



NATION MOURNS FORMER PM MANMOHAN SINGH, ECONOMIST-RULER CREDITED WITH LIBERALISATION

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, a celebrated economist and statesman credited with India's 1991 economic liberalization and a decade of transformative leadership as PM, passed away at 92, prompting a national mourning period and tributes highlighting his humility, integrity, and profound contributions to the nation.



A storied CAREER

Charting Manmohan Singh's five-decade long career in bureaucracy and politics

1954

Completes a Master's in economics from Panjab University

1957

Economics tripos at Cambridge University

1962

D.Phil. from Oxford University

1971

Joins Government of India as Economic Adviser in Commerce Ministry



1972

Appointed Chief Economic Adviser in Finance Ministry

1980-82

Member, Planning Commission

1982-1985

Governor of the Reserve Bank of India

1985-87

Served as Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission



Then RBI Governor Manmohan Singh with then T.N. CM M.G. Ramachandran in 1983. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

1990

Appointed Adviser to Prime Minister on Economic Affairs

March 1991

Appointed Chairman of University Grants Commission (UGC)

1991

Elected to Rajya Sabha and re-elected in 1995, 2001, 2007 and 2013



1991-96

Finance Minister in P.V. Narasimha Rao government

1998-2004

Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha

2004-2014

Prime Minister

Nation Mourns the Loss of Former PM Manmohan Singh Passing Away

- Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh passed away at the age of 92 at AIIMS, Delhi, on Thursday evening.
- He was admitted in critical condition after losing consciousness at home and was declared dead at 9:51 p.m. despite resuscitative efforts.
- Survived by his wife, Gurcharan Singh, and three daughters, he had been in declining health for several months.

National Mourning

- A seven-day national mourning was declared as a mark of respect.
- Union government functions were cancelled, and the Union Cabinet scheduled a condolence resolution.
- Last rites to be conducted with full state honors.

Tributes from Leaders

President Droupadi Murmu

- Described Singh as "one of the greatest sons of Bharat."
- Highlighted his contributions to economic reforms, humility, and unblemished political life.

Legacy and Achievements

Economic Reforms

- Architect of India's 1991 economic liberalization as Finance Minister under P.V. Narasimha Rao.
- Steering India through its worst economic crisis and setting the stage for future growth.

Prime Ministership (2004–2014)

- High point: Indo-U.S. nuclear deal of 2008, securing a crucial trust vote despite opposition.
- Shifted foreign policy towards deeper engagement with global superpowers.
- Advocated for peace and dialogue with Pakistan, despite political risks.

Professional Accomplishments

- Held prestigious economic roles: Chief Economic Adviser, RBI Governor, and Finance Secretary.
- Renowned for his academic brilliance with degrees from Cambridge and Oxford.

Challenges and Criticism

- Faced public disapproval over allegations of corruption in 2G spectrum, coal block allocation, and Commonwealth Games.
- Accused of policy paralysis and criticized for being "remote-controlled" by Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

- However, defied party opinions to push forward key policies like the nuclear deal and peace dialogues.

International Recognition

- Admired globally for his economic acumen and leadership.
- Former U.S. President Barack Obama once remarked, “When the Prime Minister speaks, people listen.”

CONCLUSION

Dr. Manmohan Singh leaves behind a legacy of transformative economic reforms and a career marked by humility, wisdom, and integrity. While his tenure faced challenges, history will remember him as a visionary economist and a statesman who played a pivotal role in shaping modern India.

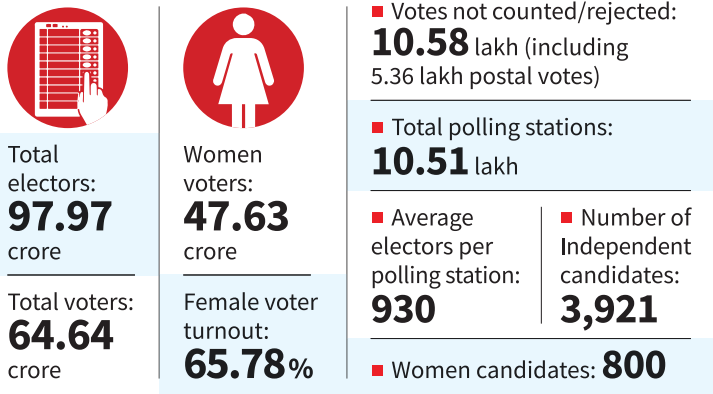
OVER 10.58 LAKH VOTES WERE ‘NOT COUNTED OR REJECTED’ IN LOK SABHA ELECTION, SHOW EC DATA

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Election Commission's statistical report on the 2024 Lok Sabha elections highlights key trends, including voter turnout, rejected votes, and the performance of candidates and political parties, reflecting the scale and dynamics of the world's largest democratic exercise.

2024 LS election in numbers

As many as 86% of the over 8,360 candidates who contested the Lok Sabha elections lost their deposits



SOURCE: ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Key Highlights of the 2024 Lok Sabha Election Statistical Report Rejected Votes

- Over 10.58 lakh votes were not counted or rejected.
 - 5,35,825 were postal votes.
 - 5,22,513 were votes cast in electronic voting machines.

Voter Registration and Turnout

- Total registered voters: 97.97 crore (7.43% increase from 91.19 crore in 2019).
- Voter turnout: 64.64 crore.
 - Valid votes: 63.89 crore.
 - Proxy votes: 3.
 - Tendered votes: 9,634 (related to impersonation complaints).

Uncontested Constituencies and Polling Logistics

- Surat (Gujarat) was the only uncontested Lok Sabha constituency.

- Total polling stations: 10,51,016.
 - Average number of electors per polling station: 930.
- Re-polling occurred in 40 polling stations.

Candidate Participation

- Total nominations filed: 12,459.
 - Qualified to contest: 8,360 (after rejections and withdrawals).
- Candidates losing deposits: 7,190 (86%).
 - Reason: Failed to secure at least one-sixth of the votes polled.

Independent and Women Candidates

- Independent candidates:
 - Total: 3,921.
 - Winners: 7.
 - Women Independent candidates: 279 (none won).
- Women candidates overall:
 - 2024: 800 (increase from 726 in 2019).
 - Women voters: 47.63 crore (up from 43.85 crore in 2019).
 - Female voter turnout: Increased from 65.55% (2019) to 65.78% (2024).

Political Party Performance

- Six national parties, including BJP, Congress, and CPI(M), secured over 63% of the total valid votes.

- Participating parties:
 - 47 recognised State parties.
 - 690 registered, unrecognised political parties.

CONCLUSION

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections demonstrated an increase in voter registration and participation, especially among women. Despite the high number of candidates, a significant proportion lost their deposits, and Independent candidates faced challenges in securing wins. The dominant role of national and recognised State parties continues to shape electoral outcomes, with the election underscoring the logistical complexity and scale of India's democratic process.

RBI'S MONETARY POLICY MAY HAVE SLOWED DEMAND: FINANCE MINISTRY

ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: The Indian Finance Ministry acknowledged that the Reserve Bank of India's aggressive monetary policy tightening may have dampened economic growth, leading them to revise their GDP growth forecast for 2024-25 downwards to "around" 6.5% from a previous target of 6.5-7%.

Key Points:

- **Monetary Policy Impact:**
 - The Finance Ministry acknowledged that the RBI's monetary policy tightening may have contributed to a slowdown in economic demand.
 - This led the Ministry to revise its GDP growth forecast for 2024-25 downwards to "around" 6.5% from a previous target of 6.5-7%.
- **RBI Concerns:**
 - High Attrition in Banks: High employee turnover rates in private sector banks and small finance banks are a concern for the RBI.
 - This impacts operational efficiency, customer service, and increases costs.
 - Dark Patterns: The RBI is investigating the use of deceptive design practices ("dark patterns") by regulated entities and considering regulatory action.
 - Top-up Loans: The RBI is assessing the risks associated with the significant growth of top-up loans, particularly their potential impact on the stock market.
- **Positive Developments:**
 - Credit Growth Support: The RBI's reduction in the cash reserve ratio is expected to boost credit flows to the economy.
 - Improved Asset Quality: Bank asset quality has significantly improved, with the gross non-performing asset ratio at a 13-year low.
 - Increased Profitability: Banks have experienced six consecutive years of increased profitability.

CONCLUSION:

The Indian economy faces a complex set of challenges. While the RBI's actions to combat inflation may have slowed demand, the central bank is also addressing concerns within the banking sector, including high employee attrition, the potential misuse of "dark patterns," and the risks associated with rapidly growing top-up loans. Despite these challenges, positive indicators such as improved asset quality and increased bank profitability offer some optimism for the future.



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ASSAM RIFLES TOLD TO MAKE A LIST OF VILLAGES IN MYANMAR WITHIN 10 KM FROM BORDER

INTERNAL SECURITY

CONTEXT: The Government of India is implementing stricter border control measures along its border with Myanmar, including the deployment of face recognition systems and biometric data collection, amid increased refugee flows and security concerns following the 2021 coup in Myanmar.



- **Increased Border Control:**
 - The Indian government is implementing stricter border control measures along the Myanmar border.
 - This includes the creation of 43 new border checkpoints and the deployment of face recognition systems.
 - The government is also compiling a list of villages in Myanmar within 10 km of the border.
- **Biometric Data Collection:**
 - The government plans to capture biometric data, such as fingerprints and iris scans, of Myanmar nationals entering India.
- **Border Pass System:**
 - A new system of QR code-enabled border passes will regulate the movement of people living near the border.
 - The Free Movement Regime (FMR), which previously allowed for freer movement, is being phased out.
- **Data Concerns:**
 - The Assam Rifles has expressed concerns about the accuracy and authenticity of the village list compiled from open sources.
- **Operational Challenges:**
 - The Assam Rifles has limited powers to conduct thorough security checks and may require assistance from other agencies.
- **Humanitarian Considerations:**
 - Over 40,000 refugees from Myanmar have sought shelter in India following the 2021 coup.
 - The FMR was originally established due to strong ethnic and familial ties between people on both sides of the border.

CONCLUSION:

The Indian government's efforts to strengthen border security along the Myanmar border reflect a complex set of challenges, including security concerns, humanitarian needs, and logistical and operational considerations. The implementation of these measures requires careful coordination between various agencies and a nuanced approach that balances security needs with the humanitarian concerns of the refugee population.

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17 CHILDREN RECEIVE AWARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2024 celebrates the exceptional achievements of 17 children across India in diverse fields, highlighting their talent, bravery, and contributions to society.

Key Highlights of the Award Ceremony

Award Overview

- Event: Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar.
- Presented by: President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi.
- Awardees: 17 children (10 girls and 7 boys) from 14 States and Union Territories.
- Categories: Art and culture, bravery, innovation, science and technology, social service, sports, and environment.

President's Remarks

- Praised the children for their extraordinary accomplishments and inspiring the nation.
- Emphasized India's tradition of nurturing and recognising talent in children.
- Highlighted how courage and patriotism in children strengthen the nation's future.

Notable Awardees

- Art and Culture:
 - Keya Hatkar (14): Author and disability advocate.
 - Ayaan Sajad (12): Sufi singer contributing to Kashmiri music.
 - Vyas Om Jignesh (17): Sanskrit scholar with cerebral palsy, memorized 5,000 slokas.
- Bravery:
 - Saurav Kumar (9): Saved three girls from drowning.
 - Loanna Thapa (17): Rescued 36 residents from a fire.
- Innovation:
 - Sindhoora Raja (15): Developed self-stabilising devices for Parkinson's patients.
 - Risheek Kumar (17): Founded Kashmir's first cybersecurity firm.
- Sports:
 - Hembati Nag: Judo player from a Naxalism-affected area, won silver at Khelo India National Games.
 - Anish Sarkar: Youngest FIDE-ranked chess prodigy at just three years old.

President's Praise

- Lauded Hembati Nag for her resilience and determination amidst adversity.

CONCLUSION

The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar showcases the limitless potential of India's youth, celebrating their accomplishments and inspiring future generations. These young achievers reflect the spirit of innovation, courage, and perseverance that will shape the nation's future.



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LOCAL CLINICAL TRIAL WAIVER FOR SELECTED DRUGS IS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD: EXPERTS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: India's health regulator is allowing waivers for local clinical trials on certain new drugs from developed countries, aiming to speed up access to medications but raising concerns about patient safety and research in India.



India's New Drug Approval Policy: A Balancing Act

- **Faster Access to Medications:** The Indian government allows waivers for local clinical trials on new drugs from developed countries. This aims to expedite access to essential medications for patients.
- **Beneficiary Categories:** This policy targets five categories of new drugs, including orphan drugs for rare diseases, gene and cellular therapies, and medications for pandemics.
- **Concerns about Patient Safety:** Experts warn that skipping local trials might lead to unforeseen side effects due to India's diverse population genetics.

- **Research and Development Impact:** Waiving trials could hinder research efforts within India, potentially affecting future drug development.
- **Industry Perspective:** The pharmaceutical industry welcomes the move, expecting faster drug approvals and quicker responses to public health emergencies.
- **Patient Groups' Dilemma:** While advocating for faster access to rare disease treatments, some patient groups also rely on local trials for obtaining expensive medications.

CONCLUSION: India's new drug approval policy offers a faster path to essential medications but raises concerns about patient safety and domestic research. Balancing these factors will be crucial for ensuring both access to new drugs and robust healthcare practices.

TAPPING INTO KAZAKHSTAN'S RARE EARTHS POTENTIAL

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

CONTEXT: India seeks to diversify its rare earth supply chain away from China, with Kazakhstan emerging as a key partner. This collaboration aims to enhance India's energy transition, reduce geopolitical risks, and boost economic cooperation between the two nations.



KEY POINTS:

- **Global Rare Earth Demand:** The global transition to renewable energy has significantly increased demand for rare earths.
 - **China's Dominance:** China holds a near-monopoly in rare earth production and supply, posing risks to global supply chains.
 - **India's Reliance on China:** India heavily relies on China for rare earth imports, despite possessing significant reserves.
 - **Geopolitical Concerns:** China's past actions, such as restricting critical technology exports, highlight the risks associated with over-reliance on a single supplier.
 - **Kazakhstan's Potential:** Kazakhstan, with abundant rare earth resources and a growing focus on mineral extraction, offers a viable alternative for India.
- **Diversification Efforts:** India is actively seeking to diversify its rare earth sources through partnerships with countries like Kazakhstan, the U.S., and others.

- **Challenges and Opportunities:** Challenges include limited connectivity and a lack of advanced extraction technologies in both India and Kazakhstan. Opportunities lie in collaborative efforts, technology transfer, and regional market development.

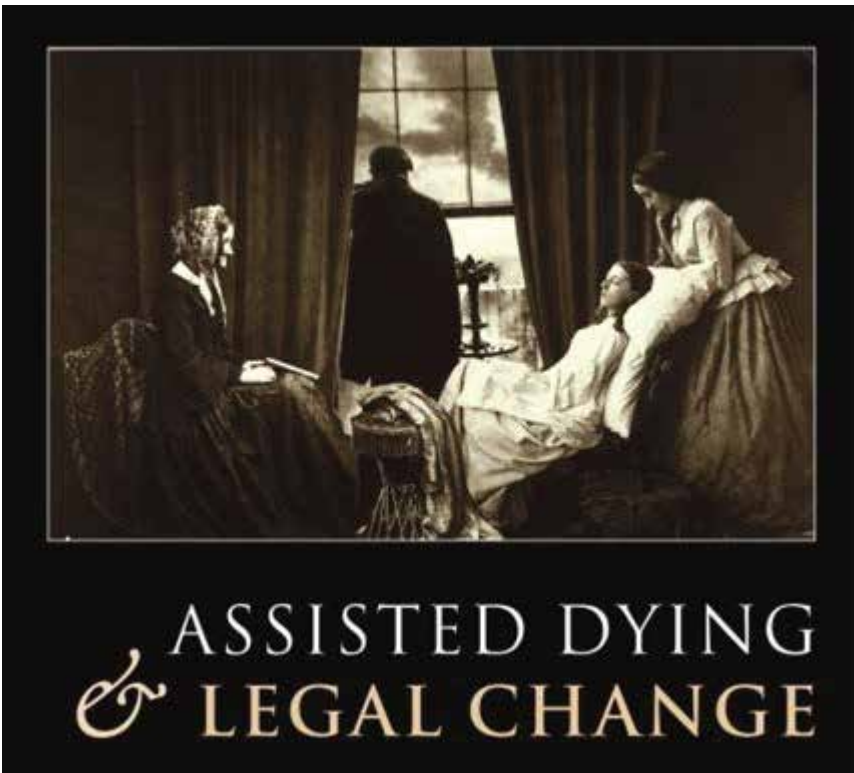
CONCLUSION:

India's strategic partnership with Kazakhstan in the rare earth sector presents a crucial opportunity to enhance its energy security, reduce dependence on China, and support the global transition to clean energy. By fostering collaboration in areas such as technology transfer, joint ventures, and regional market development, both countries can benefit from this strategic partnership and contribute to a more balanced and sustainable global rare earth supply chain.

SHOULD ASSISTED DYING BE LEGALISED?

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The recent vote in the U.K. House of Commons to legalize assisted dying for terminally ill patients has sparked debate, with opponents raising concerns about potential coercion and the impact on vulnerable individuals. ¹ This development contrasts with India's current legal framework, which permits passive euthanasia while the debate on assisted dying remains ongoing.



THE GIST

- The U.K. House of Commons recently voted to legalise assisted dying, marking a significant shift. Supporters view it as compassionate, while opponents worry about vulnerable patients feeling pressured to end their lives.
- Current law criminalises assisting suicide, but the proposed Bill allows terminally ill patients with less than six months to live to choose assisted death, with strict safeguards involving doctors and a High Court judge.
- India has legalised passive euthanasia (withdrawing life support for terminally ill patients) through the Supreme Court's ruling.

Key Points:

- **U.K. Assisted Dying Bill:**
 - The U.K. House of Commons recently voted to legalize assisted dying for terminally ill patients with less than six months to live.
 - Supporters argue it's a compassionate option for those suffering, while opponents fear it could pressure vulnerable individuals.

- Strict safeguards, including approval from doctors and a judge, are proposed.
- **Current U.K. Law:**
 - Assisting suicide is currently a criminal offense in the U.K.
 - The courts have generally left the decision on legalizing assisted dying to Parliament.
- **India's Position:**
 - India has legalized passive euthanasia (withdrawing life support) through the Supreme Court.
 - The Supreme Court has affirmed the "right to die with dignity" as part of the right to life.
 - Recent guidelines have simplified the process for withdrawing life support.

CONCLUSION:

The U.K.'s move towards legalizing assisted dying marks a significant shift in end-of-life care. While India has legalized passive euthanasia, the debate around assisted dying remains complex and contentious. Both countries grapple with balancing individual autonomy, medical ethics, and the potential for abuse.

WHY IS STRENGTHENING FISHERIES EXTENSION SERVICES CRUCIAL?

ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: Strengthening fisheries extension services is crucial in India to enhance fish production, improve fisher livelihoods, and ensure the sustainable growth of the aquaculture sector.



THE GIST

- Strengthening fisheries extension services is essential for supporting fishers and promoting sustainable practices, with initiatives like Matsya Seva Kendras and Sagar Mitras playing key roles.
- Matsya Seva Kendras and Sagar Mitras help fishers by providing critical support, training, and information to improve productivity and sustainability.

Key Points:

- Importance of Extension Services:
 - Strengthening fisheries extension services is crucial for improving fish production and livelihoods of fishers in India.
- These services provide vital support, training, and information on various aspects of fish farming.
- Role of Matsya Seva Kendras:
 - These centers act as one-stop shops for fishers, offering a range of services like disease diagnosis, training, and access to technology.
 - They promote sustainable practices and encourage collaboration among stakeholders.
- Sagar Mitras' Contribution:
 - Sagar Mitras act as intermediaries between the government and sea-borne fishers.
 - They provide critical information on market trends, weather forecasts, and best practices.
- Improving Extension Services:
 - Integrating existing extension networks (Krishi Vigyan Kendras) with Matsya Seva Kendras is essential.
 - Leveraging digital platforms like AquaBazaar can enhance outreach and knowledge dissemination.

CONCLUSION:

Effective fisheries extension services are vital for the sustainable growth of the Indian aquaculture sector. By strengthening existing initiatives, integrating resources, and utilizing digital technologies, India can empower fishers, improve productivity, and ensure the long-term sustainability of its fisheries resources.

LEAVE BANKING TO RBI, AVERS SC

ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court of India has recently emphasized the importance of maintaining the RBI's authority in regulating the banking sector, ruling that courts should not interfere in matters of interest rate determination, a function that solely belongs to the central bank.

This ruling highlights the need for a clear separation of powers between the judiciary and regulatory bodies in India, ensuring that each institution operates within its designated sphere of influence for the effective functioning of the financial system.

Key Points:

- Court Ruling: The Supreme Court has emphasized that the judiciary should not interfere in matters of banking regulation, leaving such decisions to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- RBI's Authority: The court recognized the RBI's authority to set regulations and issue directives for the banking sector in the public interest.
- Challenge to Interest Rates: The case stemmed from a challenge to credit card interest rates by banks against a

consumer commission ruling that capped interest at 30%.

- Court's Jurisdiction: The court ruled that its role is to examine if the RBI has abused its authority, not to set its own regulations for the banking sector.
- Violation of Banking Act: The court found that the Consumer Commission's decision to cap interest rates violated the Banking Regulation Act, which prohibits court interference in interest rate decisions.

CONCLUSION:

The Supreme Court's ruling reaffirms the importance of maintaining a clear separation of powers between the judiciary and the regulatory bodies, such as the RBI. This decision underscores the need to respect the expertise and authority of specialized institutions in their respective domains. By upholding the RBI's authority in matters of banking regulation, the court aims to ensure a stable and efficient banking system in India.

MOSCOW'S SECURITY SHOULD BE GUARANTEED

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: Russia has reiterated its stance on the Ukraine conflict, emphasizing the need for a legally binding peace agreement that guarantees its security and rules out Ukrainian NATO membership. While open to potential peace talks, Russia has rejected the idea of a simple ceasefire, citing the risk of Western rearmament of Ukraine. Notably, Russia has expressed openness to a Slovakian proposal to host peace talks



Key Points:

- **Russia's Stance:**
 - Russia seeks a legally binding peace agreement with Ukraine, not a temporary ceasefire.
 - This agreement must guarantee Russia's security and prevent Ukraine from joining NATO.
 - Russia suspects a ceasefire would be used by the West to rearm Ukraine.
- **Openness to Compromise:**
 - President Putin has indicated a willingness to compromise in potential talks with Ukraine.
 - He has stated that there are no preconditions for starting negotiations.
- **Slovakian Peace Talks Offer:**
 - Russia is open to a Slovakian proposal to host peace talks between Russia and Ukraine.
 - This is despite ongoing criticism from Ukraine regarding Slovakia's stance on the conflict.

CONCLUSION:

Russia continues to pursue its objectives in Ukraine, seeking a durable peace agreement that prioritizes its security interests. While open to potential negotiations, Russia remains firm in its demands and views a simple ceasefire as inadequate.

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