

● POLITY

● ECONOMICS

● TECHNOLOGY

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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

Seven babies killed in delhi hospital fire

CONTEXT: A fire at a children's hospital in Vivek Vihar, east Delhi, on Saturday night killed seven newborns, aged 15 to 25 days, and injured five others.

BACKGROUND: Seven infants died and five are being treated after a fire at New Born Baby Care Hospital, which lacked fire safety measures and had an expired license. The hospital's owner and a doctor were arrested for negligence. A magisterial inquiry will investigate the fire and propose preventive measures.



Tragic Fire Incident at Delhi Hospital

- **Unqualified Doctor:** Akash, the doctor on duty, only had an Ayurvedic medicine degree and was not qualified for neonatal intensive care.
- **Fire Cause and Response:** Preliminary assessments suggest a short circuit caused the fire, exacerbated by excessive oxygen cylinders; police and DFS responded quickly.
- **Extent of Damage:** The fire spread to adjacent buildings and properties, damaging a boutique, a bank, an optical shop, an ambulance, and a scooter.
- **Local Rescue Efforts:** Local residents led the rescue, breaking into the building and saving 12 babies, but seven were severely burned.
- **Casualties and Aftermath:** Six babies were declared dead, one died later, and parents, like Sitara Khatun, are devastated by the tragic losses.

Impact and Challenges of Standardized Healthcare Rates Directive

- **Supreme Court's Directive:** Private hospitals must adhere to standardized medical procedure rates, with possible interim enforcement of CGHS rates for non-compliance.
- **Healthcare Providers' Concerns:** AHPI raised feasibility issues of uniform rates, suggesting cost variations based on scientific principles and establishment categories.

- **Industry Stance:** Stakeholders fear standardized pricing could compromise healthcare quality, reduce patient choice, and deter skilled doctors from practicing in India.
- **Potential Benefits:** The directive aims for more accessible and affordable healthcare by ensuring rate transparency and reducing patients' financial burden.
- **Implementation Challenges:** Nationwide implementation faces challenges due to healthcare infrastructure variance, regional cost differences, and the need for a fair pricing model study.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Hamas launches attack on Tel Aviv for the first time in months

CONTEXT: Hamas launched rockets from Gaza, triggering air-raid sirens in Tel Aviv for the first time in months, demonstrating resilience amid Israel's ongoing offensive.

BACKGROUND: Hamas's military wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, claimed responsibility for the first long-range rocket attack from Gaza since January. Palestinian militants, including the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, sporadically fire rockets into Israel. Israeli forces intercepted several projectiles, and Prime Minister Netanyahu planned to discuss a Gaza truce and hostage release deal.



ICJ Ruling and Israel's Ongoing Conflict in Gaza

- **ICJ Ruling:** The International Court of Justice ruled that Israel must immediately stop its military offensive in Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city.
- **Genocide Case:** The ICJ previously asked Israel to prevent genocide in Gaza, now concluding the Rafah offensive threatens the Palestinian population.
- **Aid and Investigation:** The ICJ demands Israel keep the Rafah crossing open for aid, allow UN investigators, and release all hostages.

- **ICC Actions:** The International Criminal Court's Chief Prosecutor seeks arrest warrants for Israeli and Hamas leaders for war crimes in Gaza.
- **Israel's Stance:** Despite ICJ rulings, Israel continues its offensive; its disproportionate force has turned global opinion against it and weakened its international standing.

Netanyahu Opposes Ceasefire Amid Escalating Gaza Conflict

- **Netanyahu's Opposition:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "strongly opposes" ending the Gaza war, preferring to continue the military offensive.
- **Rocket Attacks:** Hamas militants fired rockets at Tel Aviv, escalating the conflict and causing civilians to seek shelter.
- **Hamas Demands:** Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar demands an end to the war, IDF withdrawal from Gaza, and maintaining Hamas control.
- **Hamas Accusations:** Hamas's Izzat al-Rishq accused Netanyahu of stalling to continue aggression against Gaza.
- **EU's Stance:** EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell emphasized that a strong Palestinian Authority is crucial for achieving peace.

and police station information.

- **Missing Information:** Notably, there is no specific column for the age of the accused in the arrest memo, which is crucial during initial court appearances.
- **Magistrate's Role:** Most magistrates in first production hearings focus on procedural compliance, with limited direct interaction with the accused.
- **Constitutional Rights Concerns:** The report criticizes the lack of recognition by magistrates regarding the non-preparation of arrest memos as a serious violation of the accused's constitutional rights.

Safeguards under Article 22 for Arrested and Detained Persons

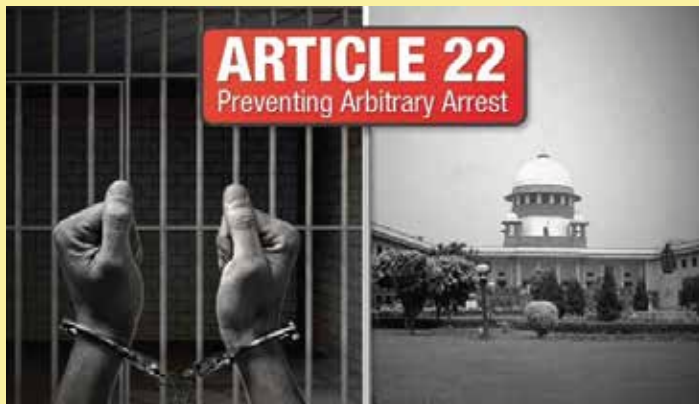
- **Protection under Article 22:** Article 22 of the Constitution provides protection to persons arrested or detained under ordinary law or preventive detention law.
- **Advisory Boards for Preventive Detention:** Preventive detention laws require advisory boards, consisting of persons qualified to be High Court judges, to review detention orders every three months.
- **Review Process:** Review boards assess detention orders based on evidence, request additional information if necessary, and give the detained person an opportunity to present their case.
- **Duration of Preventive Detention:** Initially, a person may be detained for up to three months, and any extension requires approval from the Advisory Board.
- **Rights of the Detainee:** The detainee has the right to be informed of the grounds for their detention, though the state may withhold this information in the public interest. They also have the right to challenge their detention.

INDIAN POLITY

Delhi magistrates 'Overlook' violations during arrest: report

CONTEXT: : A unique study on magistrate courts in Delhi during initial hearings and remand proceedings found judges prioritize procedural paperwork, sometimes neglecting arrest-related violations.

BACKGROUND: Article 22(2) mandates that every arrested person must be presented before a magistrate within 24 hours, known as "first production". A study by National Law University's Project 39A becomes significant amid concerns, as over 53.90 lakh people were arrested in India in 2022. The Supreme Court recently released NewsClick founder Prabir Purkayastha due to procedural violations during his arrest and initial custody, noting the arrest memo lacked grounds for his arrest.



Issues with Arrest Memo Compliance in Delhi Courts

- **Lack of Standardization:** The report highlights the absence of a standardized format for arrest memos across different states in India.
- **Content of Arrest Memo:** In Delhi courts, arrest memos typically include details such as date, time, place of arrest, FIR number,

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INDIAN POLITY

ECI should do everything to reinforce people's faith in the democratic process

CONTEXT: The ECI has accused of a "pattern of false narratives" aimed at disrupting the electoral process, acknowledging concerns could stem from ignorance or mischief.

BACKGROUND: The Election Commission, responsible for overseeing the world's largest democratic exercise, should respond maturely by providing public information that alleviates concerns. Recently, it opposed the disclosure of Form 17C in the Supreme Court, hinting at electoral process conspiracy. Complaints should be addressed transparently, fitting for a robust democracy.



General Election 2024: Sixth Phase Voting Highlights and Transparency Concerns

- **Phase Overview:** A total of 58 Lok Sabha seats across eight States and Union Territories voted in the sixth phase of the 2024 general election.
- **Completion of Polling:** With this phase, polling concluded in 28 States and Union Territories, covering 486 constituencies.
- **Incidents and Turnout:** Sporadic violence was reported in West Bengal, while the state also saw the highest polling percentage at 79.47%. Urban apathy was evident in Delhi with a turnout of 57.67%.
- **Data Transparency:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) released absolute voter turnout numbers for the first five phases, improving transparency despite recent court challenges.
- **Future Considerations:** The ECI is urged to address complaints effectively and proactively enhance transparency measures to bolster public confidence in the electoral process.

Election Commission of India: Constitutional Provisions and Responsibilities

- **Establishment and Autonomy:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) is an autonomous constitutional authority established on January 25, 1950, under Articles 324-329 of the Constitution.
- **Administrative Headquarters:** The ECI's secretariat is located in New Delhi, and it is responsible for administering elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and Presidential and Vice-Presidential offices.

- **Scope of Authority:** Article 324 vests the ECI with superintendence, direction, and control of elections in India, ensuring adult suffrage without discrimination based on religion, race, caste, or sex.
- **Separate Provisions:** The ECI is not involved in elections to panchayats and municipalities, which are the responsibility of separate State Election Commissions as per the Constitution.
- **Legislative Framework:** Articles 327, 328, and 329 empower the Parliament and State Legislatures to enact laws related to elections, ensuring minimal judicial interference in electoral matters.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The spectre of Nuclear Conflict, once again

CONTEXT: After every major conflict, questions arise about whether leaders failed to foresee and prepare for threats, urging nations to scrutinize current sabre-rattling and nuclear threats seriously.

BACKGROUND: Many Western leaders have taken note of French President Emmanuel Macron's dire warnings, which hint at nuclear annihilation and emphasize the changed nature of Russia post-Ukraine war. Unlike previous statements, Europeans are now paying close attention to Macron's concerns about Vladimir Putin's nuclear threats and their impact on European security.

Escalating Nuclear Tensions: Global Concerns and Unilateral Actions

- **French Nuclear Deterrent and Global Influence:** The French President's reference to the "French Nuclear Deterrent" signals France's substantial nuclear capabilities and global influence.
- **Rising Concerns of Nuclear Conflict:** Increasing Russian aggression in Ukraine raises concerns about the potential use of nuclear weapons, creating the spectre of a nuclear exchange.
- **Global Leadership Vacuum:** Absence of influential global leaders exacerbates nuclear tensions, amid economic turbulence and widespread global problems.
- **Erosion of Nuclear Guarantees:** Despite existing protocols, the absence of regular exchanges among nuclear powers is eroding nuclear guarantees.

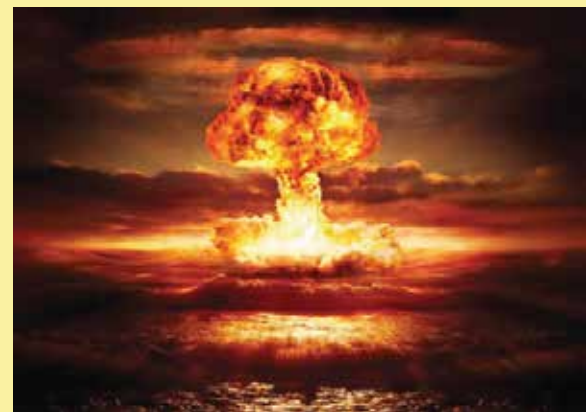


Image Credit: Third Party

- Russian Actions and International Response: Russia's revocation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and provocative statements have sparked international hostility and concern.

U.S.-India Nuclear Deal: Transforming Relations and Global Nuclear Landscape

- Background and Significance: The U.S.-India nuclear deal transformed relations by bridging gaps on nuclear issues, marking a pivotal shift.
- India's Nuclear Status: India, outside the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT), faced sanctions post-1998 nuclear tests, hindering its global nuclear participation.
- Key Provisions and Concessions: India separated its nuclear program into civilian and military sectors, accepted IAEA safeguards, and a moratorium on testing.
- U.S. Legislative Support: The U.S. amended laws and enacted the Hyde Act and 123 Agreements, easing restrictions and pursuing NSG approvals.
- International Recognition and Impact: The deal provided India with NSG waivers and recognition akin to nuclear weapon states under the NPT framework.

The discussions at the Hoover Institution underscored that the India-U.S. nuclear deal goes beyond nuclear status revision, symbolizing a transformative shift in bilateral relations. From technology denial to strategic partnership, India has become crucial in global and regional affairs, illustrating the deal's significance for peaceful nuclear energy and broader diplomatic ties.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

A door to a housing scheme, tribals find hard to open

CONTEXT: Official data shows that these tribes, totalling around 14.6 lakh households, live in remote, scattered areas, relying on traditional livelihood methods and facing economic and educational challenges.

BACKGROUND: The Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission and Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan were launched by the Government of India in 2023-24 to uplift socio-economic conditions of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). PM-JANMAN focuses on essential services like housing, clean water, and sanitation, aiming to benefit 4.90 lakh PVTG households by 2026.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs
Government of India

PM JANMAN
(Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan)

A Visionary Initiative towards Tribal Welfare

- 18 States & 1 Union Territory
- 75 PVTG Communities
- ₹24,000 Crore Allocated
- 7 Lakh Households
- 28 Lakh PVTG Population
- Convergence with 9 Ministries
- 11 Basic Amenities

Empowering Tribals Transforming India

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Challenges in PM JANMAN Housing Scheme Registration Process

- **Mobile App for Registration:** The 'Awaas+' app aids block/panchayat officials in registering PVTG households for PM JANMAN Housing, collecting location, profile, and bank details.
- **Issues with Job cards:** Deletion of MGNREGA workers' job cards has led to ineligibility for PM JANMAN Housing registration, exacerbating the problem.
- **Discrepancies in Data:** Discrepancies between app-populated village lists and MGNREGA MIS data cause confusion among beneficiaries and officials.
- **Incomplete Information:** The app lacks guidance on name entry without Aadhaar and fails to distinguish PVTGs, leading to ineligible registrations.
- **Complex Bank Selection Process:** Cumbersome dropdown lists for bank selection and branch options create unnecessary complexity for PVTGs and officials alike.

Despite the exclusion of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) from the app, the Government's initiatives like PM JANMAN aim to enhance financial inclusion for PVTGs. By rectifying these issues and actively engaging communities, there's potential to uplift PVTGs and fulfil long-overdue promises of development.

PM-JANMAN Scheme for PVTGs

- **Scheme Launch and Focus:** PM-JANMAN launched on Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas, November 15, 2023, targets 11 critical interventions across 9 ministries for PVTGs.
- **Components and Outlay:** PM-JANMAN integrates Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes with a total outlay of Rs 24,104 crore over three years.
- **Allocation for Housing:** Rs 15,000 crore allocated under DAPST for housing in PM-JANMAN, focusing on construction of houses and roads.
- **Vision and Objectives:** PM-JANMAN aims to elevate socio-economic status by addressing health, education, and livelihood gaps in PVTG communities.
- **Infrastructure and Integration:** The scheme aligns with existing initiatives across nine Ministries to improve infrastructure in PVTG habitations and families.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

An overview of Europe's AI Convention

CONTEXT: Globally, governing Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly complex, with countries adopting diverse approaches from legislation to executive actions, amid calls for a challenging global treaty.

BACKGROUND: In the absence of a global AI treaty, the Council of Europe's adoption of the AI convention marks a significant step towards establishing governance principles for AI aligned with human rights and democracy. This convention is poised to set new standards in AI regulation globally.

Understanding Framework Conventions

- **Definition and Purpose:** A 'framework convention' sets broad commitments and objectives, with subsequent agreements known as protocols for specific targets.
- **Flexibility and Implementation:** Framework conventions allow parties discretion in achieving objectives based on their capacities and priorities.
- **Global Impact and AI Governance:** Framework conventions like the AI convention can influence AI governance globally, including in innovation hubs like the U.S.

Key Articles of the AI Convention

- **Article 1 - Purpose and Scope:** Article 1 emphasizes that the Convention aims to ensure AI systems' activities are consistent with human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.
- **Article 3 - Scope and Application:** Article 3 specifies that the Convention covers AI activities that may impact human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, both by public authorities and private actors.
- **Regulation of AI Systems:** The Convention requires parties to address risks and impacts from AI systems in a manner consistent with its objectives.



Scope and Exemptions of the AI Convention

- **Broad Exemptions:** Articles 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 provide broad exemptions for national security, research, development, testing, and national defence, excluding military AI applications from the AI convention.
- **Pragmatic Approach:** Exemptions in Articles 3.2 and 3.3 are

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broad but do not fully exclude the convention's applicability concerning national security and testing.

- **General Obligations:** The convention includes obligations to protect human rights (Article 4), democratic processes, and the rule of law (Article 5), with implications for addressing disinformation and deep fakes.

The AI convention underscores the protection of existing human and fundamental rights in the context of AI applications. It imposes obligations on governments to ensure effective remedies and procedural safeguards. Despite its comprehensive approach, implementing the convention may face challenges due to evolving technology and nascent regulatory frameworks.

AGRICULTURE/ ECONOMICS

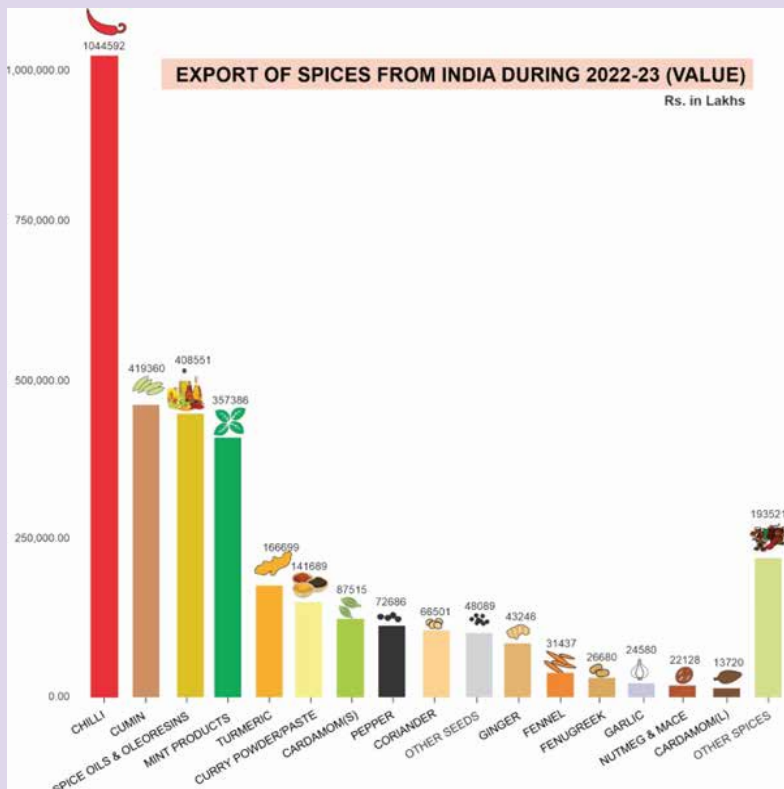
Current status of Spice Exports

CONTEXT: Last month, Hong Kong and Singapore recalled certain spice mix products from MDH and Everest Group due to higher levels of Ethylene Oxide. Indian authorities are now ensuring compliance with global food safety standards.

BACKGROUND: Most agricultural products, including spices, are stored in auction yards where they are exposed to contamination from humans, birds, reptiles, and insects. Large factories receive these contaminated materials and use ETO sterilisation due to high microbial levels. Improved early-stage processes for value addition can reduce contamination, emphasizing the importance of product quality over price for consumers.

Indian Spice Industry Overview

- **Significant Export Share:** India holds a major position in the global spice market, with exports valued at \$4.4 billion in 2023-2024, up by 12.3% from the previous fiscal year.
- **Key Exported Spices:** Chilli, spice oils, oleoresins, curry powder, paste, cumin, mint products, cardamom, and pepper



are among India's largest exported spice products in FY 2022-2023.

- **Top Production Spices:** Garlic, ginger, and chilli were the top three spices produced in India during the financial year 2023.
- **Important Markets:** China, Bangladesh, West Asian countries, and the U.S. are crucial markets for Indian spices.

Challenges and Perspectives in Indian Spice Exports

- **Product Recalls and Exports:** Singapore and Hong Kong recalled Indian products but have since resumed imports, minimizing future impacts on exports.
- **Global Standards Variability:** Different countries have varying standards for Ethylene Oxide (ETO) and Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs), posing challenges for Indian spice exports.
- **Industry Demands for Norm Relaxation:** The Indian spice industry seeks relaxed norms from the EU to enhance exports, especially for spices like cardamom and black pepper.
- **Impact on Farmers:** Chilli growers in Telangana are less affected as most do not export directly, while intercrop cultivators of cardamom and black pepper meet stringent MRL norms.
- **Exporter Perspectives:** Exporters suggest using genuine Indian spices to avoid challenges with importing and exporting value-added products, while discussing achievable guidelines with the Indian government.

ECONOMICS

India records trade deficit with 9 of top 10 trading partners in 2023-24

CONTEXT: According to official data, India experienced a trade deficit with nine out of its top 10 trading partners, including China, Russia, Singapore, and Korea, in 2023-24.

BACKGROUND: In the fiscal year 2023-24, India's trade deficit with China, Russia, Korea, and Hong Kong widened compared to the previous year. Conversely, the deficit narrowed with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Indonesia, and Iraq. China became India's largest trading partner with \$118.4 billion in two-way commerce, surpassing the U.S.

India's Bilateral Trade Dynamics and Economic Impact

- **Bilateral Trade Figures:** India-U.S. bilateral trade reached \$118.28 billion in 2023-24, with the U.S. being India's top trading partner.
- **Trade Agreements:** India has free trade agreements with key partners like Singapore, UAE, Korea, and Indonesia (as part of the Asian bloc).
- **Trade Surplus with the U.S.:** India had a trade surplus of \$36.74 billion with the U.S. in 2023-24, one of the few countries where India maintains a surplus.

- **Impact of Trade Deficit:** India's overall trade deficit narrowed to \$238.3 billion in 2023-24, affecting the domestic currency due to increased imports.
- **Economic Implications:** A rising trade deficit can lead to currency depreciation, making imports more expensive and worsening the deficit over time.

One-way street

The table shows India's trade deficit/surplus in the financial year 2023-24, with the country's top 10 trading partners. Except the U.S., India has a trade deficit with all other partners



Country	Trade balance in \$ million
China	-85,087
Russia	-57,170
Iraq	-26,650
Saudi Arabia	-20,244
Indonesia	-17,422
South Korea	-14,719
UAE	-12,393
Hong Kong	-12,206
Singapore	-6,787
U.S.	36,742



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