

# Days after exit of Dhankhar, EC sets V-P poll date: Sept 9

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 1

THE ELECTION Commission (EC) on Friday announced that the election for the post of Vice-President, which fell vacant with the sudden resignation of Jagdeep Dhankhar on July 21, would be held on September 9.

According to the schedule announced by the EC, the notification would be issued on August 7, starting the period for filing nominations. The last date for filing nominations is August 21. The polling and counting would be held on September 9.

“As per Rule 8 of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Rules, 1974, poll for the election will be taken in the Parliament House. The polling, if required, shall take place at Room No. F-101, Vasudha, First Floor, Parliament House, New Delhi,” the EC said in its press release. The EC had appointed Rajya Sabha Secretary General PC Mody as the Returning Officer for the election on July 25.

The electoral college for the election will comprise 782 members of Parliament -- 233 elected members of Rajya Sabha (five seats are currently vacant), 12 nominated members of Rajya Sabha and 542 elected members of Lok Sabha (one seat is vacant), the EC said.

Voting is held by secret ballot, using the system of proportional representation with a sin-

gle transferable vote. Each MP casts a vote by ranking candidates in order of preference. All votes carry equal value.

To be declared elected, a candidate must reach a required minimum number of votes — called the quota. This is calculated by dividing the total number of valid votes by two and adding one (fractions, if any, are ignored). If no candidate crosses the quota in the first round, the one with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated, and their votes are transferred to the remaining candidates based on second preferences. The process continues until one candidate crosses the quota.

Dhankhar’s surprise resignation came just hours after he presided over the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha. He submitted his letter to resignation to President Droupadi Murmu, citing health reasons.

While the government and BJP have remained quiet over the episode, sources say the government was taken aback by his decision to accept an Opposition-backed impeachment motion against Justice Yashwant Varma even as the BJP was planning on bringing one in the Lok Sabha.

The Home Ministry notified his resignation on July 22 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on X: “Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar Ji has got many opportunities to serve our country in various capacities, including as the Vice President of India. Wishing him good health.”



# ISRO gearing up for next U.S. collaboration with BlueBird communications satellite

**The Hindu Bureau**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is hoping to launch the Block 2 BlueBird communications satellite developed by the U.S.-based AST SpaceMobile in three or four months, Chairman of the space agency V. Narayanan said here on Friday.

This Indo-U.S. collaboration follows the NASA ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar Mission (NISAR) which the ISRO successfully launched on July 30 using the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV). The BlueBird satellite will be launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, aboard LVM3, ISRO's heaviest launch vehicle which was formerly known as the GSLV-Mk III,



V. Narayanan

he said.

The BlueBird satellite, weighing around 6,500 kg, is expected to arrive in India in September. Work is also progressing on the mission launch vehicle.

On whether U.S. President Donald Trump's trade policies would affect collaboration in science and technology, Mr. Narayanan said he "fully believes that whatever technology contracts that India has signed

will be executed".

Mr. Narayanan reiterated ISRO's plans to have the first of three uncrewed missions planned ahead of the Gaganyaan human space flight in December 2025. The remaining two uncrewed missions are expected in 2026.

The ISRO had earlier announced plans to have the crewed mission in the first quarter of 2027. This schedule will be kept after studying the performance of the uncrewed missions.

On the development of the Gaganyaan programme, he said the human-rating of the launch vehicle has been completed. The development of the orbital module is in an "advanced stage", he said, adding the development of the crew escape system is nearing completion.

# Draft poll roll for Bihar is out, voters dip by 65 lakh

EC publishes list after end of first phase of SIR; Patna draft roll has 3.95 lakh fewer voters than the list from January; many on the draft list may still be deprived of voting rights, says INDIA bloc

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**

**Amit Bhelari**

NEW DELHI/PATNA

**T**he number of voters in Bihar has dropped by 65 lakh, according to Bihar's draft electoral roll, which was published by the Election Commission on Friday after the completion of the first phase of its Special Intensive Revision exercise.

More than 7.24 crore electors in the State filled up enumeration forms and have been included in the draft roll, the EC said in a statement. There were 7.89 crore voters registered in the 2025 electoral list before the SIR exercise. The EC has said that most of these 65 lakh "missing" voters have died, registered in two locations, permanently migrated out of Bi-



**Next steps:** EC has asked voters whose names are not on the draft list to submit a Form 6 along with other required documents. ANI

har, or are untraceable.

Leaders of the Opposition INDIA bloc in the State said the EC failed to answer their queries about the names left out in the draft list.

According to data shared by the office of Bihar's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vinod Singh Gunjyal, the State capital

Patna has the highest number of 3.95 lakh voters not included in the list. There are over three lakh voters missing from the draft roll in each of the three districts of East Champaran, Madhubani and Gopalganj. Another 10 districts have seen a drop of two lakh voters each, while 13 districts saw a decline of over one

lakh voters in the draft roll.

## Claims and objections

The EC appealed to all eligible voters to check their names in the draft list, which is available on its portal. If their names are not on the list, they have been asked to submit Form 6 along with the declaration form specified in the SIR instructions. First-time voters, who have completed 18 years on July 1 or are going to turn 18 by October 1, should also get their names added by submitting Form 6. Over the next month, the EC will invite claims and objections by voters on exclusions and inclusions in the list.

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# Bihar's draft voter rolls: voters dip by 65 lakh

“In the one-month period from August 1 to September 1, any elector or political party can file claims and objections in a prescribed form before the ERO to add the name of any eligible elector or to delete the name of any ineligible one,” the EC statement said.

No State-wide compiled list was made available, but booth-wise lists of all the 90,712 polling booths of all 243 Assembly constituencies have been shared with all political parties by the State's 38 Deputy Electoral Officers (DEO).

However, the voters included in the draft list are still required to submit proof of residence and birth unless they have already done so, using the list of 11 documents which the EC had listed in the SIR rules. Neither Aadhaar nor voter ID cards are in the list of eligible documents.

Opposition parties have dubbed the SIR as an effort to bring in the National Register of Citizens (NRC) through a “backdoor” process. They have approached the Supreme Court in the matter, along with several civil society groups.

The top court had suggested to the EC, that it consider Aadhaar and Voter ID cards as proof as well. The next date of hearing has been fixed for August 12.



# Opposition protest over Bihar electoral roll revision stalls Rajya Sabha proceedings

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha failed to function on Friday, as the Opposition intensified its protest demanding a discussion on the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar.

At 11 a.m., following the laying of papers, Deputy Chairman Harivansh informed the House that he had received 30 notices for adjournment motions, of which 21 were related to the SIR in Bihar. Citing precedents, he rejected the motions, which led to an uproar from the Opposition benches.

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Manoj Kumar Jha urged the Chair to allow a discussion on the issue.

**"This is a *sub judice* mat-**



**Uproar in House:** Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh conducts proceedings in the House amid protest on Friday. ANI

ter and the rules of this House are very clear. I cannot allow [a discussion]," he said, urging the protesting members to return to their seats. The House was then adjourned till noon.

When the House reconvened, Opposition members resumed their protest. Trinamool Congress Parliamentary Party leader

Derek O'Brien, DMK floor leader Tiruchi Siva, and Aam Aadmi Party leader Sanjay Singh attempted to enter the well of the House. They were initially stopped by marshals but eventually pushed past the blockade, following which the House was adjourned for the day.

Minutes after this, the

Leader of the Opposition and Congress president, Mallikarjun Kharge, wrote to Mr. Harivansh, objecting to the deployment of security personnel. He said he was "shocked and astonished" to see CISF personnel being made to run inside the House.

Sharing the letter on X, Congress chief whip Jairam Ramesh said, "After the sudden and unprecedented resignation of the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, we are now seeing the takeover of the chamber of the Council of States by the personnel of the CISF."

Mr. O'Brien also criticised the government, stating: "Ten sittings of the monsoon session have gone by, we have been asking since Day One that we want a debate on SIR... But instead of listening to our

demand, the government is continuing to disrupt Parliament. What we witnessed today has never happened in the history of the Rajya Sabha."

**Government response**  
Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju denied the Opposition's allegations. He said it was the MPs themselves who had demanded increased security, which led to the deployment of CISF personnel.

"Members have sometimes physically taken a stand atop the treasury table and near the well. Security has been deployed to stop them from doing this. Marshals and security inside the House will not take any action till the time MPs indulge in something malicious," he said.

# India's fuel exports going on without import duty in U.S.

The U.S. President had announced plans to impose penalty on India over Delhi's ties with Moscow; but the order Trump signed excludes petroleum products from the 25% tariff on Indian goods

## Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

India's exports of petroleum products such as diesel and jet fuel to the U.S. continue to be exempted from the levy of any import duty or tariff, and President Donald Trump has, for now, not indicated the penalty he plans to impose to deter New Delhi's energy trade with Russia.

On Wednesday, Mr. Trump had announced plans to impose a 25% tariff on India, along with an additional penalty, citing concerns over the country's energy and defence ties with Russia, as well as existing trade barriers.

However, the executive order he signed thereafter only gives effect to the 25% tariff on Indian goods coming to the U.S. Even this has an exclusion list that includes finished pharmaceutical products (tablets, injectables and syrups), active pharmaceutical ingredients, electronics and ICT goods (semiconductors,



Pharmaceutical products and electronics have also been excluded from the 25% tariff on Indian goods. FILE PHOTO

smartphones, SSDs and computers), and petroleum products (crude oil, LNG, refined fuels, electricity and coal).

The executive order also does not indicate any penalty that is to be levied for Russian trade.

According to official data, India exported 4.86 million tonnes of petroleum products to the U.S. in fiscal year 2024-25 for over \$4 billion. Reliance Industries Ltd. is the biggest exporter of fuel to the U.S.

With fuel exports continuing to be on the exemption list, it means business

as usual for India and companies such as Reliance, analysts said.

## Big relief

Also, a relief would be if no penalty is imposed to punish India for its oil imports from Russia, they said, adding that for now, the U.S. administration has not indicated any penalty. "For now, there is nothing but you never know," an analyst said.

From just 0.2% before the Russia-Ukraine war to now accounting for 35-40% of total crude imports, India's reliance on

Russian oil has surged – drawing fresh scrutiny with Mr. Trump announcing a penalty on top of a 25% tariff, or tax, on all goods going to the U.S.

India historically bought most of its oil from the Middle East, including Iraq and Saudi Arabia. However, things changed when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

India, the world's third-largest crude importer after China and the U.S., began snapping up Russian oil that was available at a discount after some in the West shunned it as a means to punish Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine.

From a market share of just 0.2% in India's import basket before the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Russia overtook Iraq and Saudi Arabia to become India's No.1 supplier, with a share as high as 40% at one point of time.

This month, Russia supplied 36% of all crude oil, which is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel, that India imported.



# Trade walls thicken

The U.S. President Donald Trump imposed steep tariffs on imports from dozens of trading partners — including Canada, Brazil, India and Taiwan

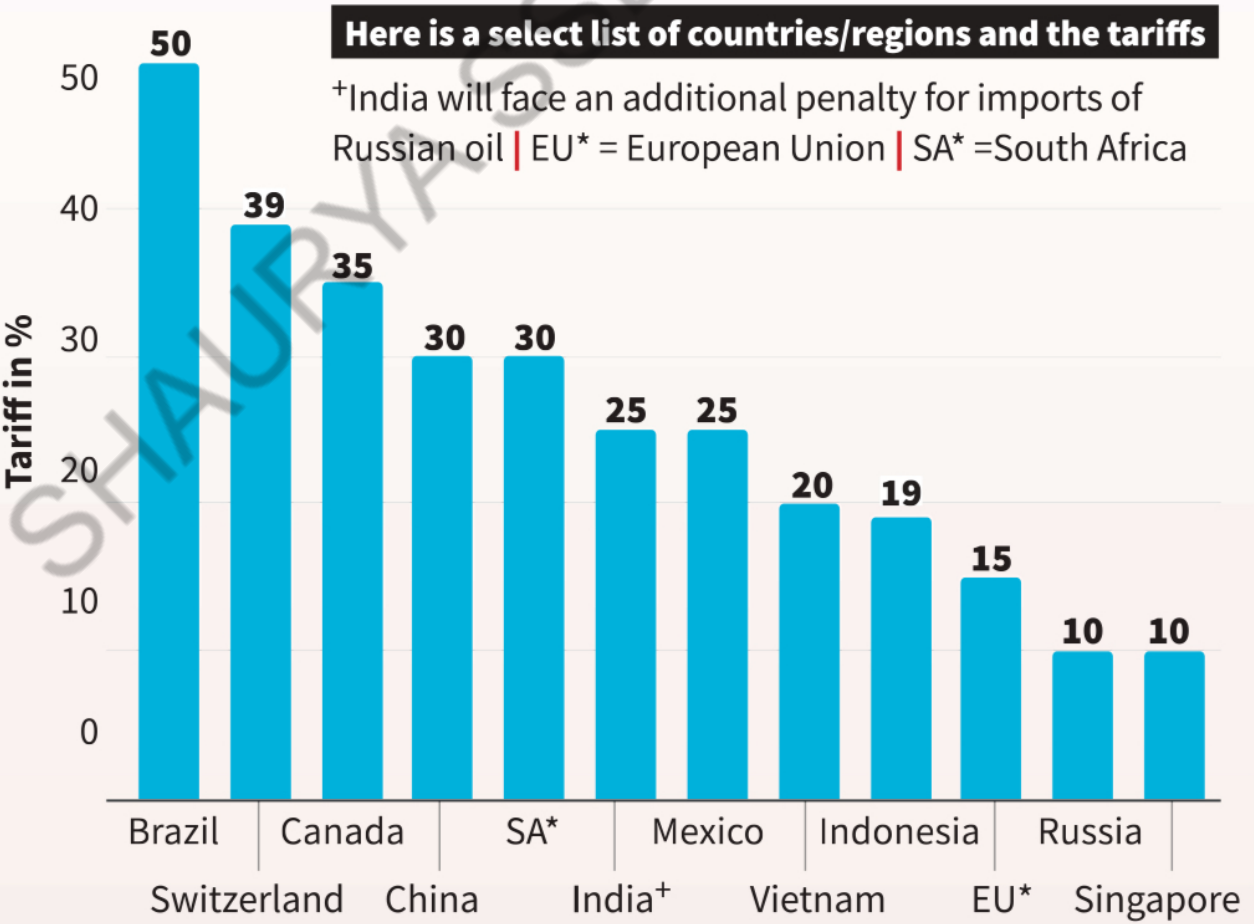


■ A presidential executive order set duties of **35%** on many **Canadian**, **50%** on **Brazilian**, **25%** on **Indian**, **20%** on **Taiwanese** and **39%** on **Swiss** products

■ The U.S. has been pressing India to open its markets to a **wide range of American products**, including dairy, poultry, corn, soybeans, rice, wheat, ethanol, fruits and nuts

Here is a select list of countries/regions and the tariffs

+India will face an additional penalty for imports of Russian oil | EU\* = European Union | SA\* =South Africa



Source: Reuters, AFP

# Trump to deploy nuclear submarines in response to Medvedev's comments

Words are important, and can often lead to unintended consequences, says U.S. President; he does not specify if he meant nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed submarines; neither does he elaborate on the locations, kept secret by the U.S. military

**Agence France-Presse**  
WASHINGTON

**U**.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that he had ordered the deployment of two nuclear submarines in response to “highly provocative” comments by a senior Russian official.

“Based on the highly provocative statements of the Former President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev..., I have ordered two Nuclear Submarines to be positioned in the appropriate regions, just in case these foolish and inflammatory statements are more than just that,” Mr.



The U.S. keeps nuclear-armed submarines on patrol as part of its nuclear triad of land, sea and air-launched weapons. REUTERS

Trump posted on his Truth Social platform.

“Words are very important, and can often lead to unintended consequences,

I hope this will not be one of those instances.”

Mr. Trump did not say whether he meant nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed

submarines. He also did not elaborate on the locations, which are kept secret by the U.S. military.

The United States and Russia control the vast majority of the world's nuclear weaponry, and Washington keeps nuclear-armed submarines on patrol as part of its so-called nuclear triad of land, sea and air-launched weapons.

Mr. Trump did not refer specifically to what Mr. Medvedev had said to prompt the highly unusual public display of nuclear saber-rattling.

However, Mr. Medvedev posted criticism on Thurs-

day of Mr. Trump on his Telegram account and alluded to the “fabled ‘Dead Hand’” – a reference to a highly secret automated system put in place during the Cold War to control the country's nuclear weapons.

This came after Mr. Trump had lashed out at what he called the “dead economies” of Russia and India.

Mr. Medvedev is currently deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council and a vocal proponent of President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine – and generally antagonistic relations with the West.



## Pakistan hails 19% tariffs under U.S. trade deal

**Press Trust of India**

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Friday announced that the U.S. has imposed a 19% tariff on its exports and termed the step as a “balanced and forward-looking” move that enhances the country’s competitiveness in the American market. The new rate is down from the previous 29% tariff announced by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Welcoming the “successful conclusion” of the tariff-related discussions with the U.S., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, “As per the outcome of these talks, a tariff of 19% will be applicable for Pakistani exports to the U.S. market.”

## Ukraine injured

...tough rhetoric

# Trump unveils slew of new tariffs while punishing Canada

**Agence France-Presse**

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled new tariffs Thursday on nearly 70 countries – including a blistering 35% on neighbour Canada – as he seeks to reshape global trade to benefit the U.S. economy.

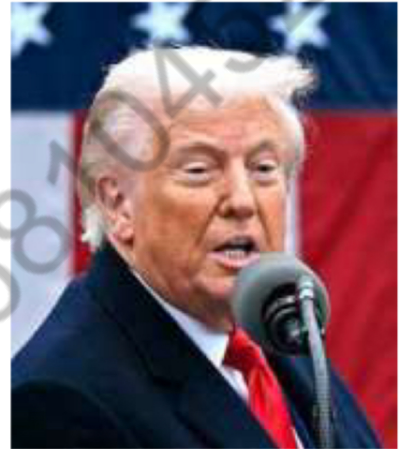
However, in a minor reprieve that opens the door to further negotiations, the White House said the measures will take effect in a week for most countries, not Friday as previously expected.

Mr. Trump raised duties on nearly 70 economies, from a current 10% level imposed in April when he unleashed “reciprocal” tariffs citing unfair trade practices.

### Varying by partner

The new, steeper levels listed in an executive order vary by trading partner and go as high as 41%.

Any goods “transhipped” through other jurisdictions to avoid U.S. du-



Donald Trump

ties would be hit with an additional 40% tariff, the order said.

The American leader separately hiked tariffs on Canadian goods from 25% to 35% – starting on Friday.

Mr. Trump gave more time to neighbour and major trading partner Mexico, delaying for 90 days a threat to increase tariffs from 25% to 30%, after holding talks with President Claudia Sheinbaum.

Exemptions remain, however, for a wide range of Canadian and Mexican goods entering the U.S. under a North American trade pact.

# Health of India's economy

Trump says India's economy, the fastest growing in the world, is 'dead'. Here's how India stacks up against other countries on growth. But the data also show significant concerns for India on a range of indicators



UDIT MISRA

ON JULY 30, United States President Donald Trump announced 25% tariffs on India, as well as an unspecified "penalty" for buying military equipment and energy from Russia.

A day later, Trump posted on social media that he did not care if India and Russia "take their dead economies down together".

Asked about Trump's description of India as a "dead" economy, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said: "Yes, he (Trump) is right... Everybody knows this except the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister. I am glad President Trump has stated a fact... The whole world knows that India is a dead economy and that the BJP has killed it..."

Union Minister of Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal pushed back, saying that India had rapidly transformed from being one of the "fragile five" to the fastest growing major economy in the world in just over a decade.

"We have risen from the 11th largest economy to one of the top five... It is also widely expected that we will become the third largest economy in a few years. Today, international institutions and economists see India as the bright spot in the global economy. India is contributing to almost 16% of the global growth," Goyal said in a statement to Parliament.

"In the last decade, the government has taken transformative measures to promote India as the manufacturing hub of the world... India's young, skilled and talented workforce is driving innovation and competitiveness of Indian industry. Our exports have steadily increased during the last 11 years," he said.

## Economic growth

So, is India's economy "dead"? While Trump, who seems annoyed with India's hard bargaining in the talks for a trade deal, need not be taken literally, it stands to reason that one absolutely necessary attribute of a dead economy must be an absence of

WORLD ECONOMIES: WHAT THE NUMBERS SHOW					
	GDP current prices*		GDP in 2025 relative to GDP in 1995	GDP in 1995 as %age of US GDP in 1995	GDP in 2025 as %age of US GDP in 2025
	1995	2025			
Argentina	288	684	2.4	3.8%	2.2%
China	738	19,232	26.1	9.7%	63%
Germany	2,595	4,745	1.8	34%	15.6%
India	360	4,187	11.6	4.7%	13.7%
Japan	5,546	4,186	0.8	72.6%	13.7%
Pakistan	99	373	3.8	1.3%	1.2%
Russian Federation	336	2,076	6.2	4.4%	6.8%
UK	1,345	3,839	2.9	17.6%	12.6%
US	7,640	30,507	4	100%	100%

Pakistan data available up to 2024. Source: IMF, The Indian Express Research \*Billions of US dollars

**I don't care what India does with Russia. They can take their dead economies down together, for all I care. We have done very little business with India, their Tariffs are too high, among the highest in the World.**

DONALD TRUMP

economic growth.

The Table alongside contains data for gross domestic product (GDP) from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a selection of countries over the past 30 years from 1995.

They have been selected in the context of Trump's comments, and the recent trade pacts signed between his administration and countries such as Pakistan, the UK, and the EU (of which Germany is the biggest economy). Japan has been included because it is one of the world's biggest economies.

The data throw up a picture that is obviously contrary to Trump's contention that India, or even Russia, are "dead" economies.

Column 3 shows the number of times the GDP of each country has grown over the past 30 years. The top three countries are China, India, and Russia in that order.

While the US has now become four times its 1995 size, its closest trade partners like

the United Kingdom have grown by less than 3 times, and Germany has failed to even double its economy.

Japan's GDP in 2025 is lower than what it was in 1995, which would, by this metric, qualify it to be not just a "dead" but perhaps a decaying economy.

In contrast, India's economy is today almost 12 times its size in 1995.

## Comparison with US

There is another way to look at these numbers: how did these economies grow relative to the US?

Columns 4 and 5 show there are only three economies that have grown in size relative to the US: China, India, and Russia. India was less than 5% the size of the US economy in 1995, but in 2025 it is almost 14%.

By contrast, all of America's friends and trading partners have shrunk in size relative to the US.

## Concerns for India

Do the above numbers mean India's economy has no problems? While India is by no means a "dead" economy — far from it — it does have several ailments.

While India's overall GDP has grown, its growth rate has lost a step since 2011-12, and failed to replicate the spurt of fast growth — averaging 8%-9% — that was witnessed before the Global Financial Crisis of 2008-09. Since 2014, India's growth rate has hovered around 6%.

India also has not achieved the pace of growth that China did during its own journey. In 2014, India's GDP was \$2.1 trillion; 11 years later, at the end of the ongoing financial year, it is projected to reach \$4.1 trillion, according to the IMF. By comparison, China's GDP raced from \$1.9 trillion to \$4.6 trillion in just four years, from 2004 to 2008.

In terms of trade — which is the context of Trump's comments — India's share is just 1.8% of total global exports of goods, and just 4.5% of total global exports of services.

One sign of weakness in the economy is the fact that there are many sectors that India wants to protect when it comes to international trade. India's farm economy is plagued with distress, with the bulk of the farmers living at subsistence levels.

The reason why the bulk of India's population is still engaged in the rural and farm sectors is the failure to boost manufacturing. Official data show that since 2019-20, manufacturing has registered a slower growth rate (CAGR of 4.04%) than even agriculture and allied activities (4.72%).

Further, despite overall GDP growth, the quality of growth and its distribution is acutely skewed, leading to widening inequalities and persistently high poverty. Twenty-four per cent of the population is below the World Bank poverty line for India. In 2011-12, when India was a poorer country and its poverty line was the same as the abject poverty line, 27% of India qualified as poor.

Data on inequality also show an alarming rise. And on human development metrics such as health and education, the situation is concerning.

A stark skills mismatch means that unemployment in India rises to very high levels with rising educational attainment. And female participation in the economy is among the lowest in the world — even when it is rising, the quality of work is of the poorest quality with low and stagnant wages.



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# Deep ties

## India needs to engage its neighbours more closely

**P** rime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Maldives last week, after an invitation by Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu to be a special guest for the country's 60th Independence Day, signalled the full return of relations to the closeness they held during the previous Ibrahim Solih government. Although the two leaders had not gotten off to the best start in 2023, after Mr. Muizzu's surprise win, backed by an "India Out" campaign – this was followed by a "Boycott Maldives" social media campaign in India – they have been on the mend for the past year. During Mr. Muizzu's 2024 state visit to India, India had announced measures including lines of credit and a currency swap arrangement to support the Maldives during its economic troubles. Mr. Muizzu reflected gratitude when he described India's role in the Maldives as "pivotal" and Mr. Modi reciprocated the warmth. India announced a line of credit worth \$565 million (₹4,850 crore) and reduced the annual debt burden for Maldives on previous Indian lines of credit by 40%. There was also the launch of India-Maldives Free Trade Agreement negotiations, which will be a significant driver of future engagement. There was the signing too of MoUs for cooperation in fisheries, meteorological sciences, digital solutions and pharma, as well as a digital and rupee-rufiyaa national currency payments agreement. Over the past six decades, India has cultivated a strong security partnership with the Maldives, including trilateral national security consultations with Sri Lanka, and it is significant that after Mr. Modi's visit, Mr. Muizzu welcomed Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake for a state visit.

The Maldives visit was also a reaffirmation of the importance of India's "Neighbourhood First" policy, at a time when Indian foreign policy is facing headwinds linked to the U.S.'s trade tariffs and the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. The conflict with Pakistan after the Pahalgam attacks, and tensions with Bangladesh have engaged the government's attention. New Delhi has also been preoccupied with reaching out to different countries, following Operation Sindoor, but did not send delegations to neighbouring countries. It is heartening that New Delhi is preparing to welcome Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, who has not been invited to India since he took office a year ago. A commemorative stamp by the Maldives for its national day celebrations showed traditional Indian and Maldives boats, which Mr. Modi described as a reflection of India and the Maldives being not just neighbours "but also fellow voyagers on a shared journey". In a time of global economic turmoil, a closer engagement with the neighbours – one that shores up their economic needs and supports their plans for development where possible – is essential.

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