

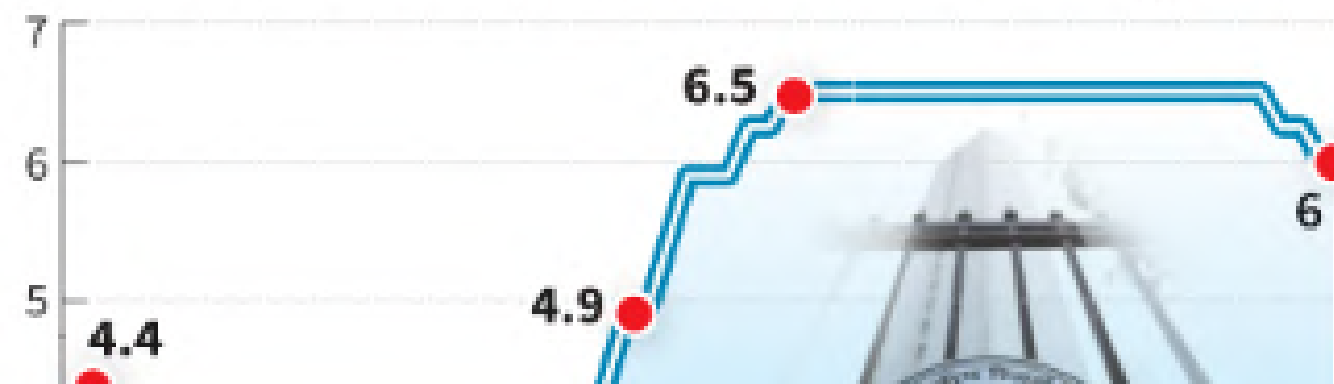


GS Paper 3-Economy

RBI cuts repo rate by 0.25%, trims GDP growth forecast

Credit cushion

The Reserve Bank of India slashed the repo rate by 25 basis points to 6% on Wednesday. The repo rate is the rate at which the RBI lends to banks to meet their short-term funding needs





KEY POINTS

- The RBI cut the repo rate to 6% to support growth amid global trade tensions and lowered the GDP forecast to 6.5%.
- The policy stance shifted to "accommodative," with Governor Malhotra highlighting trade-related uncertainties but manageable inflation risks.





THE HINDU



GS Paper 1-Culture

Epic retold



An enactment of Kolkali, depicting the Pandava-Kaurava war from the Mahabharata, performed in front of Sree Radmanabhaswamy.

KEY POINTS

- Velakali is a traditional martial art dance from South Kerala, performed by Nair warriors and inspired by Kalaripayattu. Originating in Ambalapuzha, it depicts battle scenes, especially from the Mahabharata, and is showcased during temple festivals like Pankuni with swordplay, rhythmic music, and vibrant costumes.





THE HINDU



GS Paper 3-Species

Kerala and T.N. to conduct joint Nilgiri tahr census from April 24



KEY POINTS

- The Nilgiri tahr, endemic to the Western Ghats and the state animal of Tamil Nadu, is endangered due to habitat loss and hunting.
- It is listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List and is protected under India's Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.





GS Paper 3-Economy

New scheme
to modernise
irrigation
network gets
Cabinet nod

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

KEY POINTS

- The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved “Modernisation of Command Area Development and Water Management (M-CADWM)” as a sub-scheme of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY).
- The scheme aims to modernise India’s irrigation infrastructure, improve water-use efficiency for small farmers using advanced technologies





THE HINDU



GS Paper 2-IR

Understanding India's China conundrum

Today's China is evidently not the China of Deng Xiaoping. With the advent of Xi Jinping in 2013, China has changed even more and there is little indication that it has since retracted from this path. On the other hand, it is harking more and more to its past, wallowing in self-pity as a 'wronged' civilisation. As this becomes more pronounced, the need for caution becomes self-evident, at least as far as countries on its borders are concerned. China's border provocations, in the Himalayas for instance, can be traced to its determination to restore the Qing Dynasty frontiers, notwithstanding the evident weakness of these claims.

From skirmishes to some de-escalation

The border skirmishes with India in Depsang (2013), Demchok (2016), Doklam (2017), and Galwan (2020) serve to confirm this hypothesis. The warm sentiments exchanged between leaders of India and China recently, therefore, need to be taken with a great deal of circumspection. Much of the rest of the world, apart from India, has been surprised by the recent outburst of sentiments. Caution is, thus



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in October (2024), adding that "our cooperation is not only (mutually) beneficial, but also essential for global peace and prosperity". Subsequent to this, there has been mention of the revival of the SR (Special Representatives) talks in the near future.

De-escalation of tensions on the border and putting in place new 'patrolling arrangements' are important, but fall well short of robust negotiating stages. Specifics are, however, important in dealing with such issues, all the more so in the case of a nation such as China. In a world that is no longer considered multipolar, and where pluralism is at a severe disadvantage, most experts veer to the view that 'Might is again Right'. Also, that references to the 'rules based international order' have little meaning. Hence, the need for caution.

A reality check

Meanwhile, China, in March, announced that it is increasing its Defence Budget by 7.2% over that of the previous year. This is approximately three times higher than that of India, and should serve as a warning to India. India's defence spending is currently believed to be less than 2% of its GDP.

pious words will be needed to convince the world (India included) about China's real intentions before the Elephant and the Dragon can dance together. India must, hence, exercise utmost vigil.

In the neighbourhood

Meanwhile, as a part of its current foreign policy initiatives, China has embarked on a quest for new friends in India's 'backyard'. India needs to be vigilant about this development. The latest is Bangladesh. After the eclipse of the Sheikh Hasina regime in Bangladesh, and a successful visit by Bangladesh's Chief Adviser, Mohammed Yunus, to China in March, Bangladesh has now come directly on China's radar, and is being viewed as a 'good friend'.

This development, apart from being an aspect of deep concern, creates a new void on India's eastern flank. What is also becoming evident is that even as India has been assiduously courting the U.S., it seems to be losing focus on strengthening and improving relations with countries in its immediate neighbourhood. This situation extends to West Asia and North Africa as well.

Again, if energy security remains the 'Hob-



KEY POINTS

- Under Xi Jinping, China has become more assertive, increasing military strength and territorial claims, particularly in the Himalayas. Tensions with India persist, and China is expanding its influence in India's neighborhood and securing energy resources. India must stay vigilant amid shifting global power dynamics.





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GS2-Governance

Ministry of Panchayati Raj



Evidence-Based Rural Development Gets a Push with Rollout of First-Ever Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) Baseline Report for FY 2022-23

PAI 2022–23: Out of 2.16 Lakh Validated Panchayats, 35.8% Gram Panchayats Recognized as Performers; 61.2% Identified as Aspirants; Gujarat and Telangana Lead as Front Runners

Posted On: 09 APR 2025 1:43PM by PIB Delhi

KEY POINTS

- The Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) measures the progress of 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats in India towards localized SDGs, categorizing them as Front Runners, Performers, Aspirants, or Beginners. It uses 435 indicators to support evidence-based planning and guide rural development.





GS Paper 2-IR

India, Russia Approve Six Strategic Projects To Boost Investment Ties



KEY POINTS

- India and Russia have agreed on six new strategic projects to enhance bilateral investment cooperation, discussed during the eighth session of the India–Russia Working Group on Priority Investment Projects in New Delhi. The session focused on strengthening economic ties, with over 80 businesses from both countries participating in the India–Russia Investment Forum.

