

Headlines

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Join me on Telegram :- Prashant Tiwari
Username:- UPSCwithPrashant



Nothing will work
unless you do.

Maya Angelou

Indus treaty with Pak. put on hold

Page No. 1, GS 2

India flags 'Pak. links' to Pahalgam attack, unveils 5-pronged response

Attari check post shut; Pakistan nationals told to return by May 1

Special visas deemed cancelled; diplomatic staff to be withdrawn

Kallol Bhattacharjee

Vijaita Singh

Nistula Hebbbar

NEW DELHI

India will hold the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan "in abeyance with immediate effect", Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced on Wednesday. It is part of the five-pronged response that was decided upon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) in the aftermath of the terror strike in Pahalgam that left 26 dead.

The CCS took note of the "cross-border linkages" of the terror attack in Pahalgam, Mr. Misri said, adding, "The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 will be held in abeyance with immediate effect, until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism."



Stern review: Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairing a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security, in New Delhi on Wednesday. ANI

A decision was also taken to close the Integrated Check Post in Attari with "immediate effect". "Those who have crossed over with valid endorsements may return through that route before May 1," Mr. Misri said, indicating that Pakistan nationals holding Indian visas will have to return by that date.

He further announced that Pakistan nationals will not be permitted to travel

to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES). "Any SVES visas issued in the past to Pakistani nationals are deemed cancelled. Any Pakistani national currently in India under SVES visa has 48 hours to leave India," he said.

The CCS also declared defence advisers in the Pakistani High Commission here as *persona non grata*. "They have a week to leave

2 Kashmiris suspected to be among the attackers

Vijaita Singh
Peerzada Ashiq

NEW DELHI/PAHALGAM

Two Kashmiri men who travelled to Pakistan in 2018 are believed to be among the six or seven armed terrorists who

killed 26 civilians at Baisaran in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, on Tuesday afternoon, a government source told *The Hindu*.

FULL REPORT ON
» **PAGE 13**

India. India will be withdrawing its own advisers from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. These posts in the respective High Commissions are deemed annulled. Five support staff of the Service Advisers will also be withdrawn from both High Commissions," he said, adding that the strength of both missions "will be brought down to 30 from 55 through further re-

ductions by May 1."

All-party meeting

Following the meeting, Union Home Minister Amit Shah reached out to political parties for an all-party meeting on Thursday.

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MORE REPORTS ON
» **PAGES 4, 12, 13 & 16**

Content.

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THE 5 DECISIONS

■ Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 put on hold

■ Attari Integrated Check Post shut

■ SAARC visa scheme for Pakistanis stopped

■ Military advisers in Pak mission to leave

■ High Commission strength cut to 30

Content.

- **The SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme was launched in 1992. The leaders at the Fourth Summit (Islamabad, 29-31 December 1988), while realizing the importance of having people to people contacts, among the peoples of SAARC countries, decided that certain categories of dignitaries should be entitled to a Special Travel document, which would exempt them from visas within the region. As directed by the Summit, the Council of Ministers regularly kept under review the list of entitled categories.**
- **Currently, the list included 24 categories of entitled persons, which include Dignitaries, Judges of higher courts, Parliamentarians, Senior Officials, Businessmen, Journalists, Sportsmen etc.**
- **The Visa Stickers are issued by the respective Member States to the entitled categories of that particular country. The validity of the Visa Sticker is generally for one year. The implementation is reviewed regularly by the Immigration Authorities of SAAR Member States.**

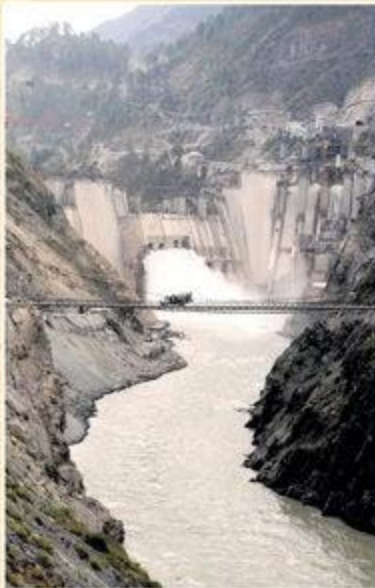
The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

- The distribution of waters of the Indus and its tributaries between India and Pakistan is governed by the Indus Water Treaty (IWT).
- Was signed on Sept 19, 1960, between India, Pakistan and a representative of World Bank after eight years of negotiations.
- Partition of India cut across the Indus river basin, which has the Indus river, plus five of its main tributaries.

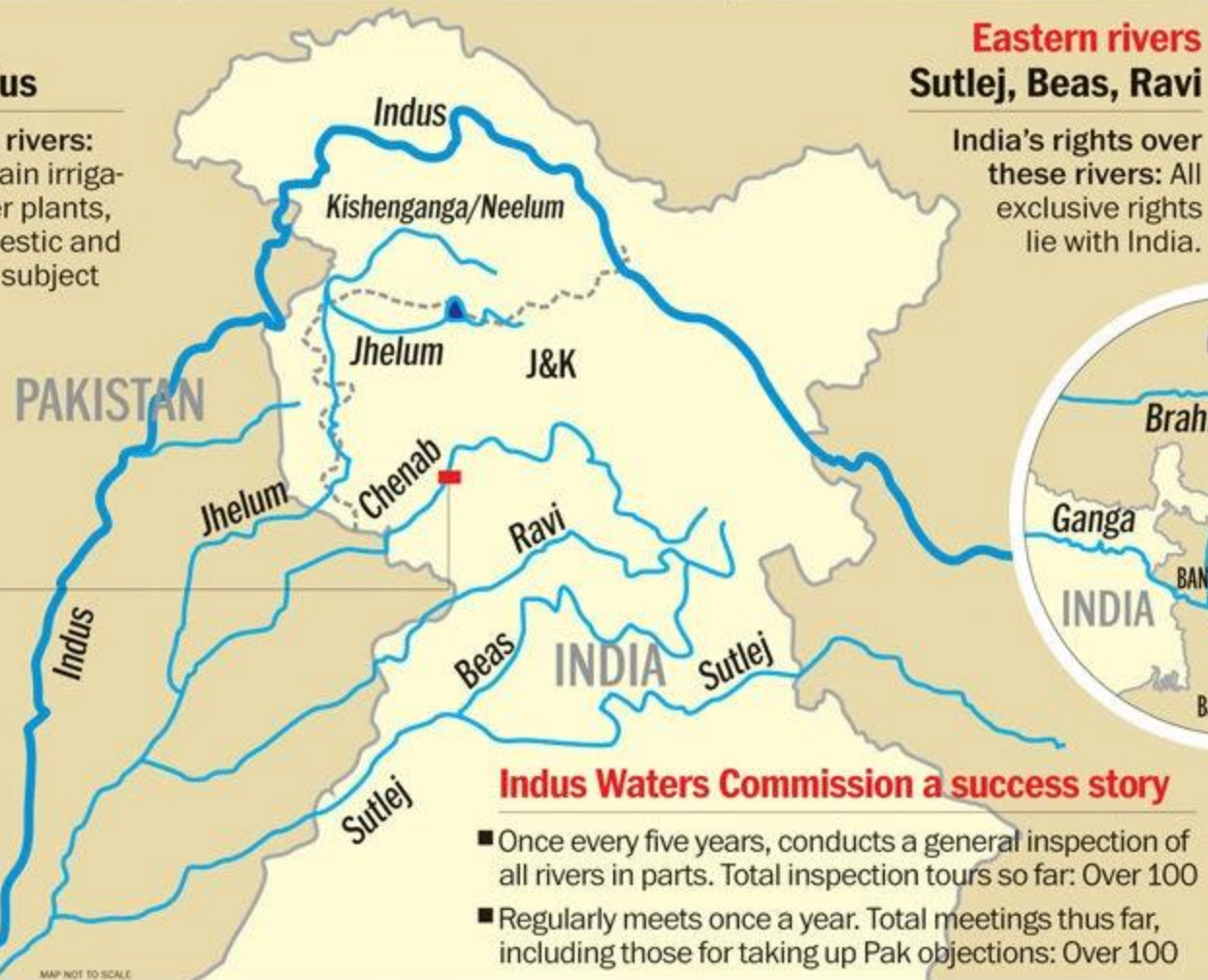
Western rivers

Chenab, Jhelum, Indus

India's rights over these rivers: Limited — can set up certain irrigation, run-of-the-river power plants, very limited storage, domestic and non-consumptive use, all subject to conditions



Baglihar dam on Chenab



Eastern rivers

Sutlej, Beas, Ravi

India's rights over these rivers: All exclusive rights lie with India.

Indus Waters Commission a success story

- Once every five years, conducts a general inspection of all rivers in parts. Total inspection tours so far: Over 100
- Regularly meets once a year. Total meetings thus far, including those for taking up Pak objections: Over 100

Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)

- It is headed by the Prime Minister.
- The Committee discusses, debates, and is the apex body when it comes to the appointments of the officials in the national security bodies.
- It also makes all the important decisions on defence policy and expenditure and, generally, all matters of India's security.
- **Members:** PM, Ministers of Defence, Home Affairs, Finance and External Affairs.
- **Functions:**
 - Deals with all the issues related to the defence and security of India.
 - The CCS deals with all issues related to the law and order and national security of India.
 - It discusses different initiatives to take to enhance the national security of India.
 - It also deals with policy matters of foreign affairs that may have a bearing on internal or external security implications, including cases relating to agreements with other countries on security-related issues.

- **Cabinet Committees are extra-constitutional, meaning, they are not mentioned in the Indian Constitution.**
- **They are partly designed to reduce the burden on the Union Cabinet by allowing smaller groups of ministers to make decisions on specific policy areas.**
- **They are constituted or reconstituted when a new government takes over or the Cabinet undergoes a reshuffle.**

- **There are a total of 8 cabinet committees:**
 - **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.**
 - **Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs.**
 - **Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth.**
 - **Cabinet Committee on Security.**
 - **Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs.**
 - **Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development.**
 - **Cabinet Committee on Accommodation.**
 - **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.**

Responding to the terror attack in Pahalgalam

The terrorist attack in Pahalgalam in Jammu and Kashmir is not just an act of brutality; it is a calculated political signal, carefully timed and deliberately chosen to inflict not only human casualties, but cause strategic disruption. Coming days after the Kashmir Valley had begun welcoming tourists as part of a fresh season, and while U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance tours India, this is not a random or desperate strike. It seems to be the continuation of a long-standing pattern of cross-border terrorism, directed and sustained by the Pakistani military-intelligence establishment. At a time when Pakistan had faded from India's diplomatic radar and foreign policy imagination, it is back: threatening to disrupt much of what we hold dear.

The attack took place in Baisaran, an alpine meadow which is often described as 'mini Switzerland'. The very setting – a site of picnics, pony rides, and often school excursions – make the images all the more harrowing. Videos of terrified tourists scrambling for safety, and bloodstained trails in a place known for its serenity, have left an indelible mark on public memory. It was not just a strike on innocent tourists; it was a deliberate assault on the idea of Kashmir as a safe and even sacred tourist space.

It also reflects a massive intelligence failure, and a lowering of the security vigil, which is deeply troubling. Pahalgalam is a tourist hub; a gateway to the Amarnath shrine. The forces and agencies should have been on their guard. The drones and electronic surveillance infrastructure that India has invested in also seems to have been absent. While the intelligence failure may appear to not have been as colossal as it was in Kargil, it will have as deep a societal impact.

The responsibility for the Pahalgalam attack has been claimed by The Resistance Front, a proxy outfit with clear operational links to the Lashkar-e-Taiba – deeply embedded within the network of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The pattern is now familiar: inflict pain on India, sow uncertainty in Kashmir, and provoke reaction – all while maintaining a thin veneer of deniability. That such operations continue despite decades of global scrutiny reveals the strategic environment in which they thrive. It is one in which Pakistan has too often acted without paying a proportionate cost. That must change.

Crafting a response

If India is to meaningfully alter the calculus in Rawalpindi, it must also develop the institutional memory and policy continuity to respond across political administrations. Terrorism cannot be treated episodically. A long-term approach to deterrence must involve political consensus, sustained intelligence capability, and the diplomatic stamina to persist with pressure even in the absence of major attacks. Strategic patience, not short bursts of retaliatory energy, is what Pakistan's playbook is least equipped to handle.

India's response to the Pahalgalam massacre must be rooted not just in outrage, but in



Amitabh Mattoo

Dean, School of International Studies, JNU; and former Vice-Chancellor, University of Jammu

India must embrace a framework of escalatory credibility – not escalation for its own sake, but the ability and willingness to impose pain through diplomatic, economic, and covert means when red lines are crossed

strategy. Condemnation is necessary but insufficient. The imperative now is deterrence – not in the abstract, but as policy. Deterrence, in classical strategic theory, is not the threat of punishment alone. It is the imposition of credible, visible, and cumulative costs that alter the behaviour of the adversary over time.

The difficulty, of course, lies in crafting a response that deters without destabilising. But India's continued restraint – save notable exceptions such as responses after the terrorist attacks in Uri and Pulwama – in the face of repeated provocations has often been interpreted in Rawalpindi as hesitation and even weakness. To alter that perception, we must embrace a framework of escalatory credibility – not escalation for its own sake, but the ability and willingness to impose pain through diplomatic, economic, and covert means when red lines are crossed.

This includes sustained efforts to diplomatically isolate Pakistan on platforms where it seeks legitimacy; the careful reconsideration of trade and water-sharing mechanisms that Pakistan depends on; and the expansion of covert and intelligence-based capabilities to disrupt terrorist infrastructure across the Line of Control (LoC). These options are neither reckless nor novel. They are tools of statecraft that have been successfully used by others – including by those who lecture India on proportionality.

Instability in Pakistan

To understand why Pakistan resorts to such acts, we must look at the internal dynamics of the state. Pakistan today is deeply unstable. It is economically paralysed, politically rudderless, and socially fraying. In this context, adventurism in Kashmir becomes a political instrument – a way for the military establishment to reassert authority and deflect domestic discontent.

Unlike his predecessor, the quietly pragmatic General Qamar Javed Bajwa, the current Army Chief, General Asim Munir, known for his aggressive posture and appetite for risk, appears to be reviving the doctrine of 'managed escalation' – a strategy that sees value in carefully calibrated acts of violence under the nuclear threshold. A former ISI chief and deeply embedded within Pakistan's military-intelligence nexus, Mr. Munir has revived a rhetoric that blends ideological grievance with strategic opportunism. His frequent references to Hindu-Muslim relations in Manichean terms and his recent description of Kashmir as Pakistan's "jugular vein" reinforces the 'old' doctrine that sees Kashmir as a perpetual battleground and not as a site for peace. The recent escalation in ceasefire violations across the LOC, in violation of the ceasefire 'agreement' in operation since February 2021, is further evidence of the reckless approach being pursued by him.

This is not without precedent. Each phase of heightened internal unrest or civil-military imbalance in Pakistan has historically coincided with escalatory behaviour towards India – and

Kashmir has been the primary theatre. The Kargil conflict in 1999, launched under the leadership of General Pervez Musharraf during Nawaz Sharif's civilian government, remains a stark example of the military's willingness to bypass its own civilian leadership to provoke confrontation. The Parliament attack in 2001, the Mumbai attacks in 2008, the Uri attack in 2016, and the Pulwama suicide bombing in 2019 – all bear the hallmarks of a strategy designed to trigger a response from India while keeping Pakistan's involvement deniable. These incidents were not isolated acts of terrorism; they were episodes in a sustained campaign of asymmetric warfare.

Re-establishing deterrence

This is why deterrence must be re-established. India cannot afford to allow its adversary to believe that it can continue with such attacks without serious consequences. This is not merely a matter of honour or public expectation; it is one of long-term strategic stability.

The choice of targets in Pahalgalam is telling. Tourism has become a symbol of tentative recovery in Kashmir. It offers livelihoods to ordinary Kashmiris and represents the reweaving of ties between the Valley and the rest of the country. Attacking tourists, therefore, is not only an act of terror, but an attempt to sabotage the very idea of normalcy. To cut off the Valley from its visitors is to deepen the isolation that terrorist groups rely on.

It is important to say this clearly: the people of Kashmir are not complicit in this violence. On the contrary, they are its first victims. The younger generation in the Valley is looking for opportunity, not militancy. They want better education, better jobs, and a future beyond conflict. The narrative that Kashmiris harbour sympathy for terrorists is both factually wrong and strategically dangerous. It alienates the very population whose inclusion is essential to any durable peace. India's internal response, then, must be as resolute as its external one – but not in the language of repression. Instead, it must be expressed through sustained economic investment, political engagement, and continued efforts at social integration. This is not only the right thing to do, but also the strategically smart thing to do.

The timing of Mr. Vance's visit to India offers a moment of diplomatic opportunity. Washington understands the long shadow that state-sponsored terrorism casts over democracies. India must press for clearer public language from the U.S. and its allies, and for sustained pressure on Pakistan's support networks. Sympathy after attacks is welcome; action before them is what matters more.

There are no easy solutions. But clarity must precede action. The Pahalgalam massacre is not simply another tragedy to be absorbed into the long ledger of terror. It is a reminder that ambiguity emboldens the aggressor. The only language that has ever constrained Pakistan's adventurism is the language of credible consequence. This is the time to speak it again.

Content.

- **Coming days after the Kashmir Valley had begun welcoming tourists as part of a fresh season, and while U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance tours India, this is not a random or desperate strike.**
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- **At a time when Pakistan had faded from India's diplomatic radar and foreign policy imagination, it is back: threatening to disrupt much of what we hold dear.**
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Air pollution in India — where does it come from?

A breakdown of the sources of many air pollutants that damage our health and ecosystems

DATA POINT

Hannah Ritchie
Pablo Rosado

Millions of people die prematurely from air pollution every year. Where does this air pollution come from?

Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) is the main pollutant that causes acid rain. **Chart 1** shows where Indian SO₂ emissions came from in 2022. Energy production was the biggest contributor by far. This is predominantly due to power from coal, which has sulphur impurities that are released when it is burned.

Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) can be acutely toxic, inflaming the lungs. The biggest source is transport: NO_x is emitted from the exhaust of cars and trucks. This is almost matched by the burning of coal and gas for electricity production, shown as 'energy' in **Chart 2**.

Black carbon is the soot that fills our skies and lungs. It is a big problem in lower-income countries where people rely on burning biomass and charcoal for cooking and openly burning waste (**Chart 3**).

Methane (CH₄) is a greenhouse gas, so it is mostly discussed regarding contributions to climate change. Agriculture is the biggest source of methane (**Chart 4**). The other sector that contributes a lot is waste. Methane is produced when organic material, such as food waste, rots in conditions without much oxygen (a landfill).

Studies show ammonia (NH₃) could drive up to 3,85,000 premature deaths from particulate matter. Nearly all human emissions of NH₃ come from agriculture (**Chart 5**).

Non-methane volatile organic compounds can be directly toxic and mix with other gases to form ozone and small particulates. Unlike most other pollutants, solvents such as paints, cleaning products, and chemical plants are also major sources (**Chart 6**).

Smogged down

Data for the charts were sourced from "Air pollution kills millions every year — where does it come from?" Published online at OurWorldinData

1.05
million deaths in India were caused by household air pollution in 2021



Chart 1: The chart shows sulphur dioxide emissions by sector in India

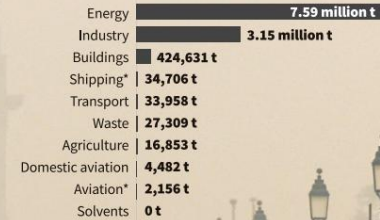


Chart 2: Nitrogen oxides emissions by sector in India

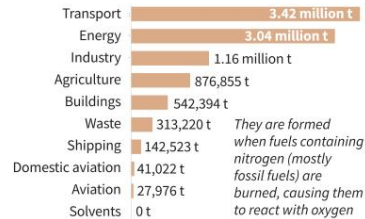


Chart 3: Black carbon emissions by sector in India

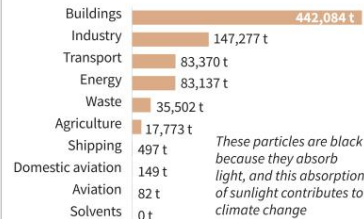


Chart 4: Methane emissions by sector in India

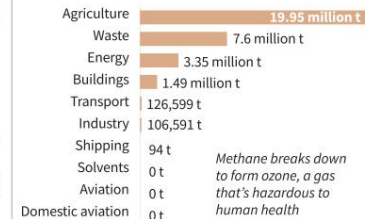


Chart 5: The chart shows ammonia emissions by sector in India

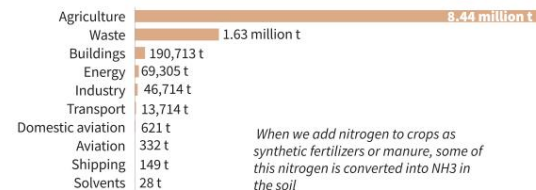
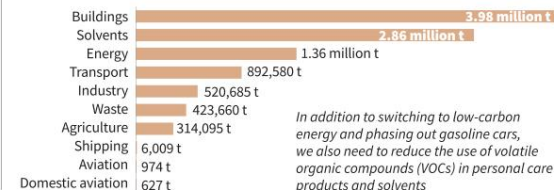


Chart 6: Non-methane volatile organic compound emissions by sector in India



Content.

- **Millions of people die prematurely from air pollution every year. Where does this air pollution come from?**
- **Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) is the main pollutant that causes acid rain.**
- **Energy production was the biggest contributor by far. This is predominantly due to power from coal, which has sulphur impurities that are released when it is burned.**
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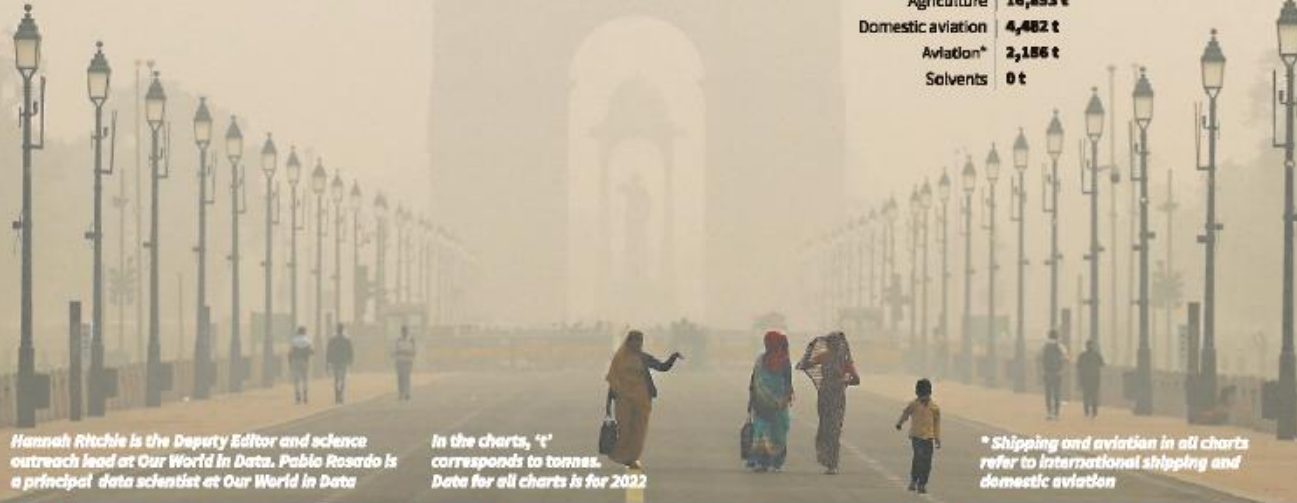
- **Black carbon is the soot that fills our skies and lungs. It is a big problem in lower-income countries where people rely on burning biomass and charcoal for cooking and openly burning waste**
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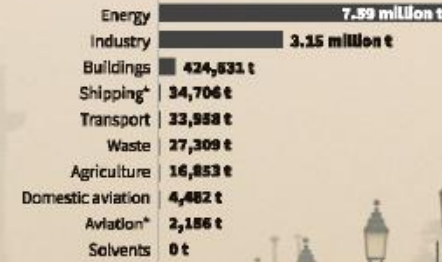
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Hannah Ritchie is the Deputy Editor and science outreach lead at Our World in Data. Pablo Rosado is a principal data scientist at Our World in Data

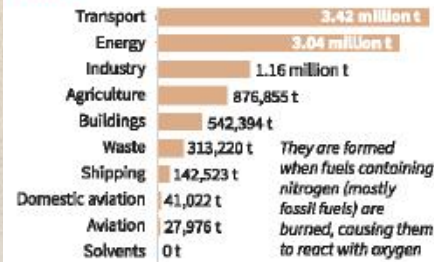
In the charts, 't' corresponds to tonnes. Date for all charts is for 2022

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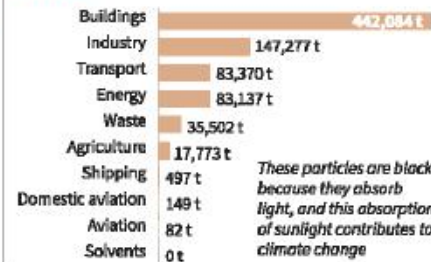
* Shipping and aviation in all charts refer to international shipping and domestic aviation

Chart 2: Nitrogen oxides emissions by sector in India



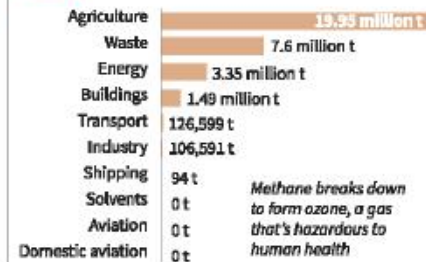
They are formed when fuels containing nitrogen (mostly fossil fuels) are burned, causing them to react with oxygen

Chart 3: Black carbon emissions by sector in India



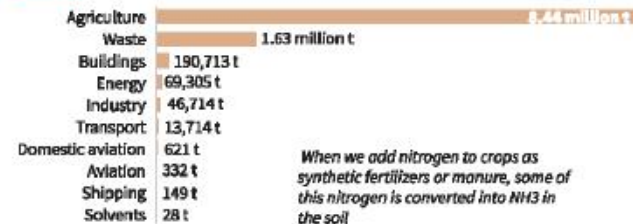
These particles are black because they absorb light, and this absorption of sunlight contributes to climate change

Chart 4: Methane emissions by sector in India



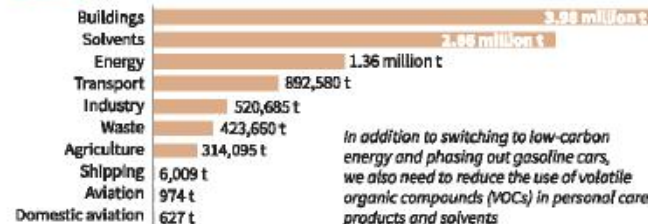
Methane breaks down to form ozone, a gas that's hazardous to human health

Chart 5: The chart shows ammonia emissions by sector in India



When we add nitrogen to crops as synthetic fertilizers or manure, some of this nitrogen is converted into NH₃ in the soil

Chart 6: Non-methane volatile organic compound emissions by sector in India



In addition to switching to low-carbon energy and phasing out gasoline cars, we also need to reduce the use of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in personal care products and solvents

Trans sceptic arguments are incoherent

The U.K. Supreme Court has ruled that the Equality Act, 2010, will not treat trans women as women. In doing so, it drastically curtails the rights and protections that trans women can avail under the law. Effectively, the ruling undermines the U.K.'s Gender Recognition Act, 2004.

In January, U.S. President Donald Trump passed an executive order declaring that his government recognises two sexes – male and female. He said that the order “restores sanity.”

Trans exclusion

Two days ago, I saw a social media post by a leading member of the U.K.'s oldest South Asian and Black feminist group welcoming the Supreme Court ruling for upholding “common sense” and protecting safe same-sex spaces for “biologically” female women while also, according to her, protecting trans women's rights. The Labour Party too welcomed the verdict, saying that it “clarifies” the issue. Why are people who see themselves as opponents to far-right politics welcoming a ruling that is being celebrated by the far-right internationally as a triumph? Perhaps this is because the campaign for trans exclusion has framed itself as feminist.

J.K. Rowling, who fronted and funded the campaign that resulted in the ruling in the U.K., declares that the verdict will keep women and girls “safe” from trans women. Fear-mongering about women's “safety” (from predatory Muslims, Mexicans, or trans women) and immigration are the most potent ingredients of global far-right discourse today. Muslim men are accused of masquerading as Hindus to seduce Hindu women; trans women are accused of being men masquerading as female to rape women.

Alexandr Dugin, the guru of the global far-right, says LGBTQIA+ rights, like all human rights, are symptoms of *kaliyuga* – i.e., caste/race/gender mixing (*varnasamkara*, miscegenation),



Kavita Krishnan

Feminist activist and writer

pollution, and confusion of natural categories and hierarchies. Trans exclusion today is the last socially acceptable bigotry – and thus the portal through which other bigotries slide back into “common sense.”

Billionaires such as Ms. Rowling and Elon Musk have the wealth and power to shape “common sense”, policy, and judicial opinion. They have the approval of Mr. Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Yet they claim to be victimised by trans women's posts on social media. Seen through the refracting lens of far-right ideology, power arrangements appear inverted. Minorities menace majorities, threatening them with elimination and extinction.

Generally, democratic people recognise that there is no evidence to support the ‘Great Replacement; idea: i.e., the far-right claims that whites are being demographically “replaced” by non-whites or (in India), Hindus by Muslims. But the same people are often ready to accept (without a shred of evidence) that women are being replaced by trans women in sports.

Take a closer look at trans sceptical arguments and their appearance of “common sense” begins to come apart, revealing a fundamental incoherence. Ms. Rowling had said she was worried that in a patriarchal society, girls would be tempted to become male. But that doesn't explain why so many would rather be trans women than retain the privilege of passing as “boys” and “men”. And it is these trans women who are the most targeted by trans exclusionary campaigners such as Ms. Rowling.

Some of my feminist friends reassure me (and I suspect, themselves) that the U.K. ruling offers equal but separate facilities and protections (such as bathrooms, domestic violence shelters, and sports) for cis and trans women. ‘Separate but equal’ – have we forgotten that this was the infamous doctrine used to rationalise racial segregation in

the U.S., in schools, housing, transport, and yes, bathrooms? Segregating trans women from other women will make public spaces more hostile to all women. It will entitle misogynists to scrutinise the bodies of every woman, denouncing her as a trans imposter if they think she looks butch or gamine or indeed “too feminine to be true.”

Imane Khelif was assigned female at birth, but this didn't stop Ms. Rowling from calling her a man. Must all girls and women have to carry certificates proving that from birth till the present their external and internal anatomy, as well as chromosomes and hormones, have passed the gender test? Or will we single out women for such tests whose appearance does not conform with traditional femininity?

Scientific evidence

So many who reject science when it comes to vaccines or climate change declare “science is real” to say trans people are not real. But sexual diversity is as “biological” as neurodiversity. Biology is not anatomy: there is mounting scientific evidence of diversity in hormones, chromosomes, and brain structure, resulting in diverse sexual identities.

The erudite Shashi Tharoor has said the use of “they” as a singular pronoun is ungrammatical. I have news for him. The singular “they” as a gender-neutral pronoun has been around since Chaucer. We don't think it's grammatical heresy to say “Everybody should mind their own business” or “Someone left their purse in the classroom.” Feminists were ridiculed when they asked for gender-neutral terms; today, “chairperson” is the norm, not “chairman.”

Science, law, language cannot erase trans people, just as they could not erase gay people. One day, the idea of the sex binary as a biological reality, as “common sense”, will appear as absurd as the idea that the earth is flat, and as bigoted as the idea that women's wombs made them unfit to study, vote or play sports.

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Content.

- **The U.K. Supreme Court has ruled that the Equality Act, 2010, will not treat trans women as women. In doing so, it drastically curtails the rights and protections that trans women can avail under the law. Effectively, the ruling undermines the U.K.'s Gender Recognition Act, 2004.**
- **In January, U.S. President Donald Trump passed an executive order declaring that his government recognises two sexes — male and female. He said that the order “restores sanity.”**
- **LGBTQIA+ is an acronym that represents lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual.**
- **The "+" represents the many other identities that are still being explored and understood. The acronym is constantly evolving and may include other terms like non-binary and pansexual.**

Content.

- **1861: Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, criminalizing "carnal intercourse against the order of nature," is introduced under British rule. This law becomes a major hurdle for LGBTQIA+ rights in India.**
- **2001: The Naz Foundation files a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) challenging Section 377.**
- **2009: A landmark Delhi High Court ruling in Naz Foundatuon vs Govt of NCT of Delhi decriminalizes consensual homosexual acts, seen as a major victory for LGBTQIA+ rights.**
- **2013: The Supreme Court, in a setback, overturns the Delhi High Court decision, upholding Section 377.**
- **2014: The Supreme Court recognizes transgender people as a "third gender." (National Legal Services Authority V/s Union of India popularly known as NALSA judgement)**
- **2018: In a historic decision, the Supreme Court strikes down Section 377, decriminalizing same-sex relationships. (Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India)**

Fact

- **2019: The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 was passed, granting legal recognition and prohibiting discrimination against transgender individuals.**
- **2022: In August 2022, the Supreme Court of India expanded the definition of family to include same-sex couples and queer relationships.**
- **2023: In October 2023, A five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme court rejecting petitions to legalise same-sex marriage in India.**
- **SC ruled that it does not have the authority to modify the Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954 by either removing or adding provisions to include same-sex individuals.**
- **It stated that the responsibility lies with Parliament and state legislatures to enact laws regarding this matter.**



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