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106TH ANNIVERSARY OF JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE

Context

- Prime Minister Modi paid homage to the **martyrs of Jallianwala Bagh**.

What was the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre?

- The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, also known as the Amritsar massacre, occurred on 13th April 1919 and marked one of the darkest chapters in India's colonial history.
- To celebrate the Baisakhi festival and protest the arrest of prominent nationalist leaders **Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal** under the **Rowlatt Act**, a large crowd of men, women, and children had gathered at the Jallianwala Bagh.
- Colonel Reginald Dyer** ordered British Indian Army troops to open fire on a peaceful gathering of thousands, without issuing any warning or order to disperse.
- According to official British records, at least **379 people** were killed and many wounded.

The Rowlatt Act

- The Rowlatt Act, officially known as the **Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919**, was passed on March 10, 1919.
- It gave the British government extraordinary powers to **detain individuals suspected of sedition without trial**.
- This act was based on the recommendations of the Sedition Committee chaired by Sir **Sidney Rowlatt** and was modelled on the **wartime Defence of India Act of 1915**.

British response to Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

- Martial Law:** The shooting was followed by the proclamation of martial law in Punjab.
- The Hunter Commission**, also called the **Disorders Inquiry Committee**, was set up by the British government in **October 1919** to investigate the massacre.
- The Commission criticized Colonel Reginald Dyer for his actions at Jallianwala Bagh.
 - It censured Dyer but did not impose any significant penalties. It did, however, recommend his **resignation from the military**.

Nationalist Response

- Rabindranath Tagore**, the Nobel laureate poet, renounced his knighthood in protest against the brutality of the British actions.

- Mahatma Gandhi**, launched the **Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920**, urging Indians to boycott British goods and institutions.
 - He also gave up the title of **Kaiser-i-Hind**, bestowed by the British for his work during the **Boer War**.
- This movement marked a significant phase in India's struggle for independence.

The Jallianwala Bagh Memorial

- Jallianwala Bagh is a memorial site maintained by the **Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Trust**.
- The site includes several structures like a **memorial flame, bullet-marked walls**, and a **well** where many people had jumped to escape the bullets.
- The memorial also houses a museum and gallery that showcases the events of the massacre and the larger context of India's fight for freedom.



Source: AIR

BR AMBEDKAR JAYANTI

Context

- Recently, India celebrated the legacy of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar on Ambedkar Jayanti, a towering figure in India's fight against caste-based discrimination.

About Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956)

- Born:** April 14, 1891; Mhow, Madhya Pradesh, in **Hindu Mahar Family**.
- He was the **14th child** of Subedar Ramji Maloji Sakpal, a respected figure in the British Army and a **follower of Sant Kabir**.

Education

- B.A. in Economics and Political Science from Bombay University.

- M.A. and Ph.D. in Economics (*Thesis work: National dividend for India — A Historic and Analytical Study*) from Columbia University, and furthered studies at the London School of Economics.

- ♦ His thesis was published as '*Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India*'.

Architect of the Indian Constitution

- **Chairman of the Drafting Committee** of the Constituent Assembly
- He emphasized the importance of **equality, liberty, and fraternity**.
- He was **India's first Minister of Law and Justice**
 - ♦ He **resigned his ministership in 1951**, expressing his differences on the Kashmir issue, India's Foreign Policy and Nehru's Policy towards the Hindu Code Bill.
- He was conferred with the **title of 'Bodhisattva'** by the Buddhist monks at '**Jagatik Buddhism Council**' in 1954 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Major Writings and Publications

- Mooknayak (fortnightly newspaper, in 1920)
- The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution (1923)
- The Bahiskrit Bharat (newspaper, 1927)
- Annihilation of Caste (1936)
- The Untouchables: Who Are They?
- Who Were the Shudras? (1942)
- Thoughts on Linguistic States (1955)

Economic Contributions

- Ambedkar's recommendations to the **Hilton Young Commission** contributed to the establishment of the **Reserve Bank of India**.

Legal Advocacy

- In 1934, he defended the **All India Textile Workers Conference**, highlighting flaws in the **Trade Disputes Act of 1929**
- His vision established a **democratic framework with checks and balances** among the Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary.
- He considered the '**Right to Constitutional Remedies**', enshrined in **Article 32**, as the '**heart and soul**' of the Indian Constitution.

Others

- Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha (aka Outcastes Welfare Association) in 1924
- Led the Mahad Satyagraha (1927)
- Kalaram Satyagraha in Nashik (1930), a temple entry movement for the untouchables.
- Formation of Independent Labour Party (1936)
- Foundation of Bharatiya Bauddha Mahasabha (1955)

Award

- In 1990, he was posthumously awarded the **Bharat Ratna** (highest civilian honour of India).

BR Ambedkar & 'Annihilation of Caste'

- **Origins of Annihilation of Caste:** Originally written as a speech for a 1936 meeting of progressive Hindus under the **Jat-Pat Todak Mandal**, the address was never delivered due to its provocative content.
 - ♦ Instead, Ambedkar published it himself, making it a **foundational text for anti-caste thought in India**.

Core Arguments of the 'Annihilation of Caste'

- **Caste as Social Tyranny:** Ambedkar rejected the view that caste is merely a division of labor; instead, he saw it as a division of laborers — deeply hierarchical and oppressive.
- **Critique of Hindu Scriptures:** He directly attacked the sanctity of Hindu shastras, including Manusmriti, for legitimizing caste discrimination and inequality.
- **Rejection of Gandhi's Approach:** Ambedkar openly criticized Mahatma Gandhi's views on caste, especially his **defense of varna (the four-fold division of society)**, and reforming Hinduism without discarding its texts.
- **Religion as a Social Force:** Ambedkar emphasized that for any real reform, Hinduism must undergo a radical transformation.
 - ♦ He provocatively argued that Hindu society must 'burn the scriptures that preach inequality'.
- **Appeal for Rationality and Justice:** Drawing from liberal and Enlightenment ideals, he urged Indians to abandon traditions that violate human dignity and embrace rationality, human rights, and constitutional morality.

Vision of an Ideal Society

- **Liberty:** It encompasses both freedom from social norms that limit one's options and freedom from physical tyranny.
- **Equality:** Ambedkar pushed for the adoption of perfect equality as he thought that in order to maximize society potential, equal chances must be given from birth.
- **Fraternity:** Ambedkar promoted 'social endosmosis' or the **free exchange of information across all groups**, and saw brotherhood as the foundation of democracy.

Influence on Later Movements

- **Dalit Panthers (1970s):** It emphasized cultural assertion and resistance inspired by Ambedkar's radicalism.
- **Bahujan Samaj Party:** It emerged with an explicitly Ambedkarite ideology aimed at political representation for Dalits and backward classes.

Source: IE

INDIA-ITALY SEEK TO DEEPEN TIES WITH COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

In News

- Deputy Prime Minister of Italy Antonio Tajani, visited India to bolster bilateral cooperation between both the nations.

More about the News

- Both the nations discussed how to boost cooperation in trade, defence, clean energy, and technology, focusing on the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC)**.
- Focus should be on deepening India-Italy cooperation under the **framework of Joint Strategic Action Plan (JSAP) 2025-29**.

India-Italy Relations

- **Historical Connect:** Italy's port cities once served as crucial nodes on the ancient spice trade route, linking the East and the Mediterranean.
 - ♦ The Venetian merchant **Marco Polo's 13th-century** travels to India exemplify the long-standing civilizational contact between the two regions.
- **Diplomatic Ties:** India and Italy established diplomatic relations in 1947, founded on historical connections and shared cultural values.

- ♦ India and Italy elevated their Relations into **Strategic Partnership in 2023**.
- ♦ **The Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025–29** launched in 2024 between India and Italy marks a significant step towards deepening their bilateral relationship.
- ♦ Italy's exit from **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2023**—after being its only G7 signatory—resonates with India's concerns over China's growing footprint in Europe and the Indo-Pacific.
- **Economic Cooperation:** Bilateral trade stood at **\$13.220 billion in 2023–24**, with Indian exports valued at **\$7.94 billion**.
 - ♦ Italy is India's **4th** largest trading partner in the EU and ranked **17th** in FDI inflows into India between **2000 and 2023**.
- **Defence Cooperation:** INS Sumedha participated in a PASSEX (Passing Exercise) with ITS Morosini off the coast of Sardinia in 2023.
 - ♦ The Italian Navy participated in **MILAN 2024**, a multinational naval exercise hosted by India in 2024.
- **Multilateral Convergence:** Both nations support multilateralism, and Italy has joined key Indian-led initiatives such as the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, **Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA)**, and the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC)**.
- **Cultural Diplomacy:** From yoga to Italian cuisine, the cultural exchanges between India and Italy create a unique bond.
 - ♦ The Executive Programme on Cultural Cooperation for the term 2023-27 was signed in 2023.
- **Indian Diaspora:** The Indian community in Italy is estimated at 2 lakhs including Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs).
 - ♦ **The Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA)** was signed in 2023 to facilitate safe and legal migration of seasonal and non-seasonal workers, researchers, professionals and academicians.

Challenges

- **Structural Trade Barriers:** Non-tariff barriers, regulatory delays, and logistical constraints limit potential trade growth between both the nations.
- **Italian Marines Case (2012):** The case caused a diplomatic strain, with concerns over national

sovereignty and legal jurisdiction impacting defence ties.

- **Differing Policies on Military Sales:** Italy has been selling military equipment to Pakistan which has created a perception of policy divergence in defence matters between the two countries.

Way Ahead

- **Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025–29:** Focused execution of this roadmap can unlock potential in areas such as trade, innovation, education, defence and sustainability.
- **Boost Innovation & Start-Up Linkages:** Establish joint incubation centres and tech parks focusing on AI, green energy, biotech, and space.
- **Streamline FDI procedures and regulatory frameworks** to foster a more predictable, investor-friendly environment for Italian investments in India and Indian businesses in Italy.
- During **Italy-India Business, Science and Technology Forum**, Italy emphasised deepening cooperation in AI, supercomputing, defence, innovation, and space technology.
 - ♦ India also underlined new areas of synergy in fashion, luxury goods, pharmaceuticals, food processing, green tech, tourism, and manufacturing.

Source: AIR

US-IRAN NUCLEAR TALKS

In News

- The United States and Iran have resumed negotiations over Iran's nuclear program following a period of heightened tensions, signaling a potential thaw in diplomatic relations.

Earlier talks

- Iran had previously refused direct talks with the U.S. following the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA).
- Indirect talks were held under Joe Biden but were unsuccessful, and Iran accelerated its nuclear program.

Iran's Nuclear Programme

- Iran is a signatory of the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** but it ceased cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after the 1979 revolution.
- Allegations have existed about Iran pursuing a secret nuclear weapons program, although

Iran claims its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

- Iran has enriched uranium to varying degrees, including **19.75% in 2010 and 60% recently, moving closer to weapons-grade uranium (90%)**.

Do you know?

- Uranium enrichment is crucial for nuclear fuel and weapons. Natural uranium contains only about 0.7% of U-235, which needs to be enriched for nuclear use.
- Uranium can be enriched to various levels for reactors (up to 20%) or weapons (90%+ for weapons-grade).

The 2015 Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA)

- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed between Tehran, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, and the European Union.
- It aimed to resolve the nuclear crisis by lifting sanctions on Iran in exchange for Iran limiting its nuclear activities, including **reducing its centrifuges, capping uranium enrichment to 3.67%, and limiting its low-enriched uranium (LEU) stockpile to 300 kg**.
- Iran complied with the deal until the U.S. withdrew in 2018 under President Trump and reimposed sanctions.
- In response, Iran accelerated its nuclear program, **enriching uranium to 60%, which is a significant step towards weapons-grade uranium**.

Potential for a Nuclear Weapon and Related Concerns

- It's estimated that Iran could develop a deployable nuclear warhead within months, if it chooses to do so, given its current enrichment capabilities.
 - ♦ The increasing stockpile and reduced breakout time have raised concerns.
- Israel has expressed strong concerns over Iran's nuclear progress, threatening military action to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.
- Trump has also suggested military action if diplomatic talks fail, with Israel playing a key role in any military operation.

Latest Developments

- Recently, Iran has faced military, political, and economic pressures, including setbacks in its

regional influence and worsening economic conditions.

- Trump offered dialogue, stating that the U.S. couldn't allow Iran to obtain a nuclear bomb, prompting Iran to engage in diplomacy.
- Iran agreed to negotiate, partially due to its weakened position.

Way Forward

- **Revival of JCPOA:** Requires mutual trust-building, sanctions relief, and IAEA monitoring.
- **Multilateral Guarantees:** Broader international consensus is essential to prevent breakout scenarios.
- **Regional Dialogue:** Middle Eastern security architecture must include nuclear non-proliferation commitments.
- **India's Diplomatic Role:** As a responsible regional player, India can advocate for peaceful nuclear energy and non-proliferation.

Source :IE

SAVING TRADITIONAL VARIETIES OF SEEDS

In Context

- The traditional seeds are rapidly disappearing after the adoption of the green revolution and modern agricultural policies.

What are Traditional Seeds?

- Traditional seeds, also known as indigenous or heirloom seeds, are naturally evolved and locally adapted over generations. These seeds are:
 - ♦ Open-pollinated and can be saved by farmers,
 - ♦ Rich in genetic diversity,
 - ♦ Adapted to local climatic and soil conditions, and
 - ♦ Culturally embedded in local food systems.

Benefits of Traditional Seeds

- **Climate Resilience:** Tolerant to drought, floods, and extreme temperatures.
 - ♦ Require less irrigation and fewer chemical inputs.

- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Promote genetic diversity critical for ecological balance and future crop improvement.
- **Nutritional Value:** Millets and pulses contain higher fibre, protein, and micronutrients compared to polished grains.
- **Economic Sustainability:** Lower input costs as farmers can reuse seeds and rely less on commercial seed and agrochemical markets.
- **Cultural and Heritage Value:** Integral to traditional food practices, festivals, and indigenous knowledge systems.
 - ♦ **Example:** Navara rice, a traditional medicinal rice variety from Kerala, is used in Ayurvedic treatments and temple rituals.

Reasons for the Decline of Traditional Seeds

- **Policy Bias toward High-Yielding Varieties (HYVs):** Green Revolution policies focused on maximizing output from a few staple crops like rice and wheat.
 - ♦ Government subsidies, MSP, and procurement favoured HYVs.
- **Market and Consumer Preferences:** Urban markets and public food schemes prioritize polished, high-yield grains.
 - ♦ Lack of awareness about traditional grains leads to poor demand.
- **Inadequate Institutional Support:** Weak community seed banks and poor conservation infrastructure.
 - ♦ Limited investment in research and development for improving traditional varieties.
- **Commercialization of Agriculture:** It has led to the dominance of seed corporations and input-intensive farming models (use of Chemical fertilizers, mechanization, irrigations etc), which prioritize hybrid and genetically modified (GM) seeds.

Key Initiatives and Best Practices

- **Odisha Millet Mission:** Promotes production, consumption, and marketing of millets in tribal districts.
 - ♦ Empowers local farmers and encourages nutritional security.

- **Community Seed Banks:** Grassroots initiatives in states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Odisha support seed conservation, exchange, and revival.
- **M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF):** Tribal Agrobiodiversity Centre in Jeypore, Odisha conserves over 1,200 rice varieties.
- **FAO and Biodiversity International Programs:** Global initiatives to document, conserve, and enhance genetic diversity in agriculture.
- **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY):** Supports organic farming using traditional seeds and indigenous practices.

Way Ahead

- **Policy Reorientation:** Integrate traditional crops into MSP, PDS, and midday meal schemes.
 - ♦ Include climate-resilient crops in the National Food Security Mission.
- **Strengthening Seed Sovereignty:** Expand well-funded community seed banks and regional conservation centres.
 - ♦ Promote Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB) with farmer-scientist collaboration.
- **Market and Branding Support:** Launch awareness campaigns on the health and environmental benefits of traditional crops.
 - ♦ Create GI tags, organic labels, and e-commerce platforms for indigenous grains.
- **Education and R&D Investment:** Revise agricultural curricula to emphasize traditional knowledge systems.
 - ♦ Allocate research grants for improving productivity of traditional varieties.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

ATMOSPHERIC RIVERS

In News

- Recently, a large part of the United States experienced heavy rain, strong winds, and severe thunderstorms caused by an atmospheric river

Atmospheric rivers

- They are narrow, fast-moving bands of moisture and wind—like rivers in the sky—that transport large amounts of water vapor from tropical oceans to land.
- They typically span 402 to 606 km in width and over 1,600 km in length.
- They often resemble hurricanes in intensity and are most common in mid-latitudes.
 - ♦ A famous example is the **Pineapple Express**, which carries moisture from Hawaii to the U.S. and Canadian West Coasts.
 - ♦ However, the recent storm in the U.S. originated from the Caribbean.

Importance and Threats

- Most atmospheric rivers are weak and beneficial, supplying **vital rain and snow**
- They can also cause severe weather such as heavy rain, strong winds, flooding, and mudslides.

Study

- A NASA study predicts that future atmospheric rivers will be longer, wider, and more intense, increasing the risk of severe flooding.

Source: IE

DRDO TESTS LASER WEAPON SYSTEM

In News

- DRDO successfully tested the Mk-II(A) **Laser-Directed Energy Weapon (DEW)** system in Andhra Pradesh.

The Mk-II(A) Laser-Directed Energy Weapon (DEW) system

- The system was developed by DRDO's Centre for High Energy Systems and Sciences (CHESS), Hyderabad along with other labs, academic institutions and Indian industries.
- It has the ability to engage and destroy drones, enemy sensors, and antennae with speed and precision.
 - ♦ With this achievement, India joins a select group of countries, including the **US, China, and Russia**, possessing such advanced capabilities.

- It offers a cost-effective solution to counter **low-cost drone threats**, with the cost of operation being equivalent to just a few litres of petrol.
- It uses a high-intensity laser beam to neutralize targets at the speed of light, minimizing collateral damage and reducing reliance on expensive ammunition.

Importance

- DRDO emphasized that as drone swarms and unmanned aerial systems become major threats, laser-DEWs are emerging as effective alternatives to traditional missile defence systems, offering ease of use, precision, and low operational costs.

Source: TH

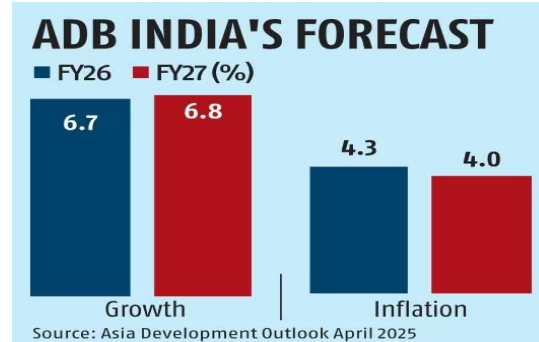
ADB REVISES INDIA'S FY26 GROWTH FORECAST TO 6.7%

Context

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** in the Asian Development Outlook 2025, revised India's GDP growth forecast for FY26 to **6.7%**, down from its earlier estimate of **7%**.

About

- **For FY27**, the growth forecast has been set at **6.8%**.
- The economies of Developing Asia and the Pacific are expected to grow at a rate of **4.9% in 2025**, which is a slight decrease from 5% in 2024.
- **Reasons:**
 - ♦ **Rising US Tariffs:** The imposition of higher tariffs on India's exports could disrupt trade and investment flows, potentially creating volatility in the domestic financial market.
 - ♦ **Structural Food Inflation:** A mismatch between demand and supply trends contribute to higher food inflation and raise inflationary expectations in the absence of effective policies to improve food supply chain resilience.
- **Mitigating Factors:** The risks could potentially be mitigated by a **trade agreement between India and US**, which is being negotiated.
 - ♦ India's exports to the US are only **2%** of GDP, limiting direct impact.



Asian Development Bank

- ADB is a regional development bank established in **1966** for Social and Economic Development. It has **68 members**.
- It is a **multilateral development bank**, which seeks to help its developing member countries to reduce poverty and improve their people's quality of life through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth and regional integration.
- **Headquarters:** Manila, Philippines.

Source: BS

EXERCISE AFRICA INDIA KEY MARITIME ENGAGEMENT (AIKEYME)

In News

- The first edition of the large-scale multilateral exercise Africa India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME) is being held from 13 to 18 April 2025.

Africa India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME) exercise

- AIKEYME, which means 'Unity' in Sanskrit, is planned for six days from 13 to 18 Apr 25 and will include participation from **Comoros, Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and South Africa, alongside the co-hosts India and Tanzania**.
- It aligns with India's vision of Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions (**MAHASAGAR**).

Importance

- It aims to address shared regional maritime challenges by enhancing interoperability and joint operations among participating navies.
- It also reflects the strong and friendly ties between India and African nations.

Source: TH

ALFALFA HAY

Context

- The delay in India's approval of **genetically modified (GM) alfalfa** hay imports from the US has emerged as a contentious issue in ongoing Indo-US trade negotiations.
- ♦ Despite clearance from India's **Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC)**, the final nod from the Agriculture Ministry remains pending.

About Alfalfa Hay

- It is often referred to as the '**Queen of Forages**' and is a highly nutritious and versatile crop widely used in agriculture and livestock farming.
- ♦ It is rich in protein, calcium, and essential vitamins, making it an ideal feed for dairy cattle, horses, and other livestock.
- ♦ Its high fiber content aids in digestion and promotes overall animal health.

- Alfalfa is a **perennial legume** that thrives in **well-drained soils** and **moderate climates**.
- ♦ It fixes nitrogen in the soil, reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers and improving soil fertility.
- It has a **deep root system**, which allows it to access nutrients and water from deeper soil layers, making it drought-resistant.

Other Food Safety Issues in Trade Talks With U.S.

- **Ready-to-Drink (RTD) Alcoholic Beverages:** India is considering relaxing food safety norms for RTD low-alcohol beverages, a concern raised by the United States Trade Representative (**USTR**).
 - ♦ Current regulations allow 0.5-8% alcohol content, but discussions are underway to permit 10-15% alcohol in this category.
- **Whiskey Import Standards:** The USTR has sought explicit protection for US whiskey products like Bourbon and Tennessee Whiskey.
 - ♦ India's FSSAI permits these imports, but further clarifications are being discussed.

Source: ET

