



## PUNJAB BANDH A SUCCESS, SAY PROTESTING FARMERS

### POLITY & GOVERNANCE

**CONTEXT:** Punjab witnessed a successful bandh on Monday, called by protesting farmers demanding the implementation of the M.S. Swaminathan formula for MSP, farm loan waivers, and withdrawal of cases against farmers.



Punjab witnessed a successful bandh on Monday, called by protesting farmers. The bandh was in solidarity with Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is on a fast-unto-death demanding the implementation of the M.S. Swaminathan formula for a legalised MSP, farm loan waivers, and withdrawal of cases against farmers.

The bandh saw widespread public support, with various sectors participating. Public transport workers even joined the protest, defying police orders. Farmers' organizations from both the Samyukt Kisan Morcha and Samyuk Kisan Morcha (non-political) united in their support for the bandh.

The success of the bandh underscores the farmers' demands. They are urging the Centre to address their concerns and implement the promised solutions. The Punjab government has also recently

proposed a State Agricultural Costs and Prices Commission to determine remunerative prices for farmers, further emphasizing the need for a legal guarantee of MSP procurement.

The Supreme Court is set to hear the matter again on Tuesday, with inputs from an expert committee, as the farmers' struggle continues.

**CONCLUSION:** "The successful bandh in Punjab demonstrates the farmers' unwavering resolve and the growing public support for their demands. The pressure is now on the Centre to engage in meaningful dialogue and address the farmers' critical concerns.

## ISRO'S DOCKING MISSION ON; SPACECRAFT REACH RIGHT ORBIT

### SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**CONTEXT:** ISRO successfully launched its Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) mission, a crucial step towards advanced space exploration capabilities, including lunar missions and a future Indian space station.



### NEWS in Brief:

ISRO successfully launched the SpaDeX mission, placing two small satellites into the intended orbit. The mission aims to demonstrate crucial technologies like rendezvous, docking, and undocking, currently mastered by only a few nations. These technologies are essential for future ambitious space missions, such as sending an Indian astronaut to the moon and building a space station. The two satellites will gradually increase their separation distance before commencing the docking process, expected to occur around January 7th.

**Conclusion:**

The successful launch of SpaDeX marks a significant milestone for ISRO, showcasing India's growing expertise in advanced space technologies and paving the way for future ambitious space exploration endeavors.

# JIMMY CARTER, FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT AND GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN, DIES AT 100

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**CONTEXT:** Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States and a globally respected humanitarian, passed away at the age of 100, leaving behind a legacy marked by his dedication to peace, democracy, and human rights, as well as his deep personal and political ties with nations like India.



### *Jimmy Carter: A Legacy of Leadership, Humanitarianism, and Global Diplomacy*

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, renowned for his post-presidency humanitarian work, passed away at 100. A figure of humility and principle, Carter navigated significant global and domestic challenges, including nuclear diplomacy with India during his historic 1978 visit. His efforts to strengthen U.S.-India relations were marked by personal connections and critical negotiations, particularly on nuclear issues. Despite disagreements, Carter's outreach fostered goodwill and mutual cooperation, underscoring his dedication to diplomacy and global harmony.

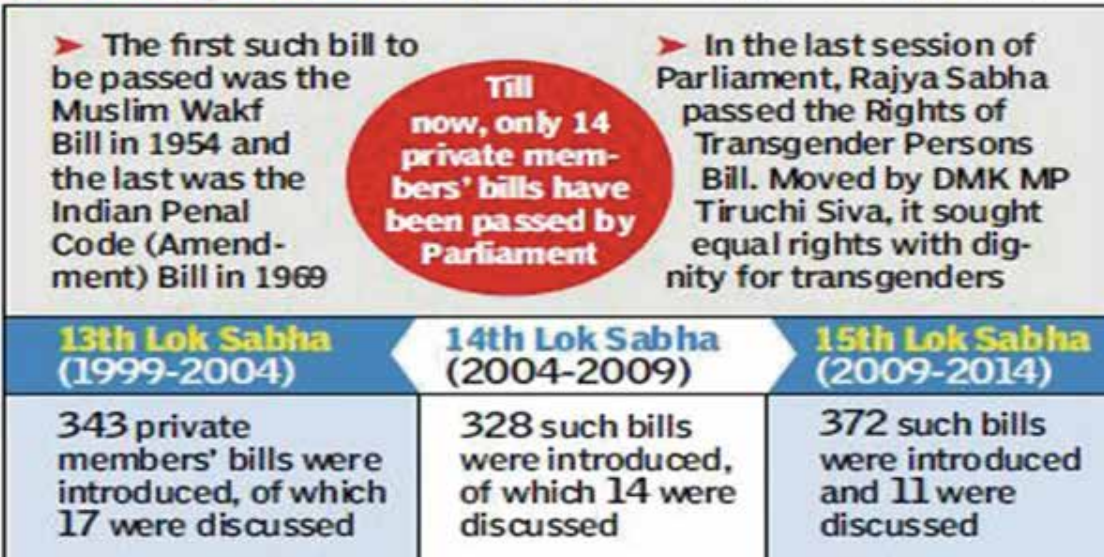
**CONCLUSION:** Jimmy Carter's enduring legacy, characterized by his pursuit of peace, commitment to democracy, and deep personal bonds with global communities, will inspire generations to come.

# PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS GET SHORT SHRIFT IN BOTH LS AND RS

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

**CONTEXT:** Private Members' Bills, which allow MPs to introduce legislation independently, are significantly underutilized in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, reflecting a decline in their importance within the Indian parliamentary system.

### PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL



### Private Members' Bills Languish Amidst Parliamentary Neglect

The alarming decline of Private Members' Bills in the Indian Parliament. An analysis reveals that both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha dedicate minuscule amounts of time to these bills, which allows MPs to introduce legislation independently. This neglect undermines an important avenue for individual expression and political discourse.

**Conclusion:**

The limited time allotted to Private Members' Bills, coupled with a general lack of seriousness, has effectively marginalized this crucial

parliamentary tool. Urgent measures, such as scheduling dedicated time slots mid-week and fostering greater engagement among MPs, are necessary to revive the significance of Private Members' Bills in the Indian Parliament.



# DEMOGRAPHIC DATA TO CHECK INFLUX FROM MYANMAR: HOME MINISTRY

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Home Ministry's year-end review, focuses on key security challenges and achievements in 2024. It highlights concerns regarding border security along the Myanmar border, particularly the need for better demographic data to prevent infiltration. The review also emphasizes the government's efforts to combat left-wing extremism and the drug menace, showcasing successful operations and outlining future strategies.

### "Home Ministry Focuses on Border Security, LWE, and Drug Menace in 2024 Review"

The Home Ministry released its year-end review for 2024, highlighting key security challenges and successes. The review emphasized the need for enhanced border security along the Myanmar border, including better demographic data and stricter border controls. The government also reiterated its commitment to combating left-wing extremism, reporting significant successes in neutralizing Naxalites. Furthermore, the Ministry highlighted its efforts to combat the drug menace, including successful operations by the NCB and other agencies. The review concluded with a focus on a "whole-of-government" approach to address these critical security challenges.

### CONCLUSION:

The Home Ministry's year-end review underscores the government's ongoing efforts to maintain national security and address critical challenges such as border security, left-wing extremism, and drug trafficking. While significant progress has been made, the review emphasizes the need for continued vigilance and a multi-pronged approach to effectively address these complex issues.

# UNCONVENTIONAL METHODS LIKE AI-BASED WARFARE A BIG CHALLENGE, SAYS RAJNATH

## DEFENCE & SECURITY

**CONTEXT:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh emphasized the growing challenges posed by unconventional warfare methods, such as AI-based and cyber warfare, while highlighting India's strides in defence exports and the importance of advanced military training

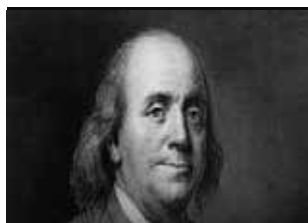


### Rajnath Singh Highlights AI-Based Warfare Challenges and India's Defence Ambitions

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh underscored the threats posed by unconventional warfare, including AI-based, cyber, and space warfare, during an address at the Army War College in Mhow. He lauded military training centres for adapting to evolving technologies and urged integration in specialized training. Highlighting India's defence progress, he noted record exports of ₹21,000 crore, aiming for ₹50,000 crore by 2029, driven by 'made-in-India' equipment. Singh also stressed the role of defence attaches in safeguarding national interests globally and reaffirmed the government's commitment to making India a global

military and economic power.

**CONCLUSION:** By addressing emerging challenges and setting ambitious goals, Rajnath Singh reaffirmed India's commitment to bolstering its defence capabilities, fostering innovation, and preparing its military for future complexities.



*"If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it."*

*—Benjamin Franklin*

# AS WAR CONTINUES, INDIAN WORKERS REPLACE PALESTINIANS IN ISRAEL'S BUILDING SECTOR

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**CONTEXT:** Following the October 2023 Hamas attack and the subsequent war in Gaza, Israel has increasingly relied on Indian workers to fill labour shortages in the construction sector, particularly as Palestinian workers have been restricted from entering the country.



### Indian Workers Fill the Void Left by Palestinians in Israel's Construction Sector

Indian workers are increasingly filling the void left by Palestinian construction workers in Israel following the October 2023 Hamas attack. The war has severely restricted the entry of Palestinian workers into Israel, forcing the country to seek alternative labour sources. Despite the ongoing security concerns, including air raid sirens, Indian workers are drawn by the opportunity to earn significantly higher wages in Israel compared to their home country. Recruitment agencies are actively facilitating this influx of Indian workers into the Israeli construction sector.

### Conclusion:

The influx of Indian workers into Israel's construction sector highlights the significant geopolitical and economic shifts resulting from the ongoing conflict. While offering economic opportunities for Indian workers, it also underscores the complex and evolving dynamics of labour migration and the impact of regional conflicts on global labour markets.

# CENTRE INKS CONTRACTS FOR AIP, TORPEDOES FOR SUBMARINES

## DEFENCE & SECURITY

Indian Defence Ministry signing two significant contracts to enhance the capabilities of its Scorpene-class submarines. These contracts involve the integration of an indigenously developed Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) module and an advanced electronic heavyweight torpedo, both crucial for improving the submarines' stealth, endurance, and combat effectiveness.



### India Boosts Scorpene Submarine Capabilities with AIP and Heavyweight Torpedo Integration

The Indian Defence Ministry has signed two crucial contracts to enhance the capabilities of its Scorpene-class submarines. The first contract, worth ₹1,990 crore, is with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited for the construction and integration of an indigenously developed Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) module. AIP technology will significantly increase the submarines' underwater endurance, allowing them to remain submerged for extended periods without surfacing. The second contract, worth ₹877 crore, is with Naval Group, France, for the integration of an advanced electronic

heavyweight torpedo developed by the DRDO. This torpedo will significantly enhance the submarines' anti-ship warfare capabilities. These upgrades are crucial for enhancing the combat effectiveness and operational readiness of the Indian



Navy's submarine fleet.

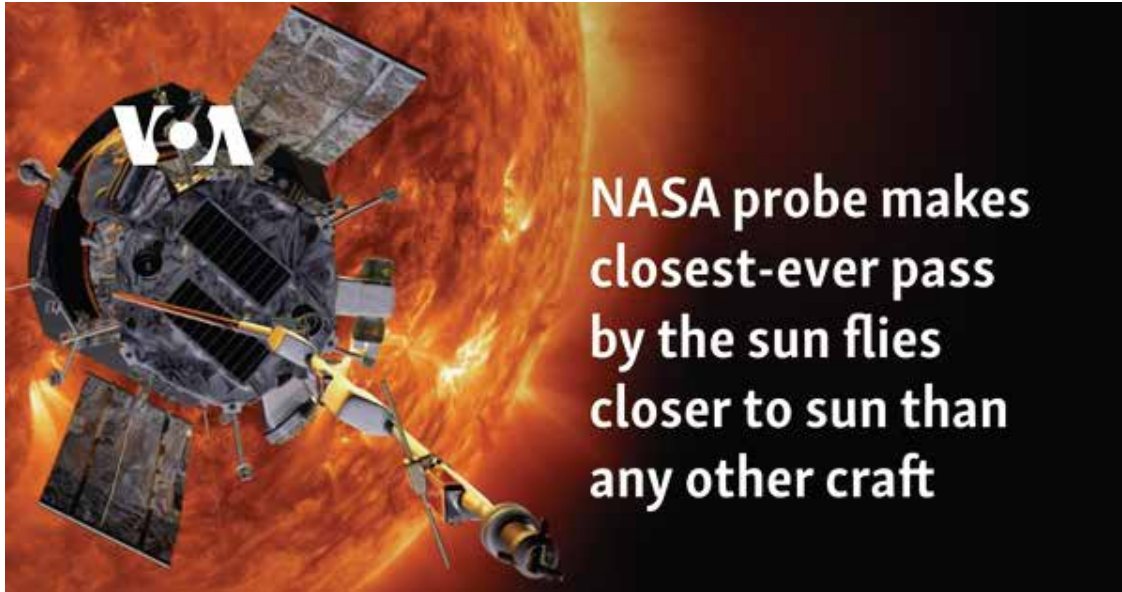
### CONCLUSION:

The signing of these contracts marks a significant step towards enhancing the combat capabilities of India's Scorpene-class submarines. The integration of AIP and advanced torpedoes will provide the Indian Navy with a significant edge in underwater warfare, bolstering its maritime power and contributing to national security. These developments also highlight India's growing indigenous capabilities in submarine technology and its commitment to modernizing its defence forces.

## NASA PROBE FLIES CLOSER TO THE SUN THAN ANY SPACECRAFT

### SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**CONTEXT:** NASA's Parker Solar Probe has made history by achieving the closest-ever flyby of the Sun, venturing deeper into the star's atmosphere than any spacecraft before. This daring mission aims to unravel fundamental mysteries about the Sun, such as the origin of solar wind and the mechanisms behind coronal mass ejections, which can significantly impact life on Earth.



### Parker Solar Probe Breaks Record with Closest-Ever Flyby of the Sun

NASA's Parker Solar Probe has successfully completed a historic flyby of the Sun, reaching a closer distance than any spacecraft in history. This remarkable achievement marks a significant milestone in our understanding of the Sun's behavior and its impact on Earth. The probe, equipped with a sophisticated heat shield, collected valuable data during its close encounter, despite facing extreme temperatures and speeds. This data will be crucial for scientists to investigate fundamental solar phenomena, including the origin of solar wind, the heating of the solar corona, and the formation of coronal mass ejections.

phenomena, including the origin of solar wind, the heating of the solar corona, and the formation of coronal mass ejections.

### CONCLUSION:

The Parker Solar Probe's successful flyby represents a groundbreaking achievement in solar science. By venturing deeper into the Sun's atmosphere than ever before, the mission is paving the way for a deeper understanding of our star and its profound influence on Earth. The data collected during this and future close encounters will be invaluable for improving space weather forecasting and mitigating the potential impacts of solar events on our planet.

## CURRENCY CONCERNS

### ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

**CONTEXT:** The Indian rupee has recently experienced significant depreciation, hitting a record low against the US dollar. This decline is attributed to a confluence of factors, including:



### Key Points

- **Foreign Portfolio Investment Outflows:** Investors are shifting funds from Indian securities markets to other emerging markets, particularly China, due to factors like overvalued stocks, weak corporate performance, and China's economic stimulus.
- **Global Economic Uncertainty:** The potential impact of trade protectionism from the US, concerns over the H-1B visa regime, and uncertainty surrounding US

monetary policy are adding to the rupee's volatility.

- **Rising Trade Deficit:** India's widening trade deficit, driven by a surge in import bills, is significantly impacting the current account balance.
- **Limited Monetary Policy Space:** The RBI's ability to intervene in the foreign exchange market is constrained, limiting its ability to fully stabilize the rupee.

#### CONCLUSION:

The recent depreciation of the rupee poses a significant challenge to the Indian economy, impacting foreign investment flows and potentially fueling inflation. While some benefits may accrue to exporters, the overall impact on India's economic stability and resilience is likely to be negative. Policymakers need to carefully monitor these developments and adopt appropriate measures to mitigate the risks associated with rupee volatility.

## UPI DUOPOLY'S RISE AND MARKET VULNERABILITIES

### ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

**CONTEXT:** The rise of UPI in India has been remarkable, but the dominance of two foreign-owned companies, PhonePe and Google Pay, poses significant risks. This duopoly threatens competition, increases systemic vulnerability, and raises data security concerns. Despite regulatory attempts to address this through market share caps, delays and potential changes in these regulations are hindering efforts to create a more level playing field for Indian players in the UPI ecosystem.

#### The UPI Duopoly: A Threat to Innovation and Competition

the rise of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in India and highlights the growing dominance of two foreign-owned companies, PhonePe and Google Pay. This duopoly creates significant risks, including increased systemic vulnerability, stifled competition, and potential data security concerns. The article criticizes the government's slow response to address these issues, particularly the delays in implementing and enforcing market share caps for TPAPs. It emphasizes the need for a level playing field to encourage innovation and foster the growth of Indian players in the UPI ecosystem.

#### CONCLUSION:

While UPI has revolutionized digital payments in India, the current market dynamics, dominated by a foreign-owned duopoly, pose significant risks. The government must urgently address these concerns by effectively implementing and enforcing market share caps for TPAPs. This, coupled with creating a supportive environment for Indian players, is crucial to ensure the long-term sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation of the UPI ecosystem.

## ON INDIA'S OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS THE ROHINGYA

### POLITY & GOVERNANCE

**CONTEXT:** This article examines the plight of Rohingya refugees in India, focusing on the government's treatment of this stateless population and its compliance with international human rights law.



#### India's Obligations Towards the Rohingya: A Balancing Act Between Security and Humanitarian Concerns

##### Key Findings:

- **Human Rights Violations:** A recent report by The Azadi Project and Refugees International has accused India of "gross violations of constitutional and human rights" against Rohingya refugees, citing instances of prolonged detention and inadequate living conditions.
- **Limited Protection for Rohingya:** India, not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, maintains it has no legal obligation to provide asylum or adhere to the principle of non-refoulement (prohibition of returning individuals to face persecution).
- **Detention and Restrictions:** Rohingya refugees in India face arbitrary detention, often under the Foreigners Act, 1946, and the Passport Act, 1967. They are denied the right to reside or settle in India, as clarified by the Supreme Court.
- **Limited Access to Legal Aid:** Civil society organizations working with Rohingya refugees face significant challenges due to funding restrictions under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, hindering legal representation and support.

for detained individuals.

- **Disparate Treatment:** India's refugee policies exhibit inconsistency, with some groups like Tibetans and Sri Lankans receiving more favorable treatment than the Rohingya. The Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, further excludes Rohingya Muslims from its purview.

#### International Law and India's Obligations:

- **1951 Refugee Convention:** This key international instrument enshrines the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the return of individuals to situations where they may face persecution. While India is not a signatory, this principle is considered customary international law, binding on all states.
- **India's International Commitments:** India is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which implicitly prohibits refoulement. It has also signed the Convention Against Torture, further emphasizing its commitment to non-refoulement.
- **Domestic Legal Interpretations:** Indian courts have recognized the importance of international law and the principle of non-refoulement in certain cases, even in the absence of a domestic refugee law.

#### Challenges and Concerns:

- **Lack of a Comprehensive Refugee Policy:** India lacks a clear and consistent policy framework for dealing with refugees, leading to arbitrary treatment and inconsistent application of laws.
- **Impact of the Citizenship Amendment Act:** The exclusion of Rohingya Muslims from the Citizenship Amendment Act further marginalizes this already vulnerable population.
- **Dehumanizing Conditions:** Detention centers for Rohingya refugees often lack adequate facilities and basic amenities, raising concerns about human rights violations.

#### In Conclusion:

The treatment of Rohingya refugees in India raises serious concerns about the country's adherence to international human rights obligations and its approach to refugee protection. While national security considerations are important, India needs to develop a more humane and consistent refugee policy that upholds the principles of non-refoulement and ensures the protection and dignity of all refugees within its borders.

## THREE FOREIGN POLICY CHOICES THAT SHAPED CARTER PRESIDENCY

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



#### Main Points:

##### 1. China Normalization:

- Carter completed the diplomatic normalization process with China, building on Nixon's breakthrough.
- His administration cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan, established full relations with Beijing, and reduced U.S. military presence in the Taiwan Strait while maintaining defense and commercial ties with Taiwan.

##### 2. Afghanistan Policy:

- Carter initiated U.S. support for the Afghan Mujahideen to counter the Soviet-backed communist government in Kabul after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

- This policy, facilitated by Zbigniew Brzezinski, involved funding and training Afghan warlords with assistance from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.
- While the policy led to the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, it contributed to long-term instability, including the rise of the Taliban.

##### 3. Camp David Accords:

- Carter brokered the 1978 peace agreement between Egypt and Israel.
- Egypt regained Sinai, recognized Israel, and Israel agreed to Palestinian self-rule in occupied territories.
- The accords laid the groundwork for future peace efforts, including the Oslo Accords and the two-state solution framework.



# LONG-RULING BA'ATH PARTY COLLAPSING IN SYRIA FOLLOWING THE OUSTER OF ASSAD

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**CONTEXT:** Following the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria, the ruling Ba'ath Party, which had held power for over six decades, is facing calls for dissolution, raising concerns about potential reprisals against former members and the possibility of sectarian divisions similar to those experienced in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein



### Key Points:

- **Ba'ath Party's Fall:** The fall of the Assad regime in Syria has led to calls for the dissolution of the Ba'ath Party, which ruled the country for over six decades.
- **Party's Legacy:** The Ba'ath Party, associated with the Assad family, is widely criticized for its authoritarian rule, corruption, and damage to Syria's relations with other Arab nations.
- **Fears of Reprisals:** Many former party members fear potential reprisals, reminiscent of the de-Ba'athification process in Iraq, which led to sectarian divisions and fueled the rise of extremist groups.
- **Concerns about Sectarianism:** The potential for a purge of former Ba'ath Party members, particularly

those belonging to the Alawite minority, raises concerns about a resurgence of sectarian tensions.

- **Shifting Power Dynamics:** The fall of the Ba'ath Party marks a significant shift in Syrian politics, with the potential for the emergence of new political forces and the possibility of a more democratic future.

### Conclusion:

The collapse of the Ba'ath Party in Syria signifies a pivotal moment in the country's history. While its demise is welcomed by many, concerns remain about the potential for instability and sectarian violence in the aftermath. The successful transition to a more democratic and inclusive political system will require careful consideration of power-sharing arrangements, reconciliation efforts, and measures to prevent the resurgence of authoritarianism

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