

# Headlines

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**A LITTLE  
PROGRESS  
EACH DAY  
ADDS UP TO  
BIG RESULTS**

# Retail inflation eases to 3.34%, lowest since 2019

Cooling in food prices seen as key factor; softening inflation trails 2 repo rate cuts by RBI; analysts expect price rise to stay below 4% in coming months, possibly leading to a further 50 bps rate cut

**Ashokamithran T.**

MUMBAI

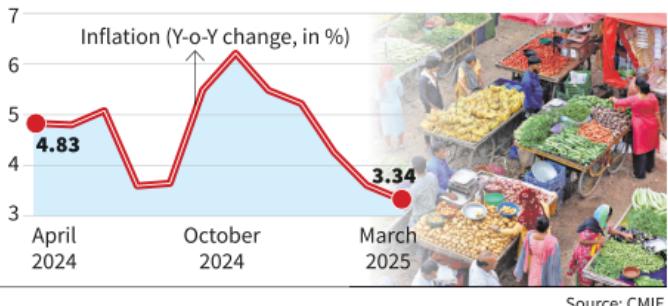
Retail inflation eased to a five-and-a-half-year low of 3.34% in March, from 3.61% in the previous month, mostly due to lower food prices, according to data from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Vegetables, eggs, and pulses were significantly cheaper, though edible oils and fruits continued to see high inflation.

Rural inflation came in at a lower 3.25% in March, down from 3.79% in February, though urban inflation increased marginally from 3.32% in February to 3.43% in March.

Fuel and light inflation increased moderately to 1.48%, with prices rising

## Cooling prices

Retail inflation in March was the lowest since August 2019 as food prices continued to moderate



for the first time since September 2023.

Consumer food price inflation hit a three-year low of 2.7% in March, a sharp drop from 3.75% in the previous month, according to data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy. The slowing prices come on the heels of two consecutive repo rate cuts,

each by 25 basis points (bps) or 0.25%, by the Reserve Bank of India indicating that the central bank is more worried about growth than inflation.

Economists agreed that the inflation is likely to stay under 4% in the coming months, which they said would prompt a 50 bps rate cut. "The softer than

expected [Consumer Price Inflation] CPI will provide further comfort to the RBI to continue to prioritise growth. We retain our view that the RBI will continue on its accommodative stance with the terminal repo rate likely around 5% to 5.25%," said Upasna Bharadwaj, the chief economist at Kotak Mahindra Bank.

Kerala had the highest inflation of 6.6% followed by Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Assam, and Haryana which all had inflation of above 3.3%. Inflation was lowest in Delhi and Telangana coming in at 1.5% and 1.1% respectively.

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**TRADE DEFICIT WIDENS**

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## **Content.**

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## **What is the Wholesale Price Index?**

- It measures the changes in the prices of goods sold and traded in bulk by wholesale businesses to other businesses.
- Published by the Office of Economic Adviser, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It is the most widely used inflation indicator in India.
- Major criticism for this index is that the general public does not buy products at wholesale price.
- The base year of All-India WPI has been revised from 2004-05 to 2011-12 in 2017.

## **What is the Consumer Price Index?**

- It measures price changes from the perspective of a retail buyer. It is released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- The CPI calculates the difference in the price of commodities and services such as food, medical care, education, electronics etc, which Indian consumers buy for use.
- The CPI has several sub-groups including food and beverages, fuel and light, housing and clothing, bedding and footwear.
- Four types of CPI are as follows:
- CPI for Industrial Workers (IW).
- CPI for Agricultural Labourer (AL).
- CPI for Rural Labourer (RL).
- CPI (Rural/Urban/Combined).
- Of these, the first three are compiled by the Labour Bureau in the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Fourth is compiled by the NSO in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- Base Year for CPI is 2012.

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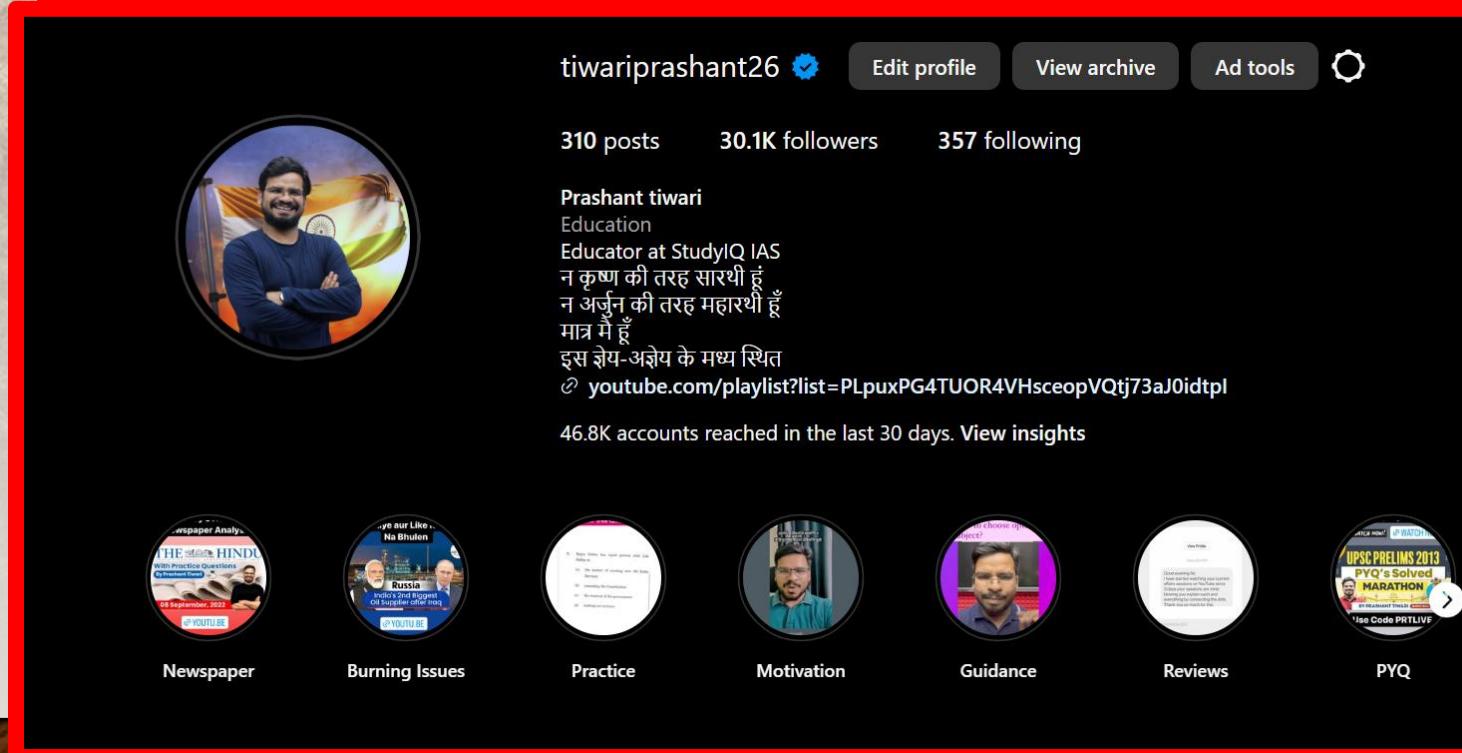
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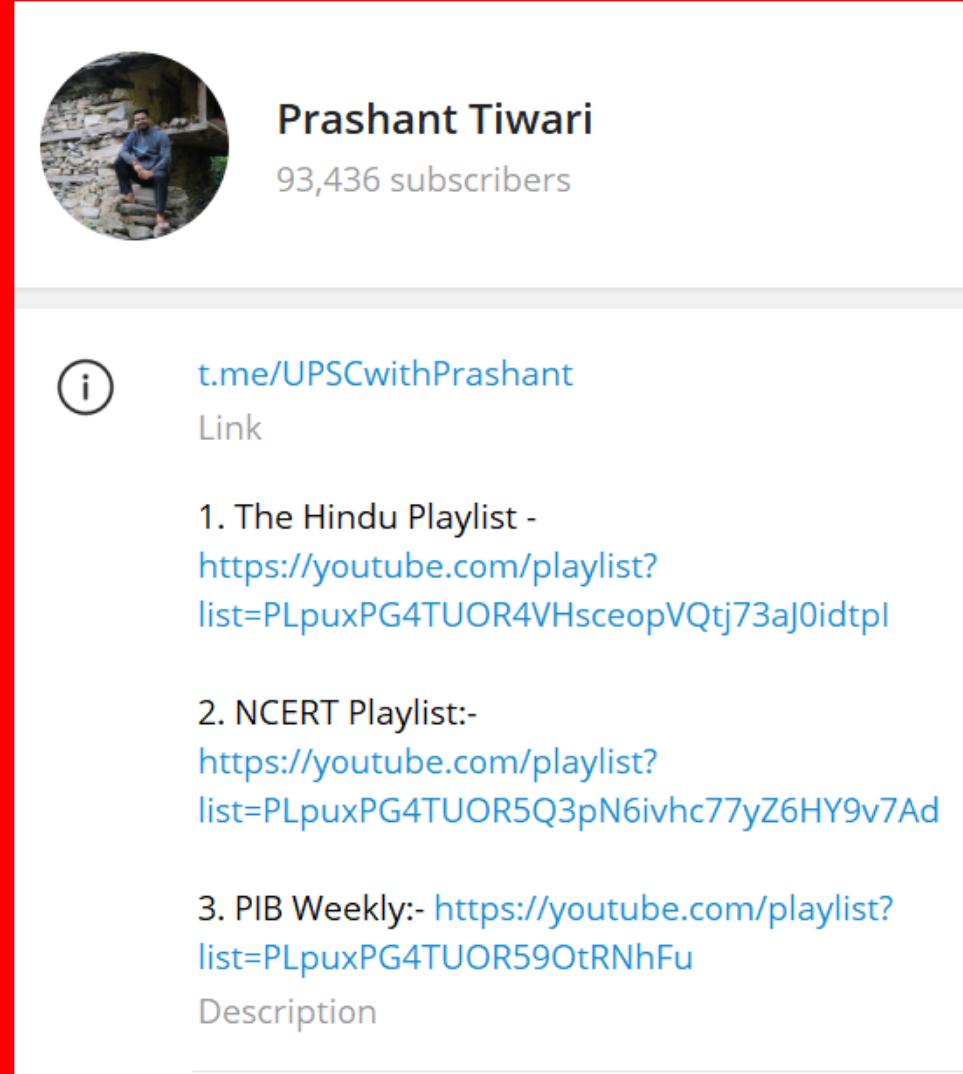
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Educator at StudyIQ IAS  
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Description



## *INSV Tarini departs from Cape Town on final leg*

The Indian Navy Sailing Vessel *Tarini* has set sail from Cape Town, South Africa, for Goa, on the final leg of a global circumnavigation. The voyage, part of the Navika Sagarparyrama-II initiative, is being undertaken by two women officers, Lieutenant-Commander Dilna K. and Lieutenant-Commander Roopa A. The vessel is expected to reach Goa by the end of May. The Navy stated that the circumnavigation was a significant endeavour aimed at promoting ocean sailing in India, showcasing the strength and resilience of Indian women in uniform, and highlighting the country's indigenous shipbuilding capabilities.



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- The Navika Sagar Parikrama initiative underscores the Indian Navy's commitment to gender empowerment and maritime excellence.
- It crewed by two women officers-Lieutenant Commander Dilna K and Lieutenant Commander Roopa A aims to promote ocean sailing, self-reliance, and India's rich maritime heritage.
- The historic expedition was flagged off from Goa by the chief of the Naval Staff on October 2, 2024.
- Navika Sagar Parikrama II covering more than 21,600 nautical miles (approx 40,000 km) will unfold in five legs with stop overs at four ports for replenishment and maintenance, as required.

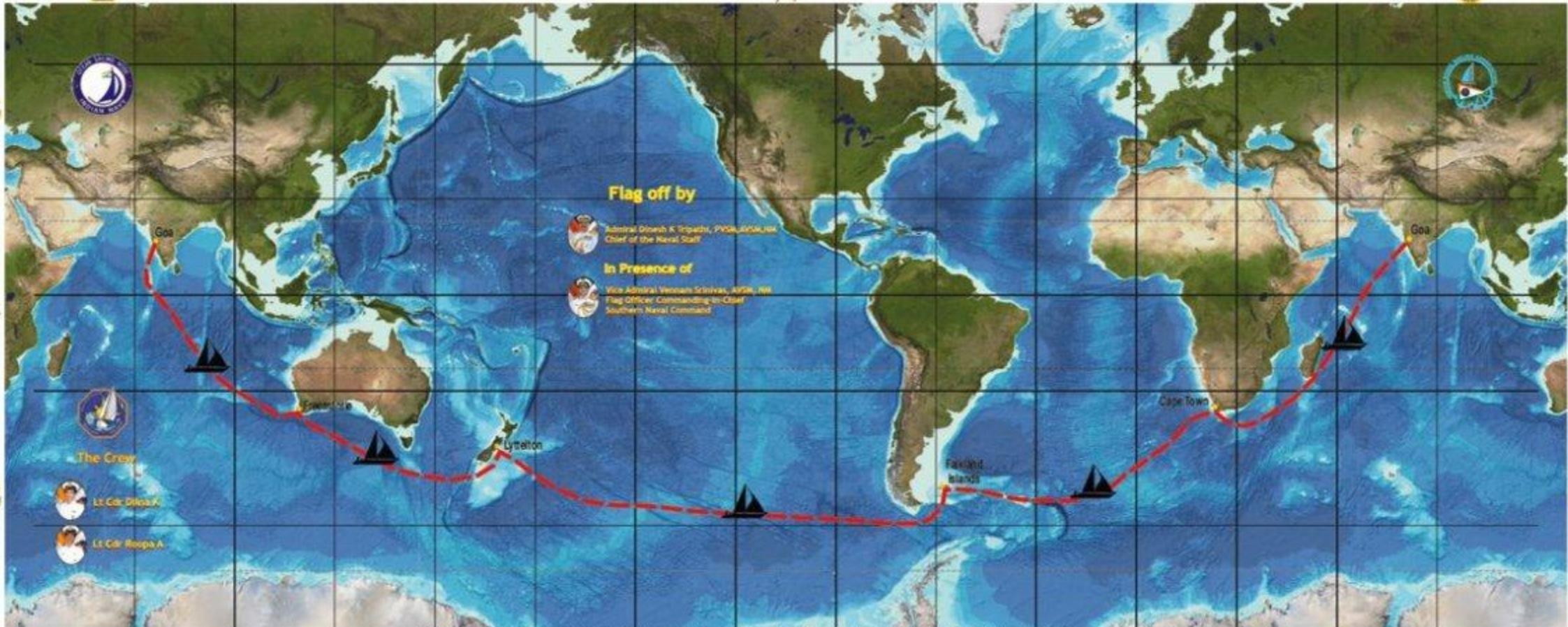
**The broad contour of voyage will be as follows:**

- Goa to Fremantle, Australia
- Fremantle to Lyttleton, New Zealand
- Lyttleton to Port Stanley, Falkland
- Port Stanley to Cape Town, S Africa
- Cape Town to Goa

## NAVIKA SAGAR PARIKRAMA - II



INSV TARINI OCT 24 TO MAY 25



Published at the National Hydrographic Office, Dehradun, under the Superintendence of Vice Admiral Lochan Singh Pathania, FIS, Chief Hydrographer to the Government of India  
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- Point Nemo, also known as the Oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility, holds the distinction of being the farthest point from any landmass on Earth.
- This remote point lies in the South Pacific Ocean and is named after Captain Nemo, the sailor from Jules Verne's famous novel Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea.
- Situated approximately 2,688 km from the nearest landmass, this isolated point is famous for its extreme remoteness, with the closest human presence often being aboard the International Space Station orbiting above.
- The nearest land in each direction is:
- To the north lies Ducie Island, part of the Pitcairn Islands (British Overseas Territory).
- To the northeast is Motu Nui, one of the Easter Islands (Chilean dependency).
- To the south is Maher Island, part of Antarctica.
- Due to its isolation, the waters around Point Nemo have very little marine life, and the region falls within the South Pacific Gyre, known for having some of the clearest and least biologically active ocean waters.
- Due to its remoteness and relative lack of marine traffic, Point Nemo has become a popular location for space agencies to dispose of space junk.

# Operation Chakra V: CBI gets hold of four ‘kingpins’ in ‘digital arrest’ fraud

**Devesh K. Pandey**

NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested four people, two each from Mumbai and Moradabad (Uttar Pradesh), for their alleged involvement in “digital arrest” fraud.

The arrests, made as part of ‘Operation Chakra V’, followed searches at 12 locations in the country.

The CBI has registered multiple cases of “digital arrests”. The agency took over the instant case on the Rajasthan government’s request. It was earlier registered by the cyber police in Jhunjhunu.

As alleged, the victim was “digitally detained” for over three months by cyber criminals impersonating as personnel of various law enforcement agencies. During this period, the victim was extorted of ₹7.67 crore on 42 occasions.

After taking over the case, the CBI analysed the available data and profiles of suspects. Advanced in-



In such a fraud, criminals extort money from targets by posing as officials online. GETTY IMAGES

vestigative techniques were employed to identify the perpetrators. Based on the findings, the agency recently conducted extensive searches across 12 locations in Moradabad and Sambhal in U.P., Mumbai, Jaipur, and Krishnanagar (West Bengal), leading to the arrest of four individuals.

“Substantial material was seized during these searches, including bank account details, debit cards, cheque books, deposit slips, and digital devices/evidence. The arrested individuals were produced before the competent court and have been remanded in five

days of police custody,” the agency said.

In his ‘Mann Ki Baat’ address last October, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had cautioned the people against ‘digital arrest’ frauds being committed to scam the victims of their hard-earned money and asked them to report such cases to the cyber helpline.

In this scam, fraudsters make phone/video calls to the prospective targets, posing as officials from various law enforcement and regulating agencies such as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

At first, they collect the personal information of potential victims, the second move is to create an atmosphere of fear by presenting themselves in probe agency uniforms with a government office-like background and quoting legal provisions. The criminals put psychological pressure on the victims by claiming that they have been “digitally arrested” for some offence.

**Page No. 10, Prelims**

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# A proclamation of democracy in legislative process

The recent judgment by the Supreme Court of India, in *The State of Tamil Nadu vs Governor of Tamil Nadu*, was a historic one. But it has also led to another development – the passing of laws without the assent of the Governor or President, which is an unprecedented event in the history of the republic. The Court invoked Article 142 of the Constitution to do “complete justice” in the case and fixed a time limit for the gubernatorial and presidential responses to the Bills passed by the State legislature. It interpreted Articles 200 and 201 of the Constitution dealing with the powers and functions of the Governors and the President and laid down principles governing these provisions. It emphatically said that the Governor cannot torpedo the laws made by the legislature that reflects the people's will.

The judgment that runs into 414 pages has embarrassed the Centre. The Governor of Kerala is on record for his criticism of the judgment. He has expressed his view that the Court has overstepped into the domain of Parliament and exceeded its authority by subjecting even the President of India to judicial review.

## The issue of interpretation

The Constitution is not a static document when it requires interpretation. The Court does not read the text of the Constitution in a mechanical way; rather, it interprets it organically in each situation. A centralist Constitution such as India's often calls for a federalist elucidation, to balance the interest of the States, which essentially means the people of India. Again, very many deficits in the constitutional provisions might require imaginative and purposive construction to fulfil their objective. Scholar Robert Post has rejected the plain meaning theory of interpretation as not a theory at all, for it does not actually involve a process of interpretation.

Constitutional interpretation, unlike statutory interpretation, is bound to be panoramic, futuristic and extensive. The Court's long journey from the narrow understanding of Article 21 in *A.K. Gopalan* (1950), which validated the preventive detention, to the broader prepositions on privacy based on the very same article in *K.S. Puttaswamy* (2017) shows the significant transformation in the process. The present judgment, which was rendered by Justice J.B. Pardiwala and Justice R. Mahadevan, demonstrates constitutional modernity and realism.

Article 200 of the Constitution is about the Governor's duties (not powers) with respect to the Bills passed by the State legislature. Primarily,



**Kaleeswaram Raj**

is a lawyer in the Supreme Court of India

when a Bill is placed before her, the Governor has three ways ahead: to give assent; to withhold it; or to make a reference to the President. Returning the Bill that is withheld, for reconsideration is the next option. Once a Bill so returned is reiterated by the House with or without amendment, the Governor cannot withhold assent any further. The Article also provides for reserving the Bill for presidential clearance in certain cases. Situations of repugnancy, and patent unconstitutionality on account of breach of express constitutional provisions could be reasons for such a course. Article 201 is on the obligations of the President on reservation of the Bill for her consideration. She can either give assent or withhold it. Also, she can direct the Governor to return the Bill to the President with a message when it is not a money Bill. Reconsideration of such a returned Bill should happen within six months. On reiteration, the Bill should be again ‘reconsidered’ by the President.

## Requirement of a reasoned order

This scheme indicated in the constitutional text is not comprehensive. The Court, while deciding the illustrative instance of the Tamil Nadu Governor dragging the Bills, had occasion to scan the intent and the content of the constitutional provisions. One major deficit of the provisions is a lack of a time limit for the Governor or the President to carry out their prescribed function. Again, provisions imply a great element of trust in the constitutional functionaries, which, however, stands betrayed over a period, especially in the recent past. A textual reading of the provisions can only perpetuate these deficits, which in turn, cannot resolve the issue placed by Tamil Nadu in the given case. This realisation has constrained the Court to fix the time limit for gubernatorial and presidential decisions on the Bills. This again has led to the judicial assertion that certain actions or inactions by the constitutional functionaries under these provisions cannot escape judicial scrutiny. In the given scenario, the idea of deemed assent by the President was a constitutional synthesis, for which Article 142 of the Constitution provides a formidable foundation.

The judgment relied on the Sarkaria Commission Report (1988) which said that “nonconformity of a state Bill to the policy of the Union Government is not always a safe ground for withholding presidential assent from it”. The verdict has also underlined the requirement to have reasoned orders when constitutional functionaries choose to decline assent. It rejected

the idea of “simpliciter withholding” of the Bills. Thus, the perceived immunity attached to the Governor and the President in the legislative process is completely removed by the judgment. It is a proclamation of people's democracy in the legislative process.

Therefore, the criticism that the Court has exceeded in its jurisdiction in the given case is clearly misconceived. It is erroneous to think that the Court has ‘amended’ the Constitution only because it supplemented (not supplanted) the constitutional provisions to meet the exigencies. It does not amount to legislation either, as the conclusions in the judgment only rest on a thorough precedential survey on the issue. It quoted Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer in *Shamsher Singh & Anr vs State Of Punjab* (1974), a seven-judge Bench judgment, which is still regarded as the *locus classicus* on gubernatorial functions under our constitutional scheme. The present verdict imported the people's right to enact laws while *Shamsher Singh* was more on the binding nature of the decision of the cabinet chosen by the voters. The Court could reject the idea of “unfettered discretion” in referring the Bills to the President, as laid down in *B.K. Pavitra vs Union of India* (2019), based on larger Bench decisions such as the one in *Shamsher Singh*. It is promising to see the judiciary in an assertive mode, after a long interval, that too in a case where it directly confronted the political executive at the Centre.

## Suggestions to consider

Yet, two suggestions may be useful for the time to come. The first is that in critical constitutional adjudication, instead of rendering huge verdicts after a long time, the Court needs to resort to the practice of delivering shorter judgments within a shorter span of time. The judgment of the U.K. Supreme Court in the Brexit-related case, *R(Miller) vs The Prime Minister* (2019), was just 24 pages. Brevity and promptness in the judicial process could be of great support for a nation in trouble.

Second, when matters of the similar nature are pending adjudication, the Court must have a system to club them together so that the same Bench hears the cases together. A lack of proper internal management in the Court was felt when after the Tamil Nadu judgment, a request had to be made on behalf of the State of Kerala to place its petition seeking similar relief before the same Bench. Propriety demands that such a request is heeded to forthwith, to ensure certainty, predictability and clarity, which are essential facets of constitutional adjudication.

**Page No. 6, GS 2**

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- Article 200 of the Constitution is about the Governor's duties (not powers) with respect to the Bills passed by the State legislature.
- Primarily, when a Bill is placed before her, the Governor has three ways ahead: to give assent; to withhold it; or to make a reference to the President. Returning the Bill that is withheld, for reconsideration is the next option.
- Once a Bill so returned is reiterated by the House with or without amendment, the Governor cannot withhold assent any further.
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# *India, rising power demand and the 'hydrogen factor'*

The goal of achieving a net-zero economy can be realised only by massive electrification of end uses of energy. Besides their use in generating electricity, fossil fuels are used to provide heat and molecules for industrial processes. The use of fossil fuels for providing heat is ubiquitous and well understood. Examples of providing molecules include the use of carbon (from coal) in steel making to reduce iron ore, and the use of hydrogen from natural gas to make ammonia, which is a feedstock for the fertilizer industry. In the steel industry, hydrogen can be substituted for carbon. Thus, a net-zero economy would mean electrification of end uses and the use of hydrogen for many industrial processes.

**Power demand and nuclear power plans**  
Forecasts made by several academics, including this writer and his colleagues, predict a steep increase in electricity demand to meet the goal of economy-wide net-zero emissions for a developed India. Solar, wind and hydro cannot provide all the electricity that India needs, and nuclear has to be part of the energy mix in India. Considering this, the Government of India has set an aspirational target to reach 100 GW of installed capacity based on nuclear power by 2047.

The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) has announced an ambitious programme to set up several 700 MW Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs). Two units are working at Kakrapar in Gujarat. One unit in Rajasthan was synchronised to the grid in March 2025 and another is under commissioning. Two units are coming up in Haryana. In 2017, the NPCIL announced the construction of a fleet of 10 reactors, and on March 11 this year, the Chairman and Managing Director of NPCIL announced plans to construct an additional 10 units. When completed, the total will amount to 26 units of 700 MW rating.

Many public sector undertakings and departments such as the Indian Railways are looking to deploy nuclear power plants.



**R.B. Grover**

is a Member of the Atomic Energy Commission, a former Principal Adviser of the Department of Atomic Energy, and a former Vice-Chancellor of the Homi Bhabha National Institute

The NPCIL has invited proposals from the industry for setting up 220 MW PHWRs, christened as Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs) for its captive use. The NPCIL has several 220 MW PHWRs in its portfolio, and the BSR is its evolutionary version. Thus, the NPCIL is marching ahead to set up PHWRs, a technology that it has mastered. Indian industry is capable of manufacturing all equipment and components for PHWRs.

## **Low carbon sources and solutions**

Therefore, in the years ahead, the share of electricity provided by low-carbon sources, that is, hydro, nuclear, solar and wind, will increase. Solar and wind are intermittent sources, and nuclear is best operated as base load. At present, to balance supply and demand during solar hours, coal-fired power plants are flexed. Flexing coal-fired plants and letting solar and wind continue to operate lowers carbon emissions from electricity generation. In the emerging scenario, when all sources are low-carbon, balancing supply and demand will need innovative solutions.

Suggestions to explore the possibility of flexing nuclear power plants have been made. It is not desirable to flex power plants set up with a high capital cost. It is worth recalling that the capital cost of a nuclear plant is higher than a coal-fired power plant, but the variable cost is lower.

Also, flexing nuclear power plants is technically challenging. Though adopted to a limited extent in some countries for certain reactor designs, it is also not cost-competitive for two reasons: when operated at low power, the variable cost might remain the same as for operating at full power or only marginally come down. This does not make any environmental or economic sense. Many advanced reactors are being designed to be load-following, but this is a technology for the future.

Producing hydrogen by electrolyzers when there is surplus electricity in the system is a solution based on mature technologies. One can

connect electrolyzers and electricity storage devices to the grid and operate them to shape demand so that there is no need to flex nuclear power plants or curtail solar and wind. Following this approach, one can reduce electricity storage requirements. Considering that the cost of electricity storage is an issue for large-scale integration of solar and wind, this approach provides a win-win solution.

Electrolyzers are low-cost equipment and can be operated at different power levels. The scheme proposed for hydrogen production using surplus electricity in the system is not for the reconversion of hydrogen to electricity but for its use in the industry.

The government has defined hydrogen produced by electrolyzers using electricity from solar and wind as green and has provided incentives. A certification scheme has also been drafted for green hydrogen, where electrolytic and biomass-based hydrogen with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions not exceeding 2 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/kg H<sub>2</sub> on average is called green. Life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions (expressed in terms of a kg of greenhouse gas per kg of hydrogen) for hydrogen production from renewable sources and nuclear power plants are comparable. It is suggested that the taxonomy be changed from green hydrogen to low-carbon hydrogen based on a threshold for carbon emissions. This will enable nuclear to be included in the definition of low-carbon hydrogen

## **Need for synergy**

At present, electricity storage and hydrogen production are considered distinct activities. This needs to change. Hydrogen generation and electricity storage need to be synergised to improve economics. Our case studies demonstrate that by synergising hydrogen generation and battery storage, one can improve overall economics.

We recommend two policy changes: changing the taxonomy by replacing green hydrogen with low-carbon hydrogen, and synergising electricity storage and hydrogen production.

**Page No. 6, GS 3**

- Besides their use in generating electricity, fossil fuels are used to provide heat and molecules for industrial processes. The use of fossil fuels for providing heat is ubiquitous and well understood.
- Examples of providing molecules include the use of carbon (from coal) in steel making to reduce iron ore, and the use of hydrogen from natural gas to make ammonia, which is a feedstock for the fertilizer industry.
- In the steel industry, hydrogen can be substituted for carbon. Thus, a net-zero economy would mean electrification of end uses and the use of hydrogen for many industrial processes.
- steep increase in electricity demand to meet the goal of economy-wide net-zero emissions for a developed India.
- Solar, wind and hydro cannot provide all the electricity that India needs, and nuclear has to be part of the energy mix in India.
- Considering this, the Government of India has set an aspirational target to reach 100 GW of installed capacity based on nuclear power by 2047.

## **Content.**

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- At present, electricity storage and hydrogen production are considered distinct activities. This needs to change. Hydrogen generation and electricity storage need to be synergised to improve economics.

## **Self-perpetuating**

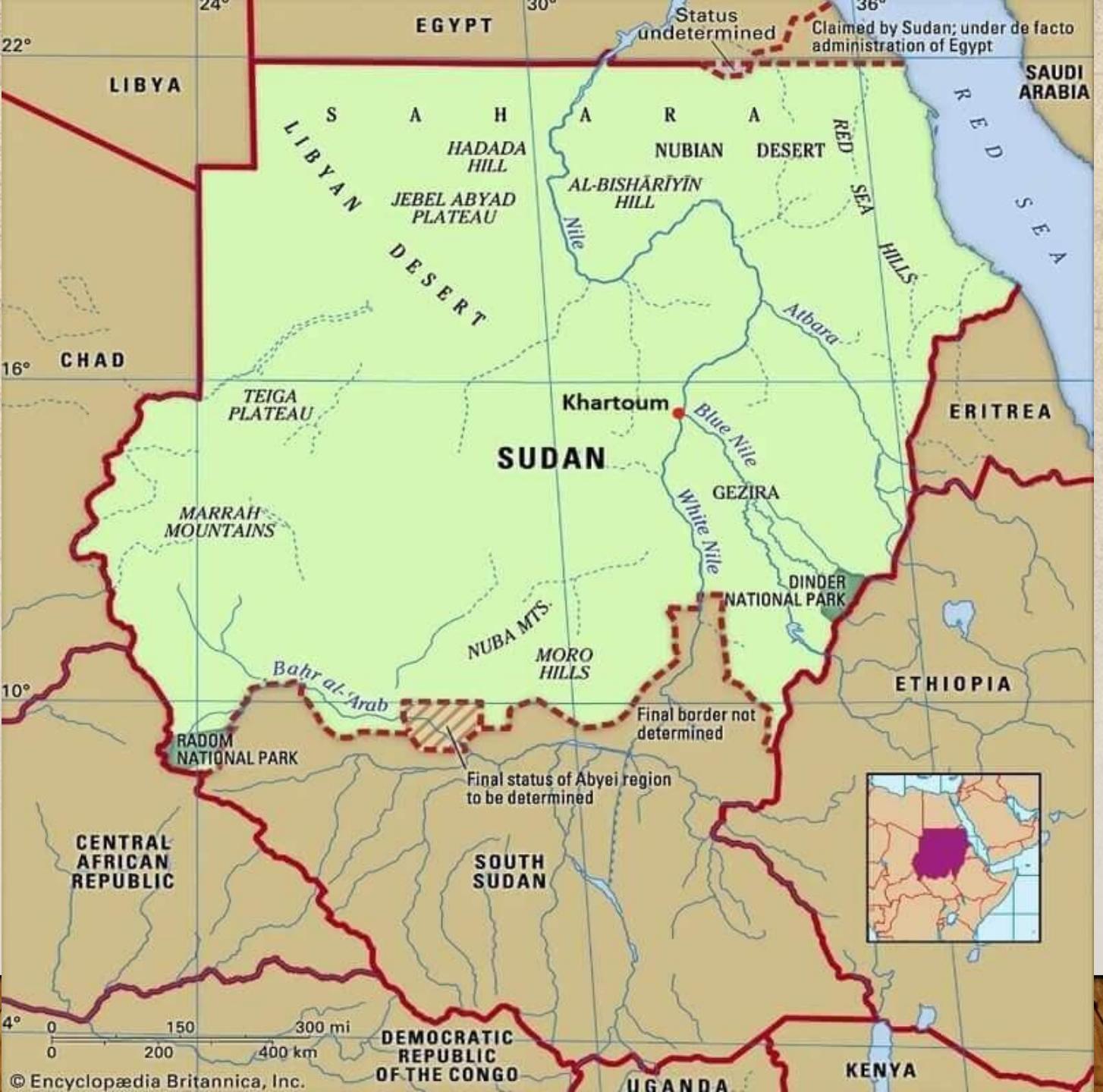
Sudan's humanitarian crisis needs  
the world's attention

In April 2023, a power struggle between two generals pushed Sudan, which witnessed a revolution and a counter-revolutionary coup in the preceding years, into a devastating cycle of violence. The conflict has displaced nearly 13 million people, transformed cities, including the capital, Khartoum, into war zones, and triggered economic collapse, inducing the world's first officially declared famine in four years. More than 1,50,000 people have lost their lives. Yet, the generals, army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and head of the notorious paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, are not done fighting. Although the army suffered setbacks early in the conflict, it has regained ground. Late last month, in a blow to the RSF, Gen. Burhan's forces took control of Khartoum. The military controls much of northern and eastern Sudan, including the Red Sea city of Port Sudan, the de facto wartime capital. However, the RSF, a potent force, maintains control over much of the western Darfur region, where it is currently laying siege to El Fasher, an army stronghold. Recently, the RSF declared a parallel government in the areas under its control, seeking to shore up political support. So, despite the army's gains, a decisive victory seems far away.

While the RSF faces credible allegations of large-scale atrocities against civilians, including the rape of children, both sides bear responsibility for Sudan's descent into chaos and anarchy. The country hoped for a new dawn when mass protests brought down the brutal three-decade dictatorship of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019. After his fall, the military and civilian leaders shared power in a transitional administration, which was seen as a stepping stone toward full civilian rule. But in 2021, Gen. Burhan, then head of the transitional government, refused to hand over power to the civilian leadership. He joined hands with Mr. Dagalo, to orchestrate a coup. Their alliance soon collapsed, bringing civil war. For two years, the international community largely turned a blind eye, while regional powers supported rival factions. The military accuses the UAE of backing the predominantly Arab RSF, while the army gets support from Russia, Türkiye, Iran and Qatar. But two years of war is a testament to the fact that there can be no military solution. Civilians have endured relentless air strikes by the army, indiscriminate attacks and looting by the RSF and a near-total collapse in health care, education and access to food and water in the war-hit areas. The world must pay attention to Sudan's humanitarian crisis and push for urgent, meaningful talks between the warring factions. What Sudan needs is an immediate ceasefire, followed by humanitarian aid so that at least some measure of stability could be restored.

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- Darfur region

# *The approach to regulating AI in India*

The governance and regulation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) have garnered significant global attention over the past year. While the discourse has recently shifted from a focus on social safety, inclusivity, and human rights towards prioritising innovation and economic prosperity, only a few countries or regions have so far introduced laws to regulate AI. These include China, the European Union, Canada, Korea, Peru, and the U.S. (though U.S. President Donald Trump has now revoked former President Joe Biden's Executive Order related to the utilisation of AI). Several countries, such as the U.K., Japan, Brazil, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Pakistan have draft Bills awaiting approval from their respective legislative assemblies.

A more common approach globally has been the publication of a policy or strategy document that outlines the country's intentions, plans, budgets, and a road map for leveraging AI to foster socio-economic development, while ensuring that the resultant growth is inclusive, ethical, and sustainable. About 85 countries and the African Union have published some official (National) AI Strategy documents.

## **India's approach**

India, however, appears to have taken a different approach. It has neither an officially approved National AI Strategy document nor a law specifically regulating AI. Instead, it has focused its resources on a government mission designed to support the development and adoption of AI. The NITI Aayog document titled 'National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence' from 2018, while comprehensive and strong in its suggestions, remains a recommendation without formal endorsement from the Government of India or an implementation plan or budget. The IndiaAI mission, through its seven pillars, aims to foster an innovative, skilled, safe, and



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trustworthy AI ecosystem. Several initiatives, such as a foundational AI model, are in the pipeline. An advisory group of experts is currently working to develop recommendations for governance frameworks that could be suitable for India. But there is limited clarity regarding whether these recommendations will be adopted into official governance policies or integrated as internal mechanisms.

While there are several benefits to this approach – primarily the flexibility to adapt plans in response to the evolving nature of technologies, their adoption, geopolitics, economics, trade, and citizen sentiment – it also leaves a significant gap. Specifically, it does not provide a comprehensive view of India's vision, priorities, capacity, achievements, planned milestones, initiatives, or accountability mechanisms. The initiatives remain reactive and may or may not follow a planned trajectory towards the envisioned goals. They also risk dependence on individual leadership.

AI development remains predominantly concentrated in the U.S., the EU, the U.K., and China, but India is experiencing a rapid and substantial rise in AI adoption. As AI usage expands, it is essential to ensure that its implementation does not lead to discrimination, exclusionary practices, unfair outcomes, cybersecurity threats, privacy breaches, or unequal opportunities. At present, the guardrails surrounding AI implementation are largely voluntary and lack clarity. There is little to no public awareness of algorithmic use, efficacy or evaluation metrics even in sectors that directly impact citizens' everyday lives, such as banking, insurance, education, healthcare, and public administration.

Subsequently, there is little civic discourse on important issues such as algorithmic alignment with societal values, model evaluation outcomes, data and content provenance, labour

market disruptions, or the potential cybersecurity and privacy risks driven by AI. This lack of discussion is especially concerning in light of the fact that India has already experienced several instances of violence and social harm, largely fuelled by AI-generated content on social media platforms in recent years.

## **Lessons to be drawn**

There are various approaches to AI governance and regulation, and valuable lessons can be drawn from how different countries worldwide have handled data regulation and policies. With the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, the Government of India has adopted an approach similar to the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and China's Personal Information Protection Law – cross-sectoral, centralised, and comprehensive. In contrast, the U.S. has taken a more decentralised and sector-specific approach to data protection and privacy. China has implemented focused laws for different types of AI (for instance, generative AI) or a use case (for example, deep synthesis). India could adopt any of these approaches or develop a hybrid model, building on the framework established by the centralised DPDP Act, 2023.

An AI policy could be a viable short-term goal for India. Such a policy would also allow the government to pilot enforcement tools before introducing formal legislation. Insights from the 85 AI policies worldwide suggest key areas that should be addressed in the official document. These include India's vision for AI, strategies for building capacity and infrastructure to support AI development and adoption, the government authority responsible for policy implementation, ethical guidelines for responsible AI use, and priority sectors where AI can drive socio-economic growth. Public discussion on AI use need to be urgently initiated by the government too.

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## **Content.**

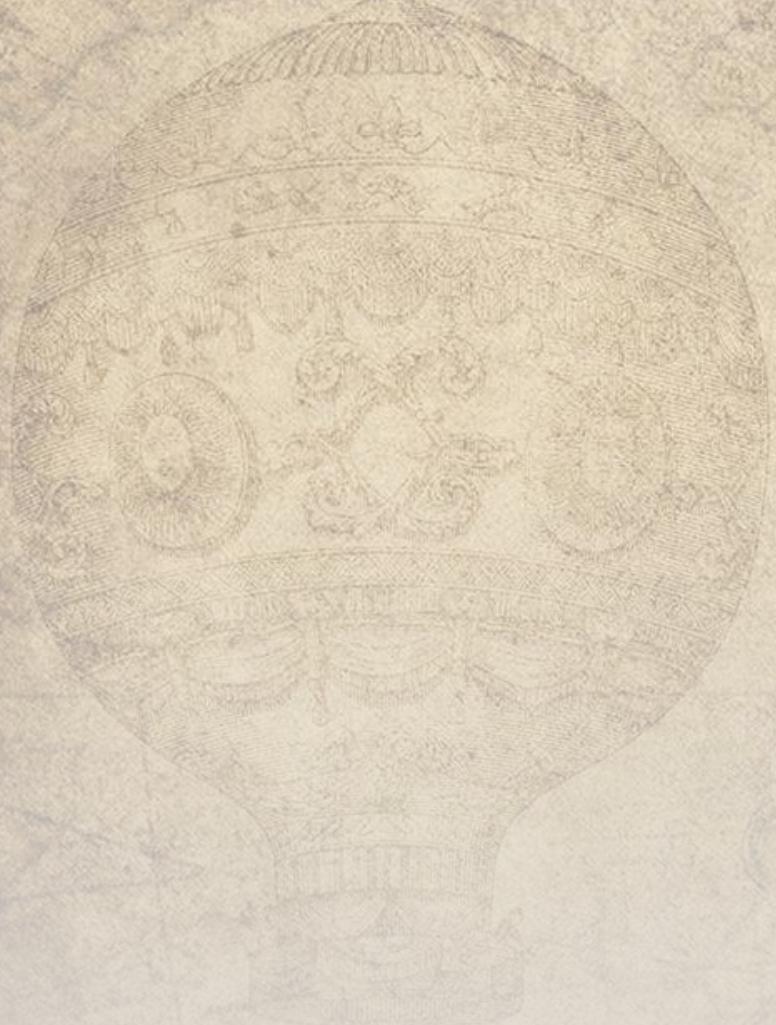
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## Fact

- AI development remains predominantly concentrated in the U.S., the EU, the U.K., and China, but India is experiencing a rapid and substantial rise in AI adoption.
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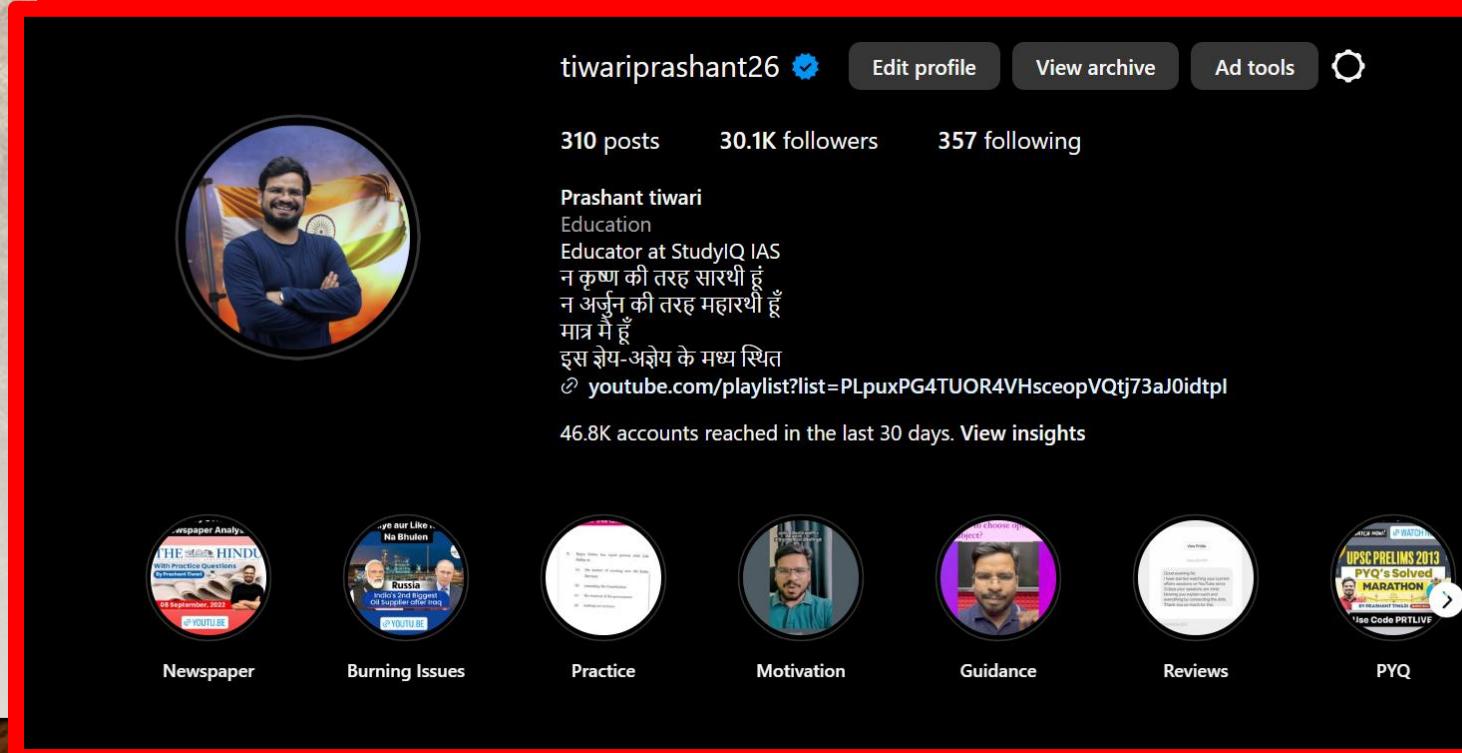
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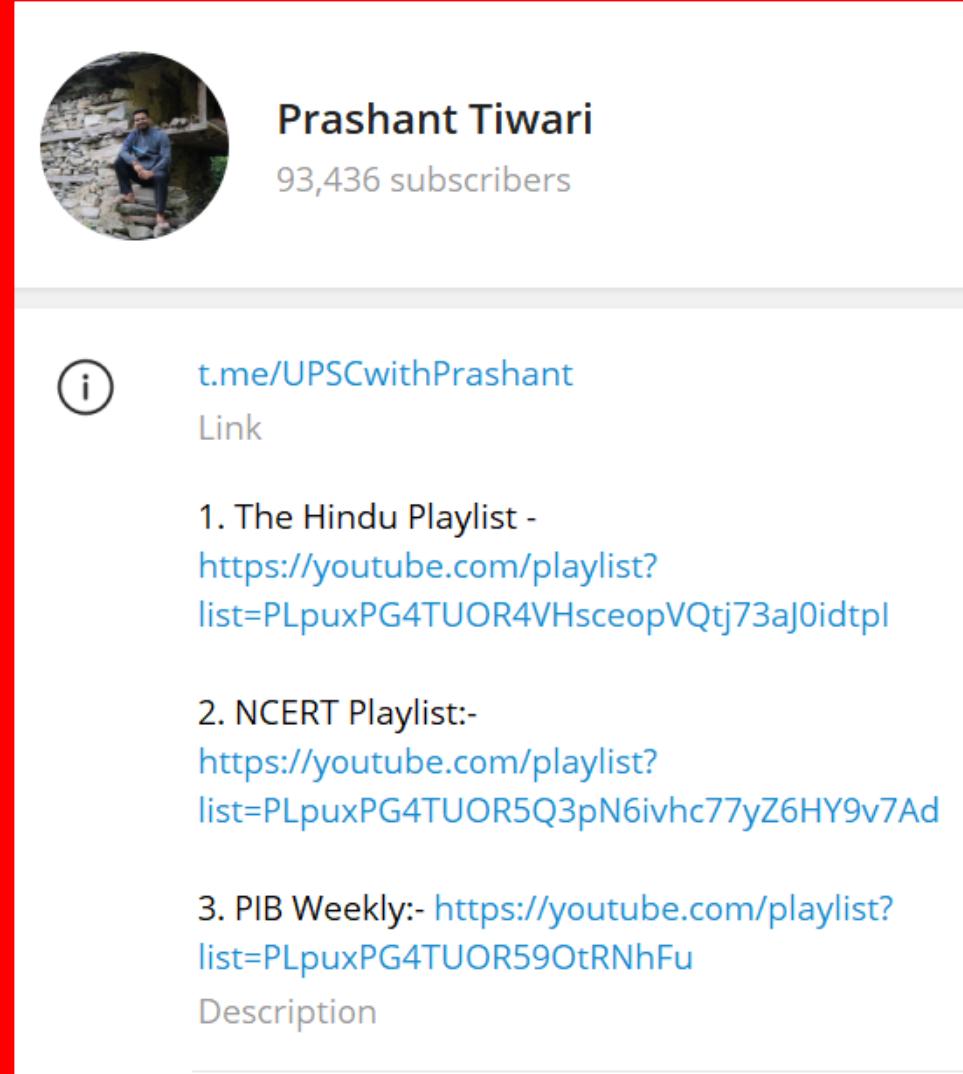
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