

EDITORIALS HIGHLIGHTS

14-08-2026

1. MERCHANDISE EXPORTS SURGE BY 20% AS INDIA DIVERSIFIES TRADE

(THE HINDU PAGE NO 1)

1. GS III (Economy)
2. Topics: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development.
3. Concepts: Trade diversification, merchandise vs. services exports, trade deficit, West Asia shipping routes.

Merchandise exports surge by 20% as India diversifies trade

India's exports to West Asia recovered in July after re-routing shipping lines, says official; exports to several countries including China, Kenya doing well, he adds; trade deficit, however, widens as service exports grow slower than imports

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Despite the ongoing turmoil in West Asia, India's merchandise exports saw a growth of nearly 20% in July this year, faster than that of imports, official data released on Thursday show.

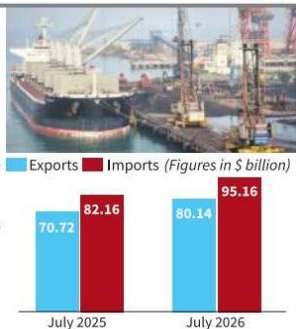
Notably, exports to West Asia itself have recovered, with July's exports to the region nearly 9% higher than the same period last year.

According to Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal, this has been achieved by routing India's trade through different ports and shipping lines.

India's merchandise exports stood at \$44.2 billion in July, up 19.6% over its level in the same period last year. According to Mr.

Soaring trade

India's total exports for July 2026 grew 13.31% from July 2025, while imports grew by 15.83% in the same period. The chart shows India's total exports and imports in July 2026 compared to the year-ago period



Agrawal, this was achieved through continued diversification of export destinations. Merchandise imports, meanwhile, grew a relatively slower 17.5% in July to \$76.2 billion.

"If you look at destination countries, we are now doing well in countries

where we typically did not earlier, such as China, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Austria, Malaysia, and several other countries," Mr. Agrawal said at a press conference. "Even in Africa, in Kenya and the South African Customs Union region,

there has been an increase in exports in the first four months of this financial year," the Commerce Secretary noted. "Tanzania has also been a very strong silver lining where 130% growth in exports has been seen."

India's exports to China grew 65% to \$2.2 billion in July, albeit on a low base. Over the course of April-July this year, exports to China grew 36%.

However, India's trade deficit still widened to \$15 billion in July from \$11.4 billion in the corresponding period last year as services imports grew faster than services exports. The data show that services exports grew 6.4% in July to \$35.9 billion while imports grew 9.5% to \$18.9 billion.

The growth in services exports is in keeping with

the subdued export order growth sentiments expressed by service exporters surveyed in the HSBC India Services PMI report for the month.

The ongoing war in West Asia hit India's exports to the region in March and April, with exports contracting nearly 57% in March and 27% in April.

Since then, however, exports to the region have recovered, and stood at \$5.7 billion in July 2026, up 8.8% over July last year.

"Some of the ports in Oman that are outside the Strait of Hormuz have been doing well and more cargo has been flowing through them. Even two ports in the UAE – Fujairah and Khor Fakkan – are seeing more traffic," Mr. Agrawal explained.

2. WHY VITAL CHEMOTHERAPY DRUGS ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY IN INDIA (THE HINDU PAGE NO 7)

1. GS II (Health/Governance) & GS III (Economy)
2. Topics: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health; Indian Economy.
3. Concepts: National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), price caps, supply chain disruptions, drug security, essential medicines.

Why vital chemotherapy drugs are in short supply in India

Prices for platinum — core raw material used in cisplatin and carboplatin — have more than doubled, making old price-controlled manufacturing rates financially unviable; additionally, shipping constraints through West Asia have restricted raw material imports from global suppliers; despite a govt. move to raise price caps, the shortage persists

THE HINDU BUREAU

India is facing a critical nationwide shortage of two key chemotherapy drugs — cisplatin and carboplatin — driven by soaring global platinum raw material costs, West Asia shipping route disruptions, and domestic price caps. While government hospitals in several States have managed to stabilise supplies, private hospitals in many parts are still facing a crunch. For patients, this has meant interruptions or delays in life-saving treatment. In response, the government last month raised temporarily ceiling rates for the two drugs by 50%, to help restart halted domestic manufacturing lines.

Cisplatin is a chemotherapeutic agent used in the treatment of solid tumours as well as certain blood cancers. Carboplatin is a second generation platinum compound that is also used to treat solid tumours. Both are among the most widely used chemotherapy drugs in India and are indispensable in the treatment of several cancers, including ovarian, head and neck, lung, gall bladder, urinary bladder, breast and testicular cancers.

Prices for platinum — the core raw material used in cisplatin and carboplatin — more than doubled, making old price-controlled manufacturing rates financially unviable for companies. Additionally, geopolitical conflicts and shipping constraints through West Asia have restricted raw material imports from primary global suppliers. This resulted in several generic makers temporarily slowing or stopping production of these drugs, says Sayoni Bhattacharya, consultant, medical oncology at HCG Cancer Centre, Kolkata.

Impact on hospitals, patients
At the Cancer Institute (WIA), Adyar, in Chennai, Kalpana Balakrishnan, chief executive officer and medical director, said that the shortage has been ongoing for nearly seven months due to the war and has had significant impacts. “The cheapest drug, cisplatin, a first-generation platinum drug, is not available. Carboplatin and oxaliplatin, which are second and third generation platinum drugs, are considerably more expensive.”

Sujith Kumar Mulla, senior consultant — medical oncology, Apollo Proton Cancer Centre, Chennai said that the hospital has not received cisplatin and carboplatin from its regular companies for a long time now and was depending on companies which are Indian generic companies. He added that they have managed up until now with available stocks. Significant efforts have been made to inform the necessary authorities through medical oncology forums, he added.

In Karnataka, some hospitals reported that they have stocks sufficient for only six to eight weeks. Amit Rautan, head of medical oncology, immunotherapy and precision medicine at Manipal Hospital, Old Airport Road, Bengaluru, said

Cisplatin and carboplatin are also critical in treating childhood cancers such as neuroblastoma, hepatoblastoma, germ cell tumours and retinoblastoma, and that their therapeutic role cannot be easily replaced by alternative medicines.

Vijay Kumar Srinivasulu, senior consultant in medical oncology at Sakra World Hospital, Bengaluru, said platinum-based chemotherapy continues to be the backbone of treatment for several solid tumours despite advances in targeted therapies and immunotherapy. Treatment delays or substitution with less effective regimens could compromise outcomes, particularly in curative-intent cancers. This is especially significant in concurrent chemoradiation for cervical and head and neck cancers, where weekly cisplatin plays a vital role in enhancing the effectiveness of radiation therapy, he noted.

For patients, this has meant delays and interruptions in treatment, additional stress, as well as increased costs.

The immediate fallout, said, Sandeep Nayak, chairman of oncology, MACS-Renova Oncology Institute, KIMS Hospital, Bengaluru lands directly on cancer patients; while alternative treatment regimens exist, they are generally less effective, non-standard, and can carry higher costs or different toxicity profiles. Bhawna Sirohi, medical oncologist and medical director of Vedanta Medical Research Foundation, Rapar, Chhattisgarh, said for patients this

may mean a compromise on curative cancer treatment.

The government sector seems to be doing better in several States.

At the Regional Cancer Centre, Kerala in Thiruvananthapuram, treatment was not disrupted as the hospital had adequate stock of platinum-based drugs to tide over a few months, said director, R. Raghunath. “Now that the government has revised the prices, our purchase process is going forward and I am told that we will get new stock soon,” Dr. Raghunath said.

The Karnataka government-run Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology in Bengaluru has said it currently has adequate stocks and multiple procurement channels to ensure continuity of care. “We have annual tenders in place and procure medicines through the Central Medical Store as well as the Kidwai Cancer Drug Foundation (KDCDF). We also have multiple vendors, and non-governmental organisations support us by supplying these drugs,” said KMO director (in charge), R. Krishnappa.

At the Delhi State Cancer Institute, both cisplatin and carboplatin injections are currently available, said Pragna Shukla, head of clinical oncology.

Sources in the T.N. government said that cisplatin was in the essential drugs list of the Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation and hence, its supply was ensured. However, carboplatin, a speciality drug, was unavailable for bulk purchases but hospitals were managing through local purchases.

In Telangana, however, the Mehdi Nawaz Jung Institute of Oncology and Regional Cancer Centre in Hyderabad, the State’s largest and only government tertiary cancer care hospital, has been grappling with a shortage of both cisplatin and carboplatin for the past two months, with supplies falling well short of its monthly requirement. Sadasubudhu Gundeti, Director of MNJ Institute of Oncology, said the institute requires thousands of vials of the two chemotherapy drugs every month but is currently able to procure only a few hundred vials.

On June 12, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) invoked special clauses to raise the price cap of cisplatin from ₹726 to ₹100.89 per mL, and carboplatin from ₹60.49 rupees to ₹90.74 per mL, citing public interest.

Long-term strategies
With more than 1.5 million new cancer cases diagnosed annually in India, Smitha Saldanha, consultant in medical oncology at HCG Cancer Hospital, K.R. Road, Bengaluru, said uninterrupted access to essential oncology medicines must be treated as a national healthcare priority.

While describing the recent revision of ceiling prices as a useful short-term measure, Dr. Srinivasulu said India requires a long-term oncology drug security framework, including strategic reserves of essential cancer medicines, diversified domestic manufacturing, stronger active pharmaceutical ingredient supply chains, centralised procurement and an early-warning system for anticipated shortages, says doctor.

A Union Health Ministry official said the government has taken all steps to ensure that the supply chain stays stable.

(With inputs from Afshan Yasmeen in Bengaluru, Shrabana Chatterjee in Kolkata, Serena Josephine M. in Chennai, C. Maya in Thiruvananthapuram, Bindu Shajan Perappadan in Delhi and Siddharth Kumar Singh in Hyderabad.)
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THE GIST

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3. TRANSPARENCY AS THE FOUNDATION OF TRUST IN MEDICINE

(THE HINDU PAGE NO 8)

1. GS II (Governance/Health) & GS IV (Ethics)
2. Topics: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability; Issues relating to Health.
3. Concepts: Institutional transparency, medical auditing, Open Disclosure, doctor-patient trust, regulatory frameworks like the National Medical Commission (NMC).

Transparency as the foundation of trust in medicine

India marked Doctors' Day on July 1, but the occasion demands that we continue to look beyond well deserved expressions of gratitude and reflect on the structural foundations that sustain public confidence in health care. Trust in medicine is frequently thought of as a sacred, isolated bond between patient and doctor. In reality, that trust is forged much earlier – within the institutions that regulate care, the systems that deliver it, and the transparency that connects them.

The limitations of this system are readily observable. This writer tried the simple exercise of verifying a doctor's credentials on the Tamil Nadu Medical Council (TNMC) website. What should have been a straightforward search turned out to be unexpectedly challenging. The system required specific details, such as the doctor's exact registration number, which are not easily available to the public. Whether something obvious was missed or the website was simply not designed with the public – or even a colleague concerned – in mind, the experience pointed to a larger question: how much does institutional transparency shape public faith in medicine?

How institutions build trust

In many western countries, public trust is maintained through highly accessible regulatory frameworks. For example, the United Kingdom's General Medical Council hosts a publicly searchable register where anyone can quickly verify a doctor's qualifications, registration status, and any history of regulatory restrictions. Similarly, the provincial Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons in Canada require minimal identifying information to view a physician's professional profile. These organisations explicitly signal that professional standards are being ensured through peer review, continuing education, and clear processes for handling complaints. This transparency does more than just share data. It reassures people that medical practice is open to independent scrutiny, creating a safe environment where individual doctor-patient relationships can thrive.

India's clinical landscape is evolving admirably, with a workforce that is known for its excellent clinical acumen despite working under considerable constraints. While the National Medical Commission has taken steps to improve medical education and professional standards in recent years, public facing regulatory transparency remains uneven. State Medical Councils, including the TNMC, hold digital registers, but the ease with which a regular patient can navigate them varies. As India continues its digital transformation, making these regulatory portals genuinely user-friendly is a



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low hanging opportunity to reinforce public trust at its foundation.

Beyond individual blame

Between regulatory bodies and individual consultation rooms lie the systems of care – hospitals, clinics, and their organisational processes. These daily workflows heavily influence patient satisfaction, shaping perceptions of fairness long before a clinical outcome is reached.

System transparency requires clear communication about medical costs, operational processes, and pathways to register a grievance. Crucially, it also means having an internal culture of medical auditing. Rather than placing blame entirely on individuals when things go wrong, modern health-care systems – following World Health Organization guidelines – are moving toward analysing the systemic design flaws that allow mistakes to occur in the first place.

This approach requires a formal culture of "Open Disclosure". In advanced medical jurisdictions, being honest when things go wrong is a professional requirement, not an option. It involves a structured, honest conversation with the patient or their family, acknowledging the incident, explaining how it occurred, and detailing the steps being taken to prevent recurrence.

Formalising open disclosure in India, right from the ground level of clinical care, would be transformative. When hospitals support their doctors to be transparent about clinical uncertainties or complications, they reduce the emotional burden on the practitioner and prevent potential friction with families. A lack of clear information breeds suspicion. When processes are opaque or difficult to navigate, public dissatisfaction builds rapidly – even if the actual clinical care delivered was appropriate. Much of this friction arises not from malice, but from a mismatch between patients' expectations and their actual experience.

India has seen a worrying rise in violence against health-care workers. The Indian Medical Association reports that over 75% of doctors have faced some form of workplace violence. While the root causes are multifactorial, deep-seated systemic mistrust is often the spark that escalates conflict. In these high stress settings, transparency is a protective shield, not an administrative burden. A system that is completely honest about limitations and constraints within clinical care makes it less likely that individual frontline doctors will become the sole targets of a family's anger and resentment.

At the ground level, the doctor-patient relationship remains the ultimate test of the

profession – a space where high stakes decisions are made in moments of profound human vulnerability. Here, transparency transitions from policy into a purely human interaction.

Modern patients increasingly expect clarity regarding who is treating them and why specific clinical decisions are chosen. This means explaining a diagnosis in plain language, detailing the rationale behind investigations, discussing therapeutic alternatives, and being transparent about costs and complications. Providing proactive, periodic updates on a patient's progress – or lack thereof – is often the single most effective way to ease a family's distress.

This shift toward shared decision-making recognises that transparency in treatment is about relationships, not just data. However, if transparency is to be a core part of modern medicine, it must be integrated into medical training. This cannot be taught in a lecture hall alone; it must be actively modelled by senior doctors during everyday clinical practice and teaching. By embedding this culture of communication early, we prepare the next generation of physicians to navigate increasing public expectations.

In my experience, the majority of conflicts in health care do not arise from the medical decisions themselves, but from how those decisions were communicated and understood. When patients feel genuinely heard and informed, the bond is strengthened. When communication is poor, even appropriate care may be perceived as inadequate.

A final reflection

Doctors need safe, respectful, and dignified environments in which to work. Patients require reassurance that the care they receive is both ethical and competent. These are not competing demands; they are mutually reinforcing traits.

Trust in medicine is built collectively by what our institutions make visible, how our clinical care systems function, and how doctors and patients talk to one another. When transparency runs through all three layers, it stops being an abstract ethical principle and becomes part of everyday practice.

Doctors' Day has passed, words of appreciation are important. But the days after also invite a structural look at our systems. At a time when the medical profession is practising under unprecedented strain, enhancing transparency in regulatory frameworks, clinical corridors, and individual consultation rooms is the most meaningful way to protect the integrity of the profession. Trust is not an entitlement to be claimed; it is a professional pact that must be continuously renewed through transparency.

Transparency across regulatory bodies, hospital systems, and clinical care can strengthen public faith and trust

4. EUROPE'S AI RULES MAY BECOME INDIA'S OPPORTUNITY

(THE HINDU PAGE NO 8)

1. GS II (International Relations) & GS III (Science & Tech)
2. Topics: Effect of policies of developed and developing countries; Awareness in the fields of IT, Computers.
3. Concepts: EU AI Act, risk-based AI regulation, tech compliance, conformity assessment, India-EU Free Trade Agreement.

Europe's AI rules may become India's opportunity

The Government of India has recently indicated that it is considering a standalone legislation to govern Artificial Intelligence (AI). However, the pressure on the AI supply chain is already felt due to the European Union (EU)'s AI Act which was entered into force in August 2024 and became applicable on August 2, 2026. The Act has adopted a risk-based approach to artificial intelligence ("AI") regulation – prohibiting certain AI systems, regulating high-risk ones, and imposing lighter checks for limited-risk use cases.

While most Indian firms are likely aware that the Act applies when their AI systems produce results in Europe, there is a more consequential story that goes beyond a compliance checklist.

A post-approval issue

The Act was drafted with a particular picture in mind, and that picture does not match how India's technology industry actually works. This mismatch, more than the law's long reach, is what Indian companies should be watching. The Act assumes that software, once built and approved, is sold as a finished product. India's technology industry has never worked that way. The devil lies in the legal consequences when an AI is updated post-approval.

Before a 'high-risk' AI system, used for sensitive decisions such as hiring or education, can enter the European market, it must clear a 'conformity assessment' under Article 43: proof that it meets the law's standards on testing, documentation and human oversight. For most such systems the provider assesses itself against the Act's criteria and signs its own declaration; only a narrow set, mainly certain biometric tools, must be checked by an independent body. Either way, once the box is ticked, the system can run undisturbed. However, if the system is "substantially modified", the process must be repeated. A substantial modification is a change



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not contemplated at the time of the original assessment, one that affects its compliance or alters its intended purpose.

In June 2026, the EU gave final approval to a package easing its own timelines, pushing the compliance deadline for these standalone high-risk AI systems to December 2027 and to August 2, 2028 for high-risk AI-embedded in regulated products. It retained a grandfathering clause under which systems already on the market before this date are exempted from the Act's obligations until substantially modified. A foreseen change examined during the original conformity assessment does not trigger a fresh one, while an unanticipated change likely does.

This distinction is not just a technicality. It would likely favour business models built on predictable product road maps. Providers of standardised AI products can assess planned upgrades during the initial assessment. Businesses that rely on bespoke services, offering competitive adaptability to individual client needs, may find it harder to demonstrate that future changes fall within the scope of the original assessment.

Unplanned improvement and regulation

India's technology industry, from the large IT services firms to the global capability centres in Bengaluru and Hyderabad, runs on exactly this kind of responsive adaptation. The Act also tethers liability to firms that substantially modify someone else's high-risk system. Such firms may be treated as the provider of the modified system, inheriting every one of the original maker's obligations. Thus, for an industry whose very promise is improvement on demand, an unplanned improvement that changes an AI system's intended purpose may trigger a fresh regulatory exercise.

Yet, the Act also presents an opportunity. High-risk compliance is operationalised through

paperwork and proof. Most providers will be permitted to carry out that conformity assessment themselves, but they will do so against harmonised technical standards still being drafted. The underlying work – governance measures, technical documentation, testing regimes – has to be done in volume. The scale of this obligation is likely to generate demand for quality legal and technical professionals, which India can provide. Indian professional services firms have supported clients across data protection, financial regulation and technical assurance. They can provide regulatory capability for the Act too.

Tap the trade agreement

A longer-term vision extends beyond compliance services. The Act creates a pathway for conformity assessment bodies established in third countries to be recognised and perform the functions of notified bodies, where the EU has concluded an appropriate agreement, and those bodies satisfy the requirements. This recognition is a question for treaty negotiation, and India has just signed a treaty capable of carrying it.

The India-EU Free Trade Agreement that was concluded in January includes standing machinery and regulatory cooperation provisions. If India can secure institutional arrangements as part of its partnership with the EU, it could become not just a supplier of AI compliance services but also a participant in the EU's conformity assessment ecosystem. Going ahead, it would provide the legal gateway through which qualified Indian conformity assessment bodies could eventually perform functions recognised under the Act. Europe has written itself a mountain of compliances and India has the capacity to do it. There is a version of this where the rules India fears become the work it sells. Which version arrives is still being decided, and not for much longer.

India could build an industry around the paperwork and proof required under the European Union's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act

5. THE CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITS ON ARREST

(THE HINDU PAGE NO 10)

1. GS II (Polity & Governance)
2. Topics: Indian Constitution—significant provisions; Fundamental Rights.
3. Concepts: Article 21 (Right to Life/Liberty), Article 22 (Protection against arrest/detention), procedural safeguards, preventive detention, Arnesh Kumar guidelines.

The constitutional limits on arrest

The Supreme Court has reinforced safeguards against arbitrary arrest, holding that an arrested person must be informed of the grounds of arrest; constitutional protections under Articles 21, 22, along with judicial guidelines, seek to balance the state's power to arrest with the individual's right to personal liberty and dignity

LETTER & SPIRIT

C.B.P. Srivastava

The constitutionality of arrest in India needs to be examined to reinforce democratic values and ensure that the authority of the state and the liberty of the citizen are properly balanced. Recently, the Supreme Court, in *Vijayan Kumar v. State of Haryana* (2025), held that every arrested person must be properly and meaningfully informed of the grounds for his arrest. Failure to provide information shall amount to a violation of Article 22(1) of the Constitution and Section 50 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Section 47 of the BNSS, 2023).

Sometimes, communication is conducted with the arrested person's relatives, which appears to be a formality. Considering this, the verdict says that communicating the details of the arrest to relatives or providing ambiguous records does not satisfy the constitutional requirements.

Therefore, the arrested person must be directly informed of the grounds of arrest in a manner that enables him to understand them. This would be in line with the Constitutional philosophy of putting a check on any possible arbitrary exercise of power.

Legal safeguards

The court has opined that if the initial arrest was unconstitutional, subsequent remand orders would also be deemed illegal. Moreover, to fulfil the requirements of Article 22(2) and Section 57 of the CrPC (Section 58 of the BNSS, 2023), the arrest memo must contain the time of arrest. These constitutional and legal provisions say that the police must present the arrested person to a local magistrate within 24 hours, excluding the travel time.

The court also condemned degrading



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treatment in custody, affirming the right to dignity under Article 21, and directed the state to amend its procedures to prevent future violations. Thus, this judgment sets a strong precedent for safeguarding personal liberty and procedural fairness in India's criminal justice system.

Arrest is different from detention. While detention is a temporary hold for investigation and the person is not charged with any offence, arrest is a formal police custody with a probable cause of commission of an offence. Article 22 deals with both arrest and detention. In non-cognisable offences such as simple hurt, defamation, etc., a warrant is needed for arrest, whereas in cognisable offences such as murder, rape, etc., arrest is without a warrant.

Court's guidelines on arrest

In *Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar* (2014), the Supreme Court laid down guidelines for arrests to prevent the misuse of criminal laws. The law should not be used as a tool to harass someone. Considering this, it is obvious that allowing criminal

prosecution to continue based on frivolous and false allegations would amount to an abuse of legal process and would also be detrimental to the concept of natural justice, which is perhaps the most significant form of justice enshrined in the Constitution.

In the guidelines, the court said that arrests should be an exception in cases where the punishment is less than seven years. The police must determine whether an arrest is necessary under Section 41 of the CrPC (Section 35 of the BNSS). Thus, routine arrests cannot be made merely because the power to arrest has been given to the police. The necessity must be justified.

It is well known that personal freedom is a major part of the Constitution. Unnecessary arrests hurt a person's reputation and would be detrimental to personal liberty.

Constitutionality of arrest, detention

Article 22 protects against arrest and detention to ensure freedom of person, and hence has a direct link with the concept of personal liberty under Article

21. Article 22 provides important procedural safeguards for a person who is arrested, including the right to be informed and the right to consult and be defended by his lawyer as soon as possible, and finally the right to be presented before the nearest magistrate within 24 hours.

The Article also deals with the concept of preventive detention where these procedural safeguards do not apply. The definition of preventive detention in India is inspired by a British law, Regulation 14-B of the Defence of the Realm Act, 1914, which says that all detentions that are not punitive may be considered preventive. The detention may continue for three months, and if the period expires, an Advisory Board shall permit the extension of the period.

Thus, Article 22 protects a person from being arrested or detained, signifying the protection of his liberty against any arbitrary action by the state. However, the provision of arrest and detention exemplifies the exercise of the state's authority.

Personal liberty in the Constitution is founded in the principle of natural justice, which is enshrined in the entire constitutional scheme. Further, the Golden Triangle of India's Constitution as explained by the Supreme Court in *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India* (1978) suggests that Article 21 is related to Articles 14 and 19. Of the two, Article 14 is an antithesis to arbitrariness and the substantive natural justice emanates from it, whereas Article 19(1) incorporates procedural natural justice. Therefore, any arbitrary exercise of the power of arrest or detention would amount to a violation of the Golden Triangle. This has been the reason why the framers of the Constitution ensured that a delicate balance between authority and liberty is maintained and vibrant democracy in India is sustained.

(C.B.P. Srivastava is president, Centre for Applied Research in Governance, Delhi)

THE GIST

Constitutional and legal safeguards require the police to record the time of arrest and produce the arrested person before a magistrate within 24 hours.

Supreme Court guidelines, including those in *Arnesh Kumar*, stress that arrest should not be routine and must be justified by the necessity of the case.

6. WHY HAS THE U.K. PAUSED THREE CHEVENING FELLOWSHIPS?

(THE HINDU PAGE NO 10)

1. GS II (International Relations)
2. Topics: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.
3. Concepts: Soft diplomacy, international fellowships (CRISP, SAJP), UK foreign policy, academic exchange programs.

Why has the U.K. paused three Chevening fellowships?

What are the three programmes, who do they serve, and what happens next?

Maitri Porecha

The story so far:

The U.K. government has paused short-term fellowships offered for mid-career professionals under the prestigious Chevening programme for one year. The Chevening Research, Science and Innovation Leadership Fellowship (CRISP), the Chevening Cyber Security Fellowship, and the Chevening South Asia Journalism Programme (SAJP) have been paused for the year 2027-28.

Why have the Chevening fellowships been paused?

According to official sources, the fellowships have been paused for varying reasons, including capacity constraints and cost-cutting by the U.K. government.

"We are currently reviewing and strengthening our fellowship portfolio to ensure it continues to deliver the greatest impact and value for participants and partners. As part of this process, some programmes will pause in 2027," a British

High Commission spokesperson confirmed in response to *The Hindu's* queries.

"The SAJP will pause for the 2027 cycle due to capacity constraints at the host university, and is expected to resume in 2028," the sources said.

"We recognise this will be disappointing news for those who were hoping to apply, but we hope to be able to provide an update on future plans for the programmes soon," the sources added.

What is the nature of the fellowships?

The CRISP fellowship is a 12-week programme for scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs hosted by the University of Oxford. The Chevening Cyber Security Fellowship is a 10-week programme delivered at Cranfield University, a part of the U.K.'s Defence Academy. The SAJP is an eight-week programme hosted by the University of Westminster for mid-career journalists.

CRISP focuses on fellows from India and Sri Lanka; the Cyber Security Fellowship is offered to Indians and

citizens of the Western Balkans; the SAJP is a one-of-a-kind programme that brings together journalists from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and the Maldives.

What avenues is Chevening India exploring to restart the fellowships?

The Chevening team is exploring industry sponsorship for CRISP and the Cyber Security Fellowship, and welcomes suggestions and potential partners.

"We expect to provide an update on the Chevening Gurukul Fellowship (September-November 2027) cohort by early November 2026, and are currently exploring sponsorship opportunities for this programme too," sources said.

The Gurukul Fellowship, also hosted at the University of Oxford, is a 12-week programme targeting mid-career Indian professionals across sectors, including government, media, and civil society.

How much has the U.K. government spent on the programmes?

Data tabled in the U.K. Parliament show

that in financial year 2025-26, the U.K.'s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) allocated £59.4 million to Chevening. A break-up of the funding split between fellowships and scholarships is not available in the public domain. *The Hindu's* query to the British High Commission on this went unanswered.

"Through corporate partner income and university partnerships, Chevening receives between £6-7 million annually, funding 22% of scholars," the U.K.'s then Secretary of State for the FCDO stated in a policy paper presented in the U.K. Parliament in 2023.

What is the government's purpose?

The U.K. government launched the Chevening Fellowships in 2004 as an extension of the broader Chevening Scholarships, which were established in 1983. For 2027-28, applications for Chevening Scholarships, which offer a fully funded Master's in the U.K., have opened.

The Chevening programmes function as an instrument of soft diplomacy for the U.K. By selecting high-potential international professionals to study in the U.K. on the FCDO's fully funded programme, the U.K. government aims to cultivate influential global networks that advance British foreign policy interests.

"Many of Chevening's alumni are in positions of influence, and they form a valuable network for furthering His Majesty's Government's objectives," a policy paper on the programme states.

THE GIST

The U.K. has paused three Chevening fellowships — CRISP, Cyber Security Fellowship and SAJP — for 2027-28, citing portfolio review, cost-cutting and capacity constraints.

Chevening is exploring industry sponsorship to sustain some programmes, while the pause comes amid a longer-term decline in the number of scholarships awarded and scrutiny of programme funding.

7. SC HAS NURTURED ENVIRONMENTAL LAW. DO ITS DECISIONS LOOK DISTANT TODAY? (INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE NO 10)

1. GS II (Polity) & GS III (Environment)
2. Topics: Judiciary; Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation.
3. Concepts: Public trust doctrine, polluter pays principle, precautionary principle, sustainable development, judicial inconsistency vs. environmental jurisprudence.

SC has nurtured environmental law. Do its decisions look distant today?

IN THE early years of Indian independence, there was no precise environmental policy. The Constitution of India had a few provisions regarding the environment, though the word "environment" was not expressly mentioned.

In 1976, Parliament drew upon the commitment made by India at the UN Conference on Human Environment held at Stockholm. The views expressed at the Stockholm Conference form the core of the environmental philosophy of India that has found expression in various statutes and policy pronouncements. These provisions were inserted in the Constitution by the Constitution (forty-second amendment) Act, 1976 (the Amendment Act), which included Article 48A and Article 51A (g).

Article 48A is a directive principle of state policy. It advises the state that while framing laws or executing policy decisions, it should endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country. Article 51A is a separate provision under Part IVA providing for fundamental duties of citizens. It says that it shall be the duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment.

The Amendment Act introduced a host of provisions, starting from amendments to the Preamble. Some of its provisions became highly controversial, both substantively and in the political and constitutional context as internal Emergency was then in force. Shanti Bhushan, one of India's most prominent lawyers, became the law minister when a new government came to power in 1977. There was clamour all around that all the amendments should be removed, lock, stock and barrel. It is to his eternal credit that, notwithstanding his sharp political disagreement with the outgoing PM and despite overwhelming public demand, he did not touch many of the provisions.

Though we had the statutory framework before and after the Stockholm Conference, it is the Bhopal gas leak tragedy of 1984 that really galvanised the Supreme Court into action. In *Union Carbide vs Union of India*, the Supreme Court developed the doctrine of absolute liability. This is based on the principle that when an enterprise involves inherently dangerous activity and harm results to anybody because of a mishap attributable to the enterprise or activity, the enterprise would be obligated to repay each one of the injured or affected individuals. The polluter pays principle was introduced by the Rio Summit of 1982 and was applied for the first time in India in the case of *Indian Council for Environmental Action Vs. Union of India*.

In the case of *Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum vs Union of India*, the Supreme Court declared that the precautionary principle includes three major conditions: the state must anticipate, prevent and attack the cause of environmental degradation. It is a preventive principle based on precaution.

In my dissenting judgment in *Confederation of Real Estate Developers of India (CREDAI) vs Vanashakti*, which reviewed the original *Vanashakti* judgment, I have said that the precautionary principle is the cornerstone of environmental jurisprudence. Polluter pays is only a principle of reparation. In other words, if at all there has to be a grading of the environmental principles, precautionary principle has to be placed above the principle of polluter pays.

The principle of sustainable development means that the state must make efforts to maintain a balance between the environment and development. In *Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum*, the Supreme Court held that the precautionary principle and polluter pays principle are essential features



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of sustainable development. Sustainable development has come to be accepted as a part of customary international law.

In the case of *M.C. Mehta vs Kamal Nath*, famously known as the Span Motel case, the Supreme Court developed the concept of the public trust doctrine. While Span Motel had to bear the cost of compensation and had to face penalties under the polluter pays principle, it was the Himachal Pradesh government which was pulled up for breaching public trust. The Supreme Court also emphasised the principle of inter-generational equity, holding that the present generation has a duty to protect the environment for future generations. From these judgments, and there are many more, we can conclude that if Indian environmental jurisprudence has a parent, it is the Supreme Court. It has nurtured environmental law from its infancy. But having said that, I ask myself: Today, do these decisions look very distant?

My former colleague in the Bombay High Court, Justice Gautam Patel, has analysed Supreme Court judgments dealing with the environment in an article titled 'Consistently Inconsistent: Environmental Law and the Supreme Court'. Justice Patel finds that by and large, the Supreme Court has supported the environmental cause raised by non-governmental organisations. It has not shown the same degree of support to cases challenging infrastructure projects. Justice Patel says

it is in precisely this area that an intervention of the Supreme Court is vital, and yet it is here that we find a reluctance to come down on the side of the environmentalists. He says the jurisprudential inconsistency is apparent when one sets these decisions against the principles that the Supreme Court itself repeatedly enunciates in the broadest possible terms. It is that consist-

ent inconsistency that exacerbates the threats to the environment.

Is there any conflict between environment and development? The answer, according to me, is an emphatic no. Three decades ago, the Supreme Court had observed in the *Vellore Citizens* case that the traditional concept that development and ecology are opposed to each other is no longer acceptable. In my *Vanashakti* review judgment, I have said that it is unfortunate that a false narrative is being created pitting environment against development. Both are part of the constitutional construct of sustainable development.

When a conscientious citizen approaches the Court with a grievance that a particular project is in breach of environmental norms, what should be the approach of the court? Should the Court throw out the challenge at the threshold by asking aloud, almost posing a leading question to itself, whether any development project in India has gone unchallenged? It is true that there are many busybodies who file frivolous petitions. However, such attempts have been deprecated by the courts, but that cannot be the reason to paint all challengers with the same brush. There are committed environmentalists in our country who continue to espouse the cause of the environment. Where would they go if the doors of the courts are closed? According to me, that cannot be the approach of a constitutional court. Instead, the Court should ask: Has the project complied with the environmental norms? The Court should assure itself and citizens that all projects, big or small, infrastructure or otherwise, should comply with the environmental norms.

The writer is a Supreme Court Justice. Edited excerpts from a speech he delivered on August 8 at Vivekananda Kendra, Guwahati

8. SHUTDOWNS, APP BANS SHOW CRISIS OF INTERNET GOVERNANCE

(INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE NO 10)

1. GS II (Governance) & GS III (Internal Security/Tech)
2. Topics: Important aspects of governance, transparency; Challenges to internal security through communication networks.
3. Concepts: Internet shutdowns, IT Act proportionality test, digital rights, platform accountability, DPDP Act, facial recognition technology (FRT) privacy.

Shutdowns, app bans show crisis of internet governance



NAMRATA MAHESHWARI

THE PROTESTS triggered by the NEET exam crisis have become a microcosm of India's internet governance issues. The government's response included restricted internet access and messaging apps, surveillance, and threats to Big Tech. They point to the need for policy reform and legal safeguards.

Telegram was temporarily banned and ordered to disable its message-editing feature. The relevant provision of the IT Act empowers the government to block public access to "information" on specified grounds. The court interpreted "information" to encompass an entire platform. Applying the Supreme Court's proportionality test in *Anuradha Bhasin*, it agreed that blocking was the "least restrictive" measure. The court's findings hinged primarily on the temporariness of the restriction. Domestically, this normalises blocking a platform without adequately considering the impact on users or if blocking would achieve its purpose. Its ineffectiveness was evident: Users quickly turned to VPNs and other apps. It also suggests courts may uphold bans if orders are merely cosmetically compliant with terms such as "temporary" and "narrow tailoring". Internationally, such actions risk portraying India as unpredictable, which could hurt innovation, security development and ease of doing business. Around Jantar Mantar, where mobile internet services were suspended, when people turned to offline messaging services like BitChat, the government ordered GitHub to remove BitChat's source-code repositories.

There is no evidence that shutdowns effectively protect public order. BitChat was targeted because it could be misused. If that possibility was legally sufficient, we would have no AI assistants, SIM cards, email or Microsoft Office. Removing repositories also does not stop downloaded apps from working. It only reduces scrutiny of open-source code and creates security risks. It contradicts India's framing of open source as a strategic pillar of its AI approach. Protestors were surveilled using AI-powered facial recognition technology (FRT), smart glasses and the "Ikshana" mobile surveillance vehicle, which matched faces against a police database. According to the police's response to an Internet Freedom Foundation RTI, no rules govern FRT use, no privacy impact assessments are conducted, and an 80 per cent match is considered positive. Given FRT's inaccuracies, this is troubling. The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act is not fully in force, leaving the right to privacy without teeth. Meta was threatened with the loss of safe harbour after the PM's video became temporarily unavailable. Big Tech's opaque moderation practices need reining in. But safe harbour provisions also enable the democratic internet by reducing incentives to over-censor. Platform accountability must look beyond it.

The NEET protests should catalyse digital governance reform. The IT Act needs an overhaul; internet shutdowns should become a thing of the past; and the DPDP Act must be enforced through meaningful consultation.

The IT Act needs an overhaul; internet shutdowns should become a thing of the past; and the DPDP Act must be enforced through meaningful consultation

The writer is Asia Pacific Policy Manager and Global Encryption Policy Lead, Access Now

9. STALLING OF PARLIAMENT HAS HIGH COSTS

(INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE NO 11)

1. GS II (Polity & Governance)
2. Topics: Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges.
3. Concepts: Parliamentary productivity, Question Hour, legislative scrutiny, accountability of executive to legislature, cost of disruptions.



GOURAV VALLABH

WITH THE monsoon session concluded, Parliament's record must be judged by the work it completed. The latest verified figures available at the time of writing came from PRS Legislative Research. Covering scheduled sittings through August 13, they show that the Lok Sabha worked for 17.5 hours, or 15 per cent of scheduled time, while the Rajya Sabha worked for 37.37 hours, or 33 per cent.

India has no fresh official per-minute tariff. The widely used benchmark of Rs 2.5 lakh per minute for both houses dates to figures presented in 2012. Applying its commonly reported split of Rs 1.25 lakh per House-minute to the hour shortfall gives an indicative opportunity cost of about Rs 130 crore for the full session. This is a measure of taxpayer-funded capacity that did not become parliamentary work.

The financial cost is only the visible

edge. When Question Hour disappears, ministers escape questions that taxpayers have paid Parliament to ask. When legislative time collapses, bills are either delayed or passed without adequate scrutiny. This is becoming a norm.

Democratic work cannot be reduced to quarterly targets. Dissent is work. A reasoned speech against a bill is work. Protest is also a legitimate parliamentary instrument, and a walkout can place principled disagreement on record while allowing the House to proceed. But slogan-shouting that repeatedly forces adjournment turns one group's protest into a veto over every other member and voter.

The responsibility for a functioning Parliament is joint. The government has the first duty to list business transparently, provide adequate notice, make room for legitimate Opposition issues and ensure that ministers answer. The Opposition has an equally important responsibility to preserve the forum through which it scrutinises the executive. The majority cannot bulldoze;

the minority cannot blockade.

The events of August 12 make that distinction unavoidable. Home Minister Amit Shah, whose answer the Opposition had demanded, offered an extended debate, said he would sit through it until 3 pm on August 13 and respond to every question. The Opposition rejected the proposal. One may challenge the Home Minister's explanation, cross-examine it, reject it and continue to demand political accountability. But when the minister offers to reply in the House, why refuse the forum?

This is why PM Narendra Modi's emphasis on the "politics of performance" is relevant. He has repeatedly made measurable outcomes and last-mile execution central to governance. That standard cannot stop at Parliament's doors. A government that asks ministries to deliver should welcome rigorous legislative scrutiny. An Opposition that demands accountability should be judged by the quality of its questions, alternatives and interventions, not by the number of adjournments it can cause.

India needs a parliamentary-performance compact agreed by the government, Opposition and presiding officers. Its first rule should be: No lost hour without make-up time. If disruption erases scheduled business, the House should recover the time within the same session. Second, the right to protest should be matched by a guaranteed route to debate. Third, Parliament should publish a real-time dashboard showing attendance, questions, debates, committee work etc, to let citizens see whether public time produced public value. Finally, the daily allowance needs a clearer accountability rule. A member formally named or suspended by the Chair for a grave disorder should forfeit the allowance for that sitting. PM Modi's politics of performance has raised citizens' expectations from the government. Parliament, including the Opposition, must rise to the same standard.

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Stalling of Parliament has high costs