, it is a matter of life and death in electoral politics.

THE GIST

Panneerselvam was the AIADMK's "natural choice" for the CM post in September 2001 after the Supreme Court unseated Jayalalithaa; in September 2014, when Jayalalithaa was convicted in a disproportionate assets case; and in December 2016, after her death.

After his resignation, he patched up with Palaniswami and became the Deputy Chief Minister. He was seen as a close supporter of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Late last month, the 'OPS' camp decided to exit the NDA, a move that was attributed to the Union government's refusal to provide funds to Tamil Nadu under the Samagra Shiksha scheme.



Why is NE on edge about Assam evictions?

What is the reason for an aggressive eviction drive from forestlands? What has been the reaction in neighbouring States? Why does Assam have boundary disputes with Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland? What has the Gauhati High Court directed the States to do?

Rahul Karmakar

The story so far:

The Assam government's drive to evict encroachers from forestlands has sent alarm bells ringing in other States of the region. Now, States bordering Assam are taking measures to ensure that those evicted from Assam do not cross over.

When did the eviction drive start in Assam?

The BJP came to power in 2016 by promising to secure *jaati* (race), *maati* (land), and *bheti* (hearth). Based on a Gauhati High Court order to reclaim encroached forestlands, the first eviction drive was carried out in three fringe villages of eastern Assam's Kaziranga National Park in September 2016. Two people died at Gorukhuti in north-central Assam's Darrang district when the eviction drive resumed in September 2021, five months after the BJP retained power and Himanta Biswa Sarma became Chief Minister. The eviction drives, allegedly targeted at Bengali Muslims, resumed in June 2025, coinciding with charges of corruption against the BJP-led government, one of them involving the purchase and redistribution of Gir cows for an agricultural project at Gorukhuti, from where migrant

Assam claims four neighbouring States have been occupying almost 83,000 hectares of land belonging to it

Muslims were evicted.

What are the roots of the problem?

Evicting encroachers from forestlands, wetlands, and government revenue lands is not a new phenomenon in Assam. However, the operation has been high on optics as the BJP and its sub-nationalist regional allies have accused the 15-year rule by Congress of having paved the ground for encroachment by the 'Bangladeshi', 'Miya', or 'illegal infiltrators' – pejoratives for Muslims with roots in present-day Bangladesh – for votes. This category of Muslims has long polarised electoral politics in Assam during and after the anti-foreigners Assam Agitation (1979-'85), which led to the signing of an accord prescribing a cut-off date – midnight of March 24, 1971 – for the detection, deletion (from electoral rolls), and deportation of "illegal immigrants" or Bangladeshi nationals.

Why is the drive overtly aggressive?

The eviction drives have impacted non-Muslims as well, including 130 families whose houses were bulldozed to clear the Silsako Beel, a major wetland in Guwahati, of encroachment in 2022. Those against migrant Muslims, however, has garnered more attention for their scale and intensity, as it has led to the death of at least five people between 2016 and July 2025, when 1,080 families were evicted from 135 hectares of the Paikan Reserve Forest in Assam's Goalpara district. This aggression is also reflected in the rhetoric of the Chief Minister and other BJP leaders, who refer to the drive as a long-term exercise to save Assam from 'land jihad'.

Before the drive was launched this year, the Chief Minister said 15,288.52 bighas of satra (Vaishnav monastery) lands remain illegally occupied by people of doubtful citizenship across 29 districts. He also referred to the Union Environment Ministry's report to the National Green Tribunal that 3,620.9 square kilometres of forest area in Assam were under encroachment as of March 2024. The Chief Minister vowed to continue the eviction drive until Assam is encroachment-free in "at least 10 years", while clarifying that tribal people living in forest areas from before 2005 and covered by the Forest

Rights Act would not be touched. This followed the fast-track resettlement of at least 12 Ahom families who were evicted along with migrant Muslims from village grazing reserves across four locations in northeastern Assam's Lakhimpur district.

Why are Assam's neighbours jittery?

Assam's neighbours were passive as long as the eviction drives were in areas far from the interstate borders. NGOs in Nagaland stirred into action after the Assam government announced an anti-encroachment drive in Golaghat district's Uriamghat. They saw it as a move to push "illegal Bangladeshi immigrants" inside Nagaland under the agenda of usurping "ancestral Naga lands". Before the drive commenced, the police in Nagaland's Nuland district intercepted and turned 200 vehicles carrying "illegal migrants" back to Assam. A few days later, a conglomerate of extremist groups announced a task force to guard the Assam-Nagaland border against infiltrators. The governments of Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, and Mizoram followed suit. They issued orders to the authorities in areas bordering Assam to increase vigilance, prevent the evicted people from coming in, and make the issuance of the inner-line permit, a temporary travel document, stricter.

How are border disputes linked to eviction?

Although opposition political parties in Assam see the eviction drive against Bengali-speaking Muslims as a part of the BJP's agenda of polarisation ahead of the 2026 Assembly polls, encroachment is at the core of the State's boundary disputes with Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland. These States were carved out of Assam between 1963 and 1972. In March 2025, the Assam Assembly was told that the four States have been occupying almost 83,000 hectares of land belonging to the State. These States have, off and on, driven migrant Muslims out to Assam, a State they accuse of having patronised "illegal immigrants" and made them settle along the borders as a ploy to claim disputed lands. More than 350 people have died due to the inter-State disputes, which Assam has partially resolved with Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya. On July 30, the Gauhati High Court directed these five States to constitute a high-level committee to facilitate a coordinated action to clear illegal settlements from forestlands.



Homes razed: Villagers watch the demolition of houses during an eviction drive inside the Paikan Reserve Forest in Goalpara, Assam on July 12. AFP



Why is the U.K.'s stand on Palestine significant?

What role did Britain play in the Israel-Palestine question in 1917? What bearing does it have now?

Stanly Johny

The story so far

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced last week that his government would recognise the state of Palestine during the coming UN General Assembly session in September unless Israel agrees to a ceasefire in Gaza, allows more humanitarian aid and commits itself towards long-term peace based on the two-state formula.

What have other countries announced?
Mr. Starmer's remarks came shortly after French President Emmanuel Macron declared that Paris would recognise Palestinian statehood in September. Canada and Portugal have also expressed their intention to do the same. As the 21-month long war on Gaza rages on, Israel is facing one of its biggest diplomatic crises with more and more countries in the West, Israel's traditional allies, adopting a favourable position towards Palestinian statehood.

How significant is this recognition drive?
Of the 193 UN member states, 147 have already recognised the state of Palestine. Until now, powerful Western countries had resisted such recognition, insisting it should be part of a final diplomatic settlement to the Israel-Palestine conflict. But that position is beginning to shift. Among the five members of the UN Security Council, Russia and China have already recognised Palestine. If France and the U.K. follow through with their recent statements, the U.S., Israel's closest ally and patron, will be isolated at the Council. France, the U.K. and Canada are also members of the G7 group of advanced economies, and their recognition could influence other countries to follow suit. Britain's move, in particular, carries historic weight, given its central role in the Israel-Palestine question. In the 1917 Balfour Declaration, Britain became the first major power to endorse the Zionist demand for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

What is the Balfour Declaration?

The declaration was issued by Sir Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, on November 2, 1917, addressed to Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild, a Zionist and leader of the British Jewish community. In the letter, written in the midst of the First World War, Balfour

stated: "His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best

endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object." Jews in Europe had already started migrating to Palestine, which was part of the Ottoman Empire until the end of the First World War, in the late 19th century. By the time the Balfour Declaration was issued, there were roughly 60,000 Jews in Palestine, accounting for over 9% of the total population. Zionist leaders then argued that the only viable solution to the 'Jewish question' was the establishment of a national home in Palestine.

What did Britain do after the war?

While Britain pledged support for a Jewish home 'in Palestine', it had also promised to support Arab independence if the Arabs revolted against the Ottomans. But Britain and France had already entered into a secret agreement (Sykes-Picot) to divide the Ottoman lands once the war was over. After the war, Britain established a colonial administration in Palestine under the League of Nations Mandate. Over the following decades, Jewish migration to Palestine intensified. The Jewish community in Palestine began building their own institutions, from trade unions and industries to paramilitary groups and administrative frameworks. By the end of the Second World War, Jews made up 30% of the population.

Britain had concluded in the late 1930s that the mandate was unworkable, and supported the partition of Palestine. After the war, Britain informed the UN of its intention to end the Mandate, which was set to expire on May 15, 1948. On May 14, Zionist leaders unilaterally declared the state of Israel. Within minutes, the U.S. recognised the state. The declaration immediately triggered the First Arab-Israeli war.

Why will Britain recognise Palestine now?

Given the historical role Britain has played in the crisis, a British recognition of the state of Palestine, 108 years after the Balfour Declaration was issued, assumes enormous symbolic significance. It may not have an immediate impact on Israel's occupation of Palestine, but it clearly reflects a change in London's policy towards Israel and Palestine. As Israel is facing accusations of committing genocide against Palestinians, and images of Gaza's devastation and starving children are coming out, it becomes untenable for many Western nations to continue to back Israel unconditionally.



How will Trump's tariffs impact India?

What are the sectors that will need to rework their export strategies? Why are India's dealings with Russia under scrutiny? Will the 25% tariff and penalty affect GDP? Why hasn't a trade deal worked out between the two countries? What are the main areas of contention?

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan

The story so far:

In July 30, U.S. President Donald Trump announced 25% tariffs on imports from India "plus a penalty". While this puts to rest months of speculation over what the tariffs would be on Indian imports into the U.S., it opens up fresh uncertainties with respect to a potential bilateral trade agreement between India and the U.S.

What did Mr. Trump announce?

Taking to social media, Mr. Trump cited India's tariff and non-tariff measures on trade, and its dealing with Russia on energy and military equipment, as the main reasons behind imposing the 25% tariffs and the penalty. There is no clarity yet on what the penalty will look like, but Mr. Trump has in the past threatened a 10% additional tariff on BRICS countries. If this comes to pass, then effective tariffs on Indian imports would be 35%. There is also a legislation in the U.S. in the process of being passed that could see an additional 500% tariff on India, China, and Brazil for their dealings with Russia.

What does it mean for India?

Tariffs are paid by importers. Therefore, tariffs on Indian imports would be paid by those in the U.S. that are importing Indian goods. That is, Indian goods will become more expensive for them. Therein lies the true problem for India.

On a macro level, the tariffs and the impact they will have on Indian exports are expected to only lower India's GDP by 0.2%, according to research by the Bank of Baroda. So, if India's growth forecast had been 6.6%, then these

India wants to keep core parts of its agriculture and dairy sectors out of trade deals

tariffs – if they are imposed – could lower growth to 6.4%. However, the issue arises in individual sectors. According to the Bank of Baroda, sectors such as garments, precious stones, auto parts, leather products, and electronics (although their inclusion is uncertain) could face the pinch and would have to rework their strategies. "The issue really is that some of the competing nations like Vietnam (20%), Korea (15%) and Indonesia (19%) have lower tariffs compared with India," the Bank of Baroda added in its research note.

How did things come to such a pass?

While most trade deals are negotiated over years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mr. Trump in February 2025 announced that they would conclude the first tranche of a trade deal by fall. To put this in perspective, the recently-signed Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between India and the U.K. took about three years to negotiate.

What made the announcement by Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump notable was that it came before the latter's big moves on reciprocal tariffs, which is what pushed other countries to start negotiating with the U.S. The announcement was thus a strong and positive commitment towards strengthening ties between the two countries. But then, on April 2, Mr. Trump announced his Liberation Day reciprocal tariffs. These included a 10% baseline tariff for all countries, and additional tariffs on a country-by-country case. For India, this total was 26%. However, just a week later, Mr. Trump announced a 90-day pause on these tariffs so that bilateral deals could be struck so as to reduce the U.S.'s trade deficit with most of its trading partners. The 90-day pause was to end in July, but Mr. Trump extended it to August 1.

What are the points of friction?

It's hard to pinpoint any single recent development that has soured relations, but there have been several points of friction between the two countries in the past few months. The matter of India's tariffs and non-tariff barriers has been something Mr. Trump has been highlighting since his first term as President. It was no surprise that he would take up the issue in his second term.

Mr. Trump has brought up India's engagement with Russia, too, saying countries like India are partly financing Russia's war with Ukraine. India, however, has reiterated that it will secure its national and energy security, and if that means buying cheap Russian oil, then that is what it would do. Russia currently accounts for about 35-40% of India's oil imports, making it

a significant partner. In addition, India has remained adamant about keeping core parts of its agriculture and dairy sectors out of trade deals, including with the U.S. This has upset negotiators on the U.S. side, but it is a 'red line' India will not cross. Opening up these sectors would expose India's relatively low-productivity farmers to global competition, which will likely have devastating impacts on their livelihoods.

Then, there is the fact that Mr. Trump has repeatedly stated that it was him, and his trade talks, that encouraged India and Pakistan to agree to a ceasefire following the launch of Operation Sindoor by India. The fact that the Indian government has refuted it has only further angered Mr. Trump. Mr. Trump's claims have irked the Indian establishment as well, since it has provided the Opposition a means to attack the government.

India has informed the World Trade Organization that it reserves the right to impose additional tariffs on imports from the U.S. to retaliate against its higher tariffs on items like steel, aluminium, and automobiles.

Taking these things together, Mr. Trump's tariff announcement comes as a confirmation that at least one, if not all of these factors, worked toward souring relations.

Will India continue paying these tariffs?

Although there has been a lot of talk about a 'mini-deal' between India and the U.S. to walk back the reciprocal tariffs, Indian officials have been cagey about the date for such a deal. The tariff announcement by Mr. Trump confirms that such a deal is not coming.

However, the two sides have been remarkably consistent about their commitment of having some sort of trade deal finalised by the fall 2025 deadline. So far, negotiators from the two sides have met in New Delhi and Washington five times, including the first meeting in March where the Terms of Reference for the negotiations were finalised. The team from the U.S. will visit India in late August to take forward the talks. Things have, however, become trickier for Indian negotiators because Mr. Trump has now directly linked India's dealings with Russia to India's trade relationship with the U.S.

The tariffs will come into effect soon. According to an Executive Order dated July 31, Mr. Trump said that his duties on India and other countries would come into effect "7 days after the date of this order".

What about deals with other countries?

Over the last month, Mr. Trump has concluded deals with the U.K., Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, the EU, and South Korea. The deal with the U.K. does not specify a general tariff level, but it will see British car exports to the U.S. attract a 10% tariff, down from the earlier 27.5% and a removal of tariffs on aerospace exports to the U.S. Japan negotiated lower tariffs of 15% for its exports to the U.S., the same as the EU.



Economic shakedown: A student of Gurukul school of Art completes artwork around U.S. tariffs in Mumbai, on August 1. AP

Operation Mahadev: photos from encounter site in 2024 helped identify terrorists

The LeT terrorists' photos were found in a phone; security personnel began searches for them after matching the photographs with accounts of eyewitnesses present at Baisaran meadow on April 22

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The three Pahalgam terrorists who were killed during Operation Mahadev on July 28 were identified and tracked with the help of photographs recovered from a mobile phone seized by the security forces after an encounter in south Kashmir in 2024, a senior government official said.

The phone contained several pictures of the three Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists identified as Suleman, alias Faizal Jatt, Hamza Afghani, and Zibran posing with guns and ammunition.

Hid in Dachigam forest

The photographs were then matched with the accounts of eyewitnesses present at the Baisaran meadow on April 22 and a search was launched for them in the Dachigam forest, around 20 km from Srinagar, where they were hiding after the terror attack.

The terrorists were using a long-range wireless



Killed in encounter: (From left) Suleman, Zibran and Hamza Afghani. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

module to communicate, and its signals helped the intelligence agencies track their location. The device was likely assembled, and has been sent for forensic examination, the official said.

Home Minister Amit Shah informed the Lok Sabha on July 29 that indigenous technology was used to track the three terrorists in the Dachigam forest. The Minister said that on May 22, the Intelligence Bureau (IB) received information about the presence of terrorists in the Dachigam area through human intelligence. He said, "Continuous efforts were made by the IB and the Army

from May 22 to July 22 to confirm the information with an equipment made by our agencies to capture ultra signals in Dachigam."

"All three are Pakistanis," the official said.

The official added that the terrorists were sighted multiple times in the forest but they always managed to get away. Security forces combed the forests and monitored areas close to streams and rivers as the terrorists came there to fetch water.

As reported by *The Hindu*, a group of 20-25 hardened terrorists from Pakistan infiltrated around three years ago and are said to be operating in the

forest and mountains across Pir Panjal in Jammu and the forests in south Kashmir.

In 2024, the foreign terrorists split into two groups, one led by Suleman who was killed during Operation Mahadev on July 28 and the other group led by another Pakistani identified as Musa. Since 2021, around 135 security personnel have been killed in Jammu and Kashmir likely by the same group.

"After Operation Mahadev, we have received crucial information about the other foreign terrorists and we have launched operations to track them down," said the official.

In Bengaluru, organ transported via Metro train

According to officials, this is second instance of organ transportation through Metro in India, following the first initiative in Hyderabad; team covered 31-km journey in less than an hour — a trip that could have taken over three hours by road

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

For the first time, Bengaluru's Namma Metro successfully facilitated the transportation of an organ via Metro train on Friday. Officials from Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRL) said the operation was executed with clockwork precision.

A donated human liver, intended for transplant, was transported from Vydehi Hospital in Whitefield to Sparsh Hospital in Rajarajeshwari



In good time: A donated human liver being transported by a team in a Namma Metro train in Bengaluru. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

(R.R.) Nagar using a combination of ambulance and Metro train services.

The liver was moved in

an ambulance from Vydehi Hospital to the Metro station by a team comprising one doctor

and seven medical staffers. "Upon arrival at the station, the medical team was received by an Assistant Security Officer and metro personnel, who facilitated documentation and security checks. The organ was then transported on a Metro train that departed from Whitefield at 8.42 p.m. and arrived at R.R. Nagar Metro Station at 9.48 p.m.," an official said.

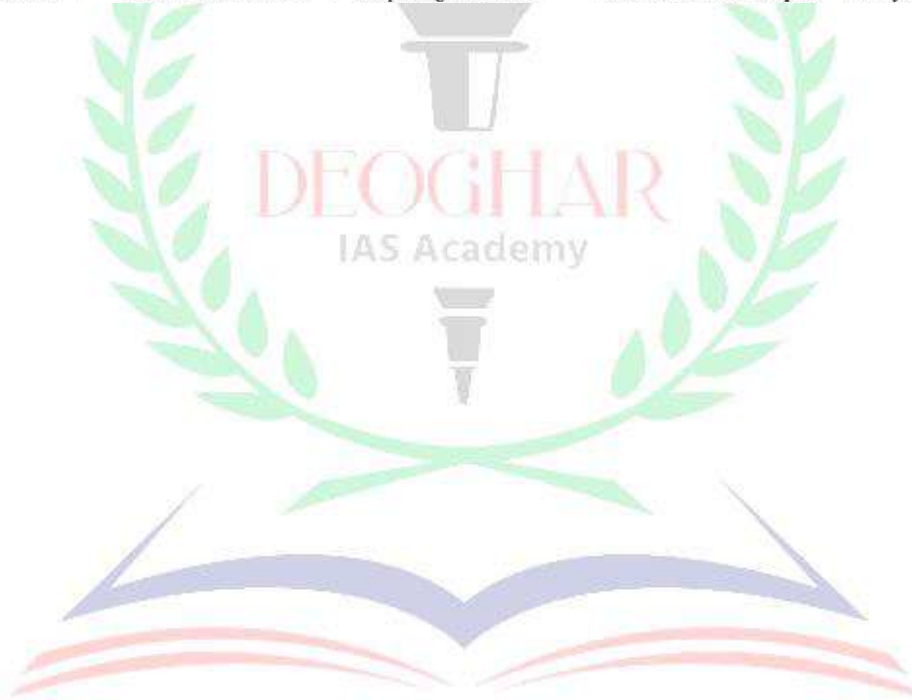
Green corridor

Green corridors were created to cover the distance from the hospital

to the Metro station in Whitefield and from the Metro station to the hospital in R.R. Nagar. The team covered the 31-km journey in less than an hour — a trip that could have taken over three hours by road on a congested Friday evening.

The complex transplant surgery, concluded successfully around 3 a.m. on Saturday.

According to BMRL officials, this is the second instance of organ transportation via Metro, following the first initiative in Hyderabad in January.



ISRO targets 2027 launch for LVM3 semi-cryogenic stage

Tiki Rajwi

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is aiming for a 2027 launch for its first LVM3 launch vehicle equipped with a semi-cryogenic propulsion stage. "Right now we are on track. The power head tests [on the engine] are progressing with great success. Five to six tests have been completed. We have set the launch target for the first quarter of 2027," ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan said during a visit to Thiruvananthapuram.

Formerly known as GSLV Mk III, the three-stage LVM3 had its first experimental flight in December, 2014, and is ISRO's most powerful rocket to date. The semi-cryogenic



V. Narayanan

stage is designed to enhance payload capability while keeping costs down, Mr. Narayanan said.

Currently capable of lifting 4200 kg payloads to the geosynchronous transfer orbit (GTO), the LVM3 will see significant changes when it is fitted with the semi-cryogenic stage. The L110 core stage, which uses liquid propellant, will be replaced by the semi-cryo

stage which uses a propellant combination of refined kerosene and liquid oxygen (LOX). The propellant loading in the cryogenic upper stage, which uses a Liquid Hydrogen-LOX combination, will increase from 28 tonnes to 32 tonnes.

Mr. Narayanan described the semi-cryogenic engine as a "very complex one" that uses special materials to withstand high temperatures and oxidiser-rich combustion. Whereas the liquid-fuelled Vikas engine gives a nominal thrust of 80 tonnes, the SE2000 semi-cryogenic engine is designed to supply 200 tonnes, he said.

Once perfected, the semi-cryogenic engines will see use in ISRO's future launch vehicles.

