

DIA, DEOGHAR IAS ACADEMY

Daily News Feed

D.N.F

11.10.2025

**Sabaijor Complex, Near Jamunajor Pul,
Castair Town**

Deoghar, Mob: -9162500508

India's Kabul mission to be upgraded to embassy

Jaishankar announces this while meeting Taliban's Muttaqi; condemns refugee repatriation by Pak.

Muttaqi welcomes decision; says diplomats will go to Afghan Embassy, may not send Ambassador initially

Jaishankar says India, Afghanistan share growth goals; cross-border terror a common challenge

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

India will upgrade its 'technical mission' in Kabul to the status of an embassy, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Friday.

The announcement came during Mr. Jaishankar's meeting with Amir Khan Muttaqi, Foreign Minister of the Taliban administration in Afghanistan, at Hyderabad House. Mr. Jaishankar also raised India's concerns over the forced repatriation of Afghan refugees by Pakistan and described "cross-border terrorism" as a common challenge to both India and Afghanistan.

"India is fully committed to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Afghanistan. Closer cooperation bet-

ween us contributes to your national development, as well as regional stability and resilience. To enhance that, I am pleased to announce today the upgrading of India's technical mission in Kabul to the status of Embassy of India," said Mr. Jaishankar.

India had shut its embassy in Kabul in 2021 after the U.S.-led forces withdrew from Afghanistan.

In an interaction at the Embassy of Afghanistan, Mr. Muttaqi welcomed the decision and said, "We will send our diplomats to the Embassy of Afghanistan." He clarified that the Taliban may not send an ambassador at the beginning.

TTP leader killed

Mr. Jaishankar noted that India and Afghanistan share a "common commitment towards growth and



Reaching out: S. Jaishankar with Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

prosperity" but cautioned that "these are endangered by the shared threat of cross-border terrorism that both our nations face." He did not name Pakistan but urged Mr. Muttaqi to "coordinate efforts" to counter the threat.

The meeting took place

hours after an explosion in Kabul reportedly killed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) leader Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud, a claim later denied by TTP sources.

Mr. Jaishankar thanked Kabul for condemning the terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22, which killed 28

Pak. violating Kabul's sovereign territory: Taliban

KABUL

The Taliban regime on Friday accused Pakistan of "violating Kabul's sovereign territory", a day after two explosions were heard. The Taliban have previously accused Islamabad of border strikes, but this is the first time they have alleged an incursion deep into their territory, calling it an "unprecedented act". **IN PAGE 12**

people, saying, "We appreciate your sensitivity towards India's security concerns." He also reiterated India's commitment to facilitating travel for Afghan nationals through a new visa module introduced in April 2025, with more medical, business, and stu-

dent visas being issued.

A joint statement issued after the meeting of the officials said that scholarships from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and other organisations are "under active consideration" to enable more Afghan students to study in India.

Mr. Muttaqi had earlier met Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri in Dubai on January 8, where the two sides discussed the roadmap for bilateral relations amid evolving regional developments. Since assuming power, the Taliban has established diplomatic ties with several countries, including Russia and China. Mr. Muttaqi arrived in New Delhi from Moscow, where he attended the Moscow Format Dialogue.

Global recognition of the Taliban government -

the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan - has been impeded by concerns over the human rights situation in the country, which did not feature in Mr. Jaishankar's remarks. Highlighting the importance of Mr. Muttaqi's first visit to New Delhi, Mr. Jaishankar said, "...a meeting between us in person has a special value in allowing us to exchange perspectives, identify common interests and forge closer cooperation." The Minister also announced six new health projects for Afghanistan, with details to be shared soon. India will gift 20 ambulances to Afghanistan as a "symbolic step". The visiting side also invited Indian companies to invest in the mining sector of Afghanistan.

"WON'T ALLOW TERRORISTS"
> PAGE 3

GS Paper: GS Paper II – International Relations / India–Afghanistan Relations English Summary:

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar announced India's decision to upgrade its "technical mission" in Kabul to a full-fledged **Embassy of India**, marking a significant diplomatic step since the 2021 Taliban takeover. During his meeting with Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, India raised concerns over cross-border terrorism and the forced repatriation of Afghan refugees by Pakistan. The visit also saw agreements on scholarships, visas, and new health projects for Afghanistan.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

विदेश मंत्री एस. जयशंकर ने अफगानिस्तान के साथ संबंध मजबूत करने के लिए काबुल स्थित "तकनीकी मिशन" को **भारत के दूतावास** के रूप में अपग्रेड करने की घोषणा की। इस बैठक में सीमा पार आतंकवाद और पाकिस्तान द्वारा अफगान शरणार्थियों की वापसी पर चिंता जताई गई। दोनों पक्षों ने छात्रवृत्ति, वीजा और स्वास्थ्य परियोजनाओं पर सहमति जताई।

Gaza ceasefire takes effect as Israel forces pull back to agreed deployment lines

Associated Press

WADI GAZA, GAZA STRIP

A ceasefire between Israel and Hamas came into effect in Gaza on Friday, the Israeli military said, hours after Israel's Cabinet approved a deal to pause the fighting and exchange the remaining hostages for Palestinian prisoners.

Israeli forces have withdrawn to agreed deployment lines for the first stage of the ceasefire, it added.

Tens of thousands of people who had gathered in Wadi Gaza in central Gaza started walking north after the military's announcement at noon. Beforehand, Palestinians reported heavy shelling in parts of Gaza throughout Friday morning, but no significant bombardment was reported after.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted in a televised statement on Friday that the next stages would see Hamas disarmed and Gaza demilitarised.

"If this is achieved the easy way – so be it. If not – it will be achieved the hard way," he said. He added that Hamas agreed to the deal "only when it felt that the sword was on its neck – and it is still on its neck."

Under the deal, all 48 hostages still in captivity are expected to be released. In exchange, Israel will release around 2,000 Palestinian prisoners.

Khalil al-Hayya, a senior Hamas official and lead negotiator, said in a speech Thursday evening that all women and children held in Israeli jails will be freed.

"We declare today that we have reached an agreement to end the war and the aggression against our



Sigh of relief: Palestinians move toward Gaza City from Nuseirat in central Gaza Strip on Friday. AFP

people," al-Hayya said.

Major step

The ceasefire marks a key step toward ending a ruinous two-year war that has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians, reduced much of Gaza to rubble, destabilised West Asia, and left dozens of hostages, living and dead, in the territory.

Israeli Brig. General Efi Defrin, a military spokesman, said that troops had completed their withdrawal to the deployment lines by Friday afternoon, a few hours after the ceasefire officially went into effect.

Earlier, an Israeli security official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the military would control around 50% of Gaza in their new positions.

In Israel's offensive, more than 67,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza and nearly 170,000 wounded, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

The war has also triggered other conflicts in the

region, sparked worldwide protests and led to allegations of genocide that Israel denies.

The hostage and prisoner releases are expected to begin Monday, two Egyptian officials briefed on the talks and a Hamas official said, though another official said they could occur as early as Sunday night.

All living hostages are expected to be released at the same time, followed by the bodies of the deceased, which could take more time.

Five border crossings are expected to reopen, including the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt, the Egyptian and Hamas officials said. That will allow aid to flow into the territory, parts of which are experiencing famine.

Tom Fletcher, the U.N. humanitarian chief, told reporters Thursday that officials have 170,000 metric tons of medicine, aid and other supplies at ready for transport into Gaza when they are given a green light.

GS Paper: GS Paper II – International Relations / West Asia

English Summary:

A ceasefire between **Israel and Hamas** came into effect after two years of intense war that devastated Gaza and killed tens of thousands of Palestinians. The deal includes exchange of hostages and prisoners, withdrawal of Israeli forces, and reopening of key border crossings like Rafah. This marks a critical point in regional diplomacy, potentially stabilizing West Asia.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

इज़रायल और हमास के बीच दो वर्षों से चल रहे युद्ध के बाद संघर्षविराम लागू हुआ। समझौते के तहत दोनों पक्षों के बीच कैदियों और बंधकों की अदला-बदली होगी और इज़रायली सेना अपने निर्धारित स्थानों पर लौटेगी। रफ़ा सीमा सहित पांच क्रॉसिंग फिर से खोले जाएंगे, जिससे मानवीय सहायता गाज़ा में पहुंचेगी।

Venezuela's Opposition leader María Machado wins Nobel Peace Prize 'promoting democracy'

Associated Press
OSLO

Venezuelan Opposition leader María Corina Machado won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for her struggle to achieve a democratic transition in the South American nation, winning recognition as a woman "who keeps the flame of democracy burning amid a growing darkness".

The former Opposition presidential candidate is a "key, unifying figure" in the once deeply divided Opposition to President Nicolás Maduro's government, said Jorgen Watne Frydnes, chair of the Norwegian Nobel committee.

Reacting to the honour, Ms. Machado said she was



Maria Corina Machado is a 'key, unifying figure' in the once deeply divided Opposition to President Nicolás Maduro's government. AFP

confident the Opposition would succeed in securing a peaceful transition to democracy in her country.

"We're not there yet. We're working very hard to achieve it, but I'm sure that we will prevail," she told Kristian Berg Harpviken, the director of the Nobel

Institute and secretary of the Nobel Committee.

Dedicates win to Trump
"I dedicate this prize to the suffering people of Venezuela and to President Trump for his decisive support of our cause!" she later wrote on X.

"This is something that the Venezuelan people deserve," Ms. Machado said in a call with the Norwegian Nobel Institute. "I'm honored not only by this recognition, but I'm honored to be part of what's going on in Venezuela today."

"In the past year, Ms. Machado has been forced to live in hiding," Mr. Frydnes said. "Despite serious threats against her life, she has remained in the country... When authoritarians seize power, it is crucial to recognise courageous defenders of freedom who rise and resist."

Mr. Maduro's government has routinely targeted its real or perceived opponents.

Ms. Machado, 58, was

set to run against Mr. Maduro in last year's presidential election, but the government disqualified her.

The crackdown on dissent only increased after the country's National Electoral Council, which is stacked with Maduro loyalists, declared him the winner despite credible evidence to the contrary. The election results announced by the Electoral Council sparked protests to which the government responded with force that ended with more than 20 people dead.

Ms. Machado becomes the 20th woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

(With inputs from AFP)

TRUMP'S QUEST
» PAGE 13

GS Paper: GS Paper II – International Relations / Democracy & Human Rights

English Summary:

María Corina Machado, Venezuelan opposition leader, received the **Nobel Peace Prize 2025** for her courageous fight for democracy against President Nicolás Maduro's authoritarian regime. The award highlights the global struggle for democratic values and human rights amid increasing repression.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

वेनेज़ुएला की विपक्षी नेता **मारिया कोरीना माचाडो** को देश में लोकतंत्र की बहाली के लिए संघर्ष करने हेतु **2025 का नोबेल शांति पुरस्कार** दिया गया। यह पुरस्कार अधिनायकवादी शासन के खिलाफ लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों की रक्षा के वैश्विक प्रयासों को दर्शाता है।

Taliban will not allow terrorists to use Afghan territory, says Muttaqi

Foreign Minister of the Taliban administration in Afghanistan rules out joint operation with India against terrorists; he calls for stronger trade ties through Wagah border and Chabahar port; terms criticism on gender rights 'international propaganda'

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

The Taliban will not allow Afghan territory to be used against any country, said Amir Khan Muttaqi, Foreign Minister of the Taliban administration in Afghanistan.

Mr. Muttaqi, the first high-level Taliban leader to be hosted by India, held a rare media interaction in the Embassy of Afghanistan where he pitched for stronger bilateral trade ties through the Wagah border crossing between India and Pakistan.

"Today, we held a detailed discussion on our security concerns. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has proved in the past four years that the territory of Afghanistan will not be used against others. Similarly, narcotics is dangerous in terms of its use as well as trafficking, and both sides agreed to carry out joint efforts to eradicate this problem," said Mr. Muttaqi in his opening remarks.

He emphasised that under the rule of the Taliban,



Reaching out: Amir Khan Muttaqi said that the Taliban would work with India to act firmly against trafficking of narcotics. ANI

terror groups from Pakistan, such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba, that were known to use Afghan territory to train their cadre, have been pushed out.

In response to a question on India and Afghanistan carrying out joint operations to rid Afghanistan of terror groups, Mr. Muttaqi said, "Joint operations would have been necessary if terrorists were found operating in Afghanistan. We carried out extensive operations against terrorists inside Afghanistan over the past four years. During this period, no threat has emanated

from the territory of Afghanistan targeting any country."

Mr. Muttaqi called for greater trade ties with India and said attempts should be made to strengthen trade through Pakistani territory, especially through the Wagah border, as trade through Wagah is economically viable for Afghans.

"India and Pakistan should not shut Wagah as it provides a cheap route to us," said Mr. Muttaqi.

He also said, "There are some obstacles on [the Iranian port] Chabahar because of U.S. sanctions. But

these obstacles should be removed. In the past one year, India-Afghanistan trade has crossed \$1 billion, so you can imagine how much trade we can do if these obstacles are dealt with."

He said that the Taliban would not hand over the Bagram airbase to the U.S. as was being demanded by U.S. President Donald Trump and said, "history is witness" that the people of Afghanistan do not appreciate the presence of foreign troops on their soil.

"Afghanistan has attained independence after four decades and everyone should support our free existence," said Mr. Muttaqi in the press interaction.

Women scribes excluded

The interaction drew sharp criticism online for being "all male" and for excluding women reporters. Several women journalists who reached the Afghan embassy were seen sitting outside the premises and were not allowed to enter.

"The condition of women under the Taliban has improved just like the overall law and order situation.

If the women would have disapproved of our rules, they would have come out in protest," said Mr. Muttaqi, answering a question while describing criticism of the Taliban on gender issues as "international propaganda".

There were dramatic moments before the press conference when officials accompanying Mr. Muttaqi were challenged by representatives of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan who continue to run the affairs of the Afghan embassy in Delhi.

The embassy officials objected when Mr. Muttaqi's companions removed the flag of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan that was overthrown by Taliban in August 2021.

"This is not a Taliban embassy yet and we will not allow your flag here," said one of the staff members as he prevented the use of a large black-white flag of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. However, the Taliban team came ready with a small table-top flag that Mr. Muttaqi placed before him while addressing the media.

GS Paper: GS Paper II – International Relations / Security / Terrorism

English Summary:

Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi assured that Afghan soil will not be used against any country. He ruled out joint anti-terror operations with India, citing that all terror groups had been expelled from Afghan territory. He called for enhancing trade through **Wagah Border** and **Chabahar Port**, while dismissing global criticism of Taliban's stance on women as "propaganda."

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

तालिबान के विदेश मंत्री आमिर खान मुत्ताक़ी ने कहा कि अफगानिस्तान की भूमि किसी भी देश के खिलाफ उपयोग नहीं की जाएगी। उन्होंने भारत के साथ संयुक्त आतंकवाद विरोधी अभियान से इनकार किया और व्यापार बढ़ाने के लिए **वाघा बॉर्डर** और **चाबहार पोर्ट** के उपयोग पर जोर दिया। महिलाओं के अधिकारों पर अंतरराष्ट्रीय आलोचना को "प्रचार" बताया।

SC gives Centre four weeks to respond to pleas for restoration of J&K Statehood

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

Urging the Supreme Court to weigh the constitutional implications for India's federal structure, petitioners on Friday pressed the Union Government to honour its "solemn promise" of restoring Jammu and Kashmir's Statehood.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai and Justice K. Vinod Chandran asked Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Union Government, to respond to the submissions within four weeks,

even as it acknowledged that "various considerations" had to be factored in while making such a decision, including the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

The Bench was hearing an application seeking the restoration of Statehood within a specified time frame, preferably two months. The petitioners, an academic and a social activist, contended that the continued Union Territory status "violates the idea of federalism", an essential feature of the Constitution's basic structure. They further pointed out

that the smooth conduct of both the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections showed there were no longer any security concerns hindering the restoration of Statehood.

Institutional promise

Senior advocate Menaka Guruswamy, appearing for MLA Irfan Hafiz Lone, argued that the assurance of restoring Statehood was not a mere political declaration but an "institutional promise" made by the Centre before a constitutional court. She urged the court to consider the "larg-

er question" of what it would signify for Indian federalism if a State could be reduced to a Union Territory "in this fashion".

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for petitioners Zahoor Ahmad Bhat and Khurshaid Ahmad Malik, read from the Supreme Court's December 2023 judgment on the abrogation of Article 370 to emphasise that the court had refrained from deciding the Statehood issue only because the Solicitor-General had assured it would be restored after elections.

GS Paper: GS Paper II – Polity & Governance / Federalism / Centre–State Relations

English Summary:

Petitioners urged the Supreme Court to direct the Centre to restore Jammu & Kashmir's statehood, arguing that continued Union Territory status violates India's federal structure. The Court gave the Centre **four weeks** to reply, emphasizing the constitutional implications of prolonged UT administration.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

याचिकाकर्ताओं ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट से जम्मू-कश्मीर का राज्य का दर्जा बहाल करने की मांग की, यह कहते हुए कि लंबे समय तक केंद्रशासित प्रदेश बनाए रखना संघीय ढांचे का उल्लंघन है। कोर्ट ने केंद्र सरकार को **चार सप्ताह** में जवाब दाखिल करने का निर्देश दिया।

Hydropower project on Chenab gets clearance

The Sawalkote project was first accorded an environmental clearance in 2017; the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan added momentum to the approval process, says official

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

An apex committee of the Environment Ministry has accorded a fresh environmental clearance to the Sawalkote hydroelectric project, proposed to come up on Chenab river in Ramban, Jammu and Kashmir.

Planned as a run-of-the-river project utilising the flow of the Chenab to generate electricity, it is reportedly the first major hydropower project on the Indus rivers to be accorded environmental clearance following India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) on April 23, following the Pahalgam terror attack.

"The Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC), after examining the information submitted and detailed deliberations, reiterated its earlier recommendation on the project and recommended the proposal for grant of prior Environmental Clearance to Sawalkote H.E. Project," said the minutes of a meeting conducted on September 26.

The project was first accorded an environmental clearance by a designated committee in 2017, when it



Earliest project: A view of the Salal Dam on the Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir. ANI

was originally being steered by the Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Corporation (JKPDC). However, the JKPDC signed a deal with the National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) Ltd. in 2021 to build and commission the project and be effectively in charge of it until 2061.

Despite the designated committee's nod, the Environment Ministry could not clear the project as the JKPDC could not procure a forest clearance – which follows a parallel approval process. In September 2023, the project was first accorded a 'stage 1 forest clearance' as per publicly

available records.

While the process of transferring the project to the NHPC has been on since 2021, a slew of approvals from the Central Electricity Authority and the Central Water Commission were accorded in July 2025. Public hearings, required to be done under the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, were done between December 2022 to February 2023.

"The Sawalkote project was already going through various stages of approval. Given its size – though it does not have a storage dam – it will be the largest project of its kind and has always had certain strateg-

ic importance. The suspension of the IWT and the plan to utilise the full potential of the eastern Indus rivers have added momentum to the approval process," a senior official, aware of the approval process of hydroelectric projects, told *The Hindu*, but declined to be identified.

Project cost goes up

From an earlier estimate of about ₹22,000 crore, estimated cost of the project has ballooned to ₹31,380 crore.

It is projected to have an installed power capacity of 1,856 MW and generate about 8,000 million units of electricity annually.

GS Paper:

- **GS Paper III (UPSC/BPSC):** Environment, Conservation, and Infrastructure
- **GS Paper II:** India-Pakistan Relations (Indus Waters Treaty)

English Summary:

The Environment Ministry's apex committee has given fresh environmental clearance to the **SawalKote Hydroelectric Project** on the **Chenab River** in Ramban district of Jammu & Kashmir. This is the **first major hydropower project** on the Indus rivers approved after India **suspended the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)** with Pakistan following the **Pahalgam terror attack** (April 2025).

The **run-of-the-river project**, with a capacity of **1,856 MW**, was initially managed by the **Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Corporation (JKPDC)** but later transferred to the **National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC)** in 2021. The project's cost has increased from **₹22,000 crore to ₹31,380 crore**, and it is expected to generate **8,000 million units of electricity annually** once completed.

The approval involved clearances from the **Central Water Commission (CWC)**, **Central Electricity Authority (CEA)**, and compliance with the **Forest Rights Act (FRA)**. The project reflects India's strategic move to **utilise the full potential of the eastern Indus rivers**, strengthening energy security and strategic leverage over shared water resources with Pakistan.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

पर्यावरण मंत्रालय की शीर्ष समिति ने जम्मू-कश्मीर के **ramban जिले में चिनाब नदी पर प्रस्तावित सावलकोट जलविद्युत परियोजना** को **नई पर्यावरणीय मंजूरी** प्रदान की है। यह **पहली बड़ी परियोजना** है जिसे भारत द्वारा **इंडस जल संधि (IWT)** निलंबित करने के बाद मंजूरी दी गई है।

यह परियोजना **“रन-ऑफ-द-रिवर” प्रकार की है**, जिसकी **क्षमता 1,856 मेगावाट** होगी और इससे हर वर्ष लगभग **8,000 मिलियन यूनिट बिजली** उत्पन्न होगी। इसकी लागत **₹22,000 करोड़ से बढ़कर ₹31,380 करोड़** तक पहुंच गई है।

मूल रूप से यह परियोजना **जम्मू-कश्मीर पावर डेवलपमेंट कॉर्पोरेशन (JKPDC)** के अधीन थी, लेकिन बाद में इसे **राष्ट्रीय जलविद्युत निगम (NHPC)** को सौंपा गया। इसे **केंद्रीय जल आयोग (CWC)**, **केंद्रीय विद्युत प्राधिकरण (CEA)** और **वन अधिकार अधिनियम (FRA)** के प्रावधानों के तहत मंजूरी मिली।

यह परियोजना भारत की रणनीतिक नीति का हिस्सा है, जिसका उद्देश्य **पूर्वी सिंधु नदियों की पूरी जल-क्षमता का उपयोग** कर ऊर्जा सुरक्षा को मजबूत करना और पाकिस्तान के साथ साझा जल संसाधनों पर नियंत्रण को सुदृढ़ करना है।

Aspect	Details
Project Name	Sawalkote Hydroelectric Project
Location	Chenab River, Ramban District, Jammu & Kashmir
Type	Run-of-the-River Project
Capacity	1,856 MW
Annual Generation	~8,000 million units
Estimated Cost	₹31,380 crore
Executing Agency	NHPC Ltd.
Previous Clearance	2017 (fresh clearance in 2025)
Linked Treaty	Indus Waters Treaty (Suspended by India in April 2025)
Relevance	Strategic Hydropower Development, Environment & Security Nexus

Crime patterns

The 2023 NCRB report shows rise in cybercrime and crimes against tribals

The National Crime Records Bureau's annual reports on crime and prison statistics have to be read with a strong caveat – most of the numbers cannot be compared between States because they are largely dependent upon the registration/reporting of crimes in the first place. However, certain national trends and sharp year-on-year changes within States can still reveal meaningful patterns that could demand policy intervention. The recent NCRB report for 2023 – delayed by a year – points to a worrying trend of postponed surveys, reports and even the Census under the current Union Government. But there are also three telling numbers: the 2.8% decrease in murder cases across the country; a staggering 28.8% surge in crimes against Scheduled Tribes (ST), and a 31.2% increase in cyber crimes. While the decrease in murder cases will come as a relief to law enforcement – most of the cases pertain to disputes, personal vendetta or enmity and “gain” – the other two numbers are alarming. The steep rise in crimes against STs is largely due to the ethnic violence in Manipur, with the registered numbers jumping from just one in 2022 to 3,399 in 2023 – which a more effective government could have mitigated. Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan also recorded significantly high crime rates against tribals suggesting their vulnerability in the central Indian States. This is not a new phenomenon; previous NCRB reports have highlighted higher crime rates in regions with significant tribal populations.

With greater Internet penetration across the country, there has been an increase in cyber-crime, particularly related to financial fraud and sexual exploitation. Anecdotally, it is evident that these numbers must have gone up even further in the last two years with the greater use of digital financial instruments in daily transactions and investment. While policing has tried to keep up with the growing menace of cybercrime, with specialised cells, the ubiquitousness and deepening spread of digital crimes require more sophistication and dedication by the police to tackle them. Crimes against children rose by 9.2% in 2023 – with the offender known to the victim in 96% of the cases. While the increase could be a function of improved reporting across States, the high number (1,77,335 cases) suggests that States must work on a war footing to sensitise children about these crimes and inappropriate behaviour by adults. A subset of these crimes could also include the application of the POCSO Act in the case of consensual adolescent relationships and this is an area that needs to be carefully handled by the prosecuting and policing agencies. Reported crimes against women registered a modest increase of 0.4%, but this masks a 14.9% spike in dowry-related crimes, pointing to a persistent societal problem.

English Summary:

The **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2023 Report** reveals alarming shifts in India's crime profile despite an overall decline in some categories.

Key Findings:

1. Murder Cases:

- Decreased by **2.8%** across the country, indicating a slight improvement in law and order.
- Most murder cases stemmed from **personal vendetta, enmity, and disputes** rather than organized crime.

2. Crimes Against Scheduled Tribes (STs):

- Sharp **28.8% rise** — largely linked to **ethnic violence in Manipur**, where cases increased from 1 (in 2022) to **3,399 (in 2023)**.
- **Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan** also recorded higher rates, reflecting tribal marginalization and weak institutional protection.
- The article underscores the need for **targeted tribal welfare, legal protection, and accountability mechanisms** in conflict-prone areas.

3. Cybercrime:

- Witnessed a **31.2% increase**, mainly in **financial fraud and sexual exploitation** cases.
- The rise correlates with expanding digital transactions and insufficient cyber literacy.
- The editorial stresses that **policing needs better technological adaptation and digital infrastructure** to counter this “new-age crime.”

4. Crimes Against Children:

- Increased by **9.2%**, with **96% of offenders known to the victim**.
- Indicates a serious social problem within households and institutions.
- Suggests stronger **POCSO Act implementation** and public awareness on child safety and consent issues.

5. Crimes Against Women:

- Marginal increase of **0.4%**, but **dowry-related deaths up 14.9%**, reflecting persistent gender bias and cultural inertia.
- Indicates the need for social sensitization and gender-justice reforms rather than only legal recourse.

Editorial Analysis:

The article warns that while NCRB data cannot always be compared across states (due to reporting inconsistencies), **national-level trends** reveal social fissures — rising **cyber vulnerability, tribal insecurity**, and **gender violence**. It calls for an **integrated policing strategy** combining **technology, community awareness, and legal reform** to address evolving crime patterns.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

राष्ट्रीय अपराध रिकॉर्ड ब्यूरो (NCRB) की 2023 रिपोर्ट में भारत में अपराध के पैटर्न में कई चिंताजनक रुझान सामने आए हैं —

मुख्य निष्कर्ष:

1. हत्या के मामले:

- पूरे देश में **2.8% की कमी** आई है।
- अधिकांश मामले **व्यक्तिगत दुश्मनी या विवादों** से जुड़े रहे।

2. जनजातियों के खिलाफ अपराध:

- **28.8% की वृद्धि**, मुख्यतः **मणिपुर में जातीय हिंसा** के कारण — 2022 में 1 से बढ़कर 2023 में **3,399 मामले** हुए।
- मध्य प्रदेश और राजस्थान में भी आदिवासियों के खिलाफ अपराध दरें अधिक हैं।
- यह प्रवृत्ति आदिवासी क्षेत्रों में **संवेदनशील शासन और सामाजिक सुरक्षा की कमी** को दर्शाती है।

3. साइबर अपराध:

- **31.2% की वृद्धि**, जिसमें वित्तीय धोखाधड़ी और **ऑनलाइन यौन शोषण** प्रमुख हैं।
- डिजिटल लेन-देन और कम साइबर-जागरूकता इस वृद्धि के पीछे मुख्य कारण हैं।
- लेख में **पुलिस बल को तकनीकी प्रशिक्षण और डिजिटल इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर** से सशक्त करने की आवश्यकता

- बताई गई है।
4. **बच्चों के खिलाफ अपराध:**
- 9.2% की वृद्धि, और 96% मामलों में अपराधी पीड़ित के परिचित थे।
 - यह सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक समस्या को उजागर करता है।
 - POCSO कानून के बेहतर अनुपालन और **जन-जागरूकता** की आवश्यकता है।
5. **महिलाओं के खिलाफ अपराध:**
- कुल वृद्धि केवल 0.4%, परंतु **दहेज से संबंधित मौतों में 14.9% वृद्धि**, जो गहरी सामाजिक मानसिकता को दर्शाती है।

संपादकीय विश्लेषण:

लेख का निष्कर्ष है कि भारत में अपराधों की प्रकृति बदल रही है —

- **साइबर अपराध** नई चुनौती बन रहे हैं,
- **आदिवासी समाज** हिंसा और उपेक्षा का शिकार है,
- और **लैंगिक असमानता** अभी भी कायम है।

इसलिए एक **एकीकृत अपराध-निवारण रणनीति** की जरूरत है, जो **तकनीक, सामाजिक शिक्षा और न्यायिक सुधार** को मिलाकर काम करे।

Theme	Data/Insight	Relevance
Murder Cases	↓ 2.8%	Governance & Law & Order
Crimes Against Tribals (STs)	↑ 28.8%	Vulnerable Groups, Governance
Cybercrime	↑ 31.2%	Internal Security (Cyber Threats)
Crimes Against Children	↑ 9.2%	Social Justice, POCSO Act
Crimes Against Women	↑ 0.4% overall; Dowry Deaths ↑ 14.9%	Gender Justice
Root Cause	Poor digital literacy, weak social protection, regional inequity	Policy Planning & Reforms
GS Paper Mapping	GS-II & GS-III	Governance, Internal Security, Social Issues

Syria's Foreign Minister visits Lebanon as the two nations seek to rebuild ties

Associated Press
BEIRUT

Syria's Foreign Minister arrived in Lebanon's capital on Friday as the two neighbors attempt to reset relations which have been tense for decades.

Foreign Minister Assad al-Shifout held talks with his Lebanese counterpart, President Joseph Aoun, and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam. It was the first high-profile Syrian visit to Lebanon since insurgent groups overthrew President Bashar Assad's government in early December 2024.

Lebanon and Syria have been working to rebuild strained ties, focusing on the status of roughly 2,000 Syrian nationals detained in Lebanese prisons, border security, locating Lebanese nationals missing in Syria for years and facilitating the return of Syrian refugees.

The current Syrian leadership resents Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah group for taking part in Syria's civil war, fighting alongside Mr. Assad's forces, while many Lebanese still begrudge Syria's 29-year domination of its smaller neighbour, where it had a military presence for three decades until 2005.

Following their meeting, Mr. Shifout and Lebanese Foreign Minister Joe Raji announced at a news conference that an organization symbolising Syria's influence over Lebanon has been suspended and all dealings will be restricted to official diplomatic channels.

The Lebanese-Syrian Higher Council was created in 1991 and was already largely inactive, with only limited contact between officials. Its role declined after Syria's 2005 withdrawal, the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and the 2008 opening of the Syrian Embassy in Beirut, which marked Syria's first official recognition of Lebanon as an autonomous state since it gained independence from France in 1943.

"In this context, we look forward to the appointment of a new Syrian ambassador to Lebanon to follow up on all matters through both embassies in

Damascus and Beirut," Mr. Aoun said in a statement following his meeting with Mr. Shifout.

In early September, a Syrian delegation, which included two former Cabinet Ministers and the head of Syria's National Com-



Major effort: Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, right, with Syrian Foreign Minister Assad al-Shifout in Lebanon on Friday, as

mission for Missing Persons, visited Beirut. Lebanon and Syria also agreed at the time to establish two committees to address outstanding key issues. On Friday, officials reaffirmed the need to form those joint committees.

These efforts are part of a broader regional shift following Mr. Assad's ouster and Hezbollah's significant losses during its recent war with Israel.

Mr. Shifout reiterated Syria's "respect for Lebanon's sovereignty," saying Damascus seeks to "move past previous obstacles and strengthen bilateral ties." "My visit to Beirut is meant to reaffirm the depth of Syrian-Lebanese relations," he said.

Key issues
Since the fall of Mr. Assad, two Lebanese Prime Ministers have visited Syria. Mr. Aoun and Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa also held talks on the sidelines of an Arab summit in Egypt in March.

On Friday, Mr. Aoun said he and Mr. Shifout emphasised the need to follow up on understandings reached in earlier meetings to address key issues — including border demarcation, a gas pipeline and detainees.

In 2022, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt agreed to ship 650 million cubic metres of natural gas per year from Egypt through Syria to Lebanon's Dair Ammar power plant.

Mr. Shifout's delegation included Syria's Justice Minister, Mazhar al-Louadi al-Wais, the head of Syrian intelligence, Houssein al-Salam, and the assistant interior minister, Maj. Gen. Abdel Qader Taham, according to the Lebanese state-run National News

Agency. "We thank Lebanon for hosting Syrians during the war and expect the issue of Syrian displacement to be resolved," Mr. Shifout said, following his meeting with Mr. Aoun. "Plans are being discussed for a dignified and sustainable return that addresses the post-war situation in Syria."

Lebanon hosts an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees who fled the uprising-turned-civil war that erupted more than 14 years ago. Since Mr. Assad's fall in December, around 850,000 refugees have returned to Syria from neighbouring countries as of September, with the number expected to rise, according to the UN refugee agency, UNHCR.

English Summary:

Syria's Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shibani visited Beirut, marking the first high-level Syrian visit to Lebanon since insurgent groups overthrew Bashar al-Assad's government in 2024. The visit aims to rebuild strained ties between the two neighbours after decades of tension and historical mistrust.

Key Highlights:

1. Resetting Bilateral Relations:

- Syria and Lebanon are working to normalise relations by addressing long-standing issues such as the status of missing Lebanese nationals in Syria, border demarcation, and the return of Syrian refugees.
- Both sides agreed to revive the Lebanese-Syrian Higher Council, created in 1991 but largely inactive since 2005.

2. Strategic and Political Background:

- Relations deteriorated after Syria's 29-year military presence in Lebanon (1976–2005) ended.
- The assassination of Lebanese PM Rafik Hariri (2005) and the opening of the Syrian Embassy in Beirut (2008) formalised Lebanon's autonomy.
- The Syrian leadership now seeks to restore ties post the Assad regime's fall (2024), focusing on mutual cooperation rather than dominance.

3. Regional Context:

- The move aligns with a broader regional recalibration following Hezbollah's losses in the recent Israel conflict and Syria's attempt to reintegrate diplomatically after isolation.
- The two countries are also engaging on economic cooperation, including the 2022 gas agreement with Egypt for energy supply through Syrian pipelines to Lebanon's Deir Ammar power plant.

4. Refugee Issue:

- Lebanon hosts around 1.5 million Syrian refugees; about 850,000 have returned as of September 2025.
- Both nations discussed plans for the “dignified and sustainable return” of refugees, balancing humanitarian and domestic security concerns.

5. Outcome of the Visit:

- Both sides reaffirmed respect for each other's sovereignty and the intention to strengthen bilateral mechanisms through official diplomatic channels only.
- The visit marks a symbolic thaw and a possible new chapter in Levant regional diplomacy after years of turmoil.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

सीरिया के विदेश मंत्री असाद अल-शिबानी ने बेरूत (लेबनान) की यात्रा की — यह 2024 में राष्ट्रपति बशर अल-असद की सरकार के पतन के बाद पहली उच्चस्तरीय सीरियाई यात्रा थी। दोनों देशों ने दशकों पुराने तनावपूर्ण संबंधों को सुधारने की दिशा में कदम बढ़ाया है।

मुख्य बिंदु:

1. संबंधों का पुनर्निर्माण:

- दोनों देश सीरिया में लापता लेबनानी नागरिकों की स्थिति, सीमा निर्धारण, और सीरियाई शरणार्थियों की वापसी जैसे मुद्दों पर काम कर रहे हैं।
- लेबनानी-सीरियाई उच्च परिषद (1991) को फिर से सक्रिय करने का निर्णय लिया गया।

2. ऐतिहासिक पृष्ठभूमि:

- सीरिया का लेबनान में 29 वर्षों तक सैन्य प्रभुत्व (1976-2005) रहा।
- 2005 में रफ़ीक़ हरीरी की हत्या और 2008 में सीरियाई दूतावास की स्थापना के बाद दोनों देशों के संबंध बिगड़ गए।
- अब सीरियाई नेतृत्व पुनः संबंध सुधारना चाहता है ताकि क्षेत्रीय स्थिरता और आर्थिक सहयोग बढ़े।

3. क्षेत्रीय परिप्रेक्ष्य:

- यह यात्रा हेज़बोला और इज़रायल के हालिया युद्ध के बाद क्षेत्रीय शक्ति-संतुलन के पुनर्गठन का

- हिस्सा है।
- 2022 की लेबनान-सीरिया-मिस्र गैस आपूर्ति समझौता को आगे बढ़ाने पर सहमति बनी।
4. शरणार्थी समस्या:
- लेबनान में 1.5 मिलियन सीरियाई शरणार्थी रह रहे हैं; सितंबर 2025 तक 8.5 लाख लोग लौट चुके हैं।
 - दोनों देशों ने गरिमामय और स्थायी पुनर्वास योजना पर चर्चा की।
5. राजनयिक परिणाम:
- दोनों देशों ने संप्रभुता के सम्मान और औपचारिक राजनयिक वार्ता के माध्यम से सहयोग बढ़ाने की घोषणा की।
 - यह यात्रा पश्चिम एशिया की कूटनीति में नया अध्याय खोल सकती है।

Theme	Key Insight	Relevance
Countries Involved	Syria-Lebanon	India's Interest in West Asia & Refugee Issues
Focus Areas	Border security, refugee return, economic cooperation	GS-II (IR)
Strategic Context	Post-Assad regional reset; Hezbollah's reduced influence	West Asia Politics
Humanitarian Aspect	Refugee rehabilitation (~1.5 million Syrians in Lebanon)	GS-II (Governance, IR)
Economic Link	2022 Gas Pipeline via Egypt-Syria-Lebanon	Energy Diplomacy
Relevance for India	Part of India's extended neighbourhood (energy & stability)	UPSC/BPSC GS-II

Microfinance loan defaults surged in 2024-25: Sa-Dhan data

Bihar performed the worst, not only accounting for the highest amounts of loans outstanding, but also the highest rates of default on these loans

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The rate of delinquencies of microfinance loans rose sharply in 2024-25, according to the latest report by microfinance self-regulatory body Sa-Dhan. The percentage of microfinance loans overdue by more than 30 days increased to 6.2% from 2.1% in 2023-24.

Similarly, the share of loans more than 90 days overdue increased to 4.8% by the end of March 2025 compared with 1.6% in the previous year.

"Delinquency levels have risen across the industry," the 2025 edition of the annual Bharat Microfinance Report by Sa-Dhan said. "The Portfolio at Risk (PAR) 30+ days past due (dpd) surged to 6.2%, up significantly from 2.1% in the last financial year."

'Bad' debts

Delinquency levels have risen across the industry, says the annual Bharat Microfinance Report by Sa-Dhan

- The data showed that rural borrowers fared the worst in terms of loan repayment
- Of the ₹2.3 lakh crore of loans outstanding for rural customers, 6.4% were overdue by more than 30 days
- This is compared with 6.1% and 6% for semi-urban and urban borrowers, respectively



"State-wise data further corroborate this upward trend in delinquency across the industry," the report added.

According to the data, Bihar had ₹57,712 crore worth of microfinance loans outstanding as of March-end 2025.

Of these, 7.2% were more than 30 days overdue compared with the national average of 6.2%. About 4.6% of the loans were overdue by more than 90

days, the conventional benchmark used to categorise a loan as a non-performing asset.

The data also showed that rural borrowers fared the worst in terms of loan repayment.

Of the ₹2.3 lakh crore of loans outstanding for rural customers, 6.4% were overdue by more than 30 days, compared with 6.1% and 6% for semi-urban and urban borrowers, respectively.

English Summary:

The Sa-Dhan Bharat Microfinance Report 2025 highlights a sharp rise in microfinance loan defaults during FY 2024–25, with Bihar emerging as the worst-performing state both in total loan volume and default rate.

Key Findings:

1. Delinquency Surge:

- Microfinance loans overdue by more than 30 days rose to 6.2% in 2024–25, up from 2.1% in 2023–24.
- Loans overdue by more than 90 days increased to 4.8% (from 1.6% last year).
- Indicates mounting stress in the rural credit ecosystem post-COVID and amid inflationary pressures.

2. State-Level Analysis:

- Bihar tops in both outstanding microfinance loans (₹57,712 crore) and defaults.
- 7.2% of its loans were overdue by over 30 days, compared to the national average of 6.2%.
- Rural borrowers fared worst — 6.4% delinquency, versus 6.1% (semi-urban) and 6% (urban) borrowers.

3. Sector-Wide Impact:

- The report attributes rising NPAs to income shocks, poor financial literacy, over-lending, and climate-related crop loss in rural belts.
- Indicates a worrying trend for Self-Help Groups (SHGs), NBFC-MFIs, and small borrowers dependent on microcredit.

4. Policy Implications:

- The trend may impact financial inclusion efforts under schemes like PMEGP, NRLM, and MUDRA.
- Calls for restructuring of repayment terms, better credit risk monitoring, and strengthening of microfinance regulation by RBI.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

भारत माइक्रोफाइनेंस रिपोर्ट 2025 (Sa-Dhan) के अनुसार, वर्ष 2024–25 में माइक्रोफाइनेंस ऋणों में चूक (डिफॉल्ट) की दर में तेज़ वृद्धि दर्ज की गई है।

मुख्य निष्कर्ष:

1. ऋण भुगतान में देरी:

- 30 दिन से अधिक बकाया माइक्रोफाइनेंस ऋणों का प्रतिशत 2.1% से बढ़कर 6.2% हो गया।
- 90 दिन से अधिक बकाया ऋण 1.6% से बढ़कर 4.8% हो गए।
- ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में यह समस्या अधिक गंभीर है।

2. राज्यवार प्रदर्शन:

- बिहार सबसे खराब प्रदर्शन वाला राज्य रहा, जहाँ ₹57,712 करोड़ के माइक्रोफाइनेंस ऋण लंबित हैं।
- इनमें से 7.2% ऋण 30 दिन से अधिक बकाया रहे — जो राष्ट्रीय औसत (6.2%) से अधिक है।
- ग्रामीण ग्राहकों में डिफॉल्ट दर 6.4%, जबकि अर्ध-शहरी (6.1%) और शहरी (6%) में कम रही।

3. मुख्य कारण:

- आय में अस्थिरता, अत्यधिक ऋण वितरण, वित्तीय साक्षरता की कमी, और जलवायु परिवर्तन से कृषि हानि जैसे कारणों से ऋण भुगतान प्रभावित हुआ है।
- इससे ग्रामीण महिलाओं, SHGs और NBFC-MFIs की स्थिति कमजोर हुई है।

4. नीतिगत प्रभाव:

- यह प्रवृत्ति वित्तीय समावेशन योजनाओं जैसे मुद्रा योजना, राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण आजीविका मिशन (NRLM) और PMEGP को प्रभावित कर सकती है।
- रिपोर्ट में सुझाव दिया गया है कि पुनर्भुगतान अवधि को पुनर्गठित किया जाए, क्रेडिट मॉनिटरिंग को सुदृढ़ किया जाए और RBI द्वारा नियामक नियंत्रण बढ़ाया जाए।

