

## Pakistan announced the suspension of the Simla Agreement after India puts Indus Waters Treaty on hold

The Agreement was **signed between India and Pakistan in 1972** as a peace measure after the India-Pakistan 1971 War.

- 1971 war led to the creation of new nation of Bangladesh out of East Pakistan.

### Key Highlights of Simla Agreement

- **Bilateral Resolution of Disputes:** Both countries agreed to **resolve all outstanding issues** through bilateral negotiations, **excluding any third-party intervention**.
  - ⊕ Both sides also agreed to **respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity** in accordance with the **Charter of the United Nations**.
- **Line of Control (LOC):** The **ceasefire line** that existed after the war on **17<sup>th</sup> December, 1971** in Jammu and Kashmir was transformed into the Line of Control (LoC).
- **Normalisation of Relations:** Steps shall be taken to resume communications including border posts, promote travel facilities, trade and economic cooperation, and exchanges in science and culture.

### Important outcomes of the Agreement

- Led to **Pakistan's diplomatic recognition of Bangladesh**, and **release of around 93,000 Pakistani prisoners of war** captured by India.
- India returned over 13,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land seized during the war **except a few strategic areas in the Chorbit Valley** (approx. 883 km<sup>2</sup>), part of the **Shyok river valley in Ladakh**.

## Mati Carbon, Indian-led climate initiative wins \$50m XPRIZE Carbon Removal competition

Mati Carbon uses an **Enhanced Rock Weathering model**, which captures **carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)** while boosting **crop yields for smallholder farmers**. This offers a rare synergy of **environmental & social impact**.

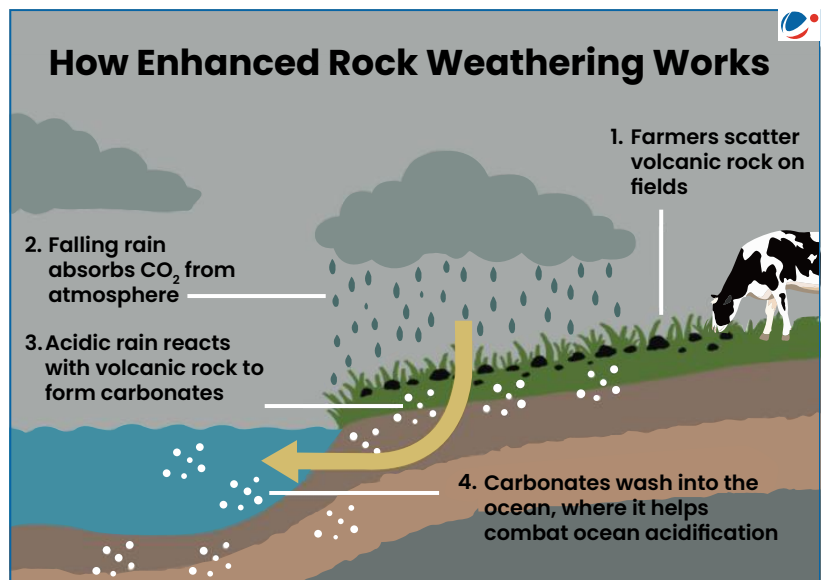
- **XPRIZE**, launched in 2021, challenges innovators to deploy scalable solutions for removing CO<sub>2</sub>.

### About Enhanced Rock Weathering Model

- **Definition:** Enhanced Rock Weathering involves **grinding basalt (or other volcanic rocks like Olivine)** into a **fine powder** and then **spreading it on various landscapes**. E.g., farmlands, forests, and coastlines.
  - ⊕ **The Basaltic powder then reacts over time**, removing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and locking it away in an inorganic form that will wash into lakes, rivers, and oceans.
  - ⊕ **Basalt's good CO<sub>2</sub> absorption capabilities** stem from its high content of calcium, magnesium, and iron.

### Additional Benefits of Enhanced Rock Weathering Model

- **Agricultural Benefits**
  - ⊕ **Increased crop yields** due to improved soil health. E.g., Farmers report **70% higher yields**.
  - ⊕ **Reduced fertiliser costs** as basalt releases essential minerals. E.g., reduces pesticide use by 65%.
- **Environmental & Ecosystem Benefits**
  - ⊕ **Counters ocean acidification** by increasing seawater alkalinity via bicarbonate runoff.
  - ⊕ **Enhances long-term carbon storage** (10,000+ years) compared to organic carbon methods.
- **Scalability & Practical Advantages**
  - ⊕ **Globally abundant feedstocks** (e.g., basalt rock) with existing mining infrastructure.
  - ⊕ **Low-tech implementation**—uses commercially available equipment.



## About 242 million hectares (16%) of global cropland is affected by toxic metal pollution: Study

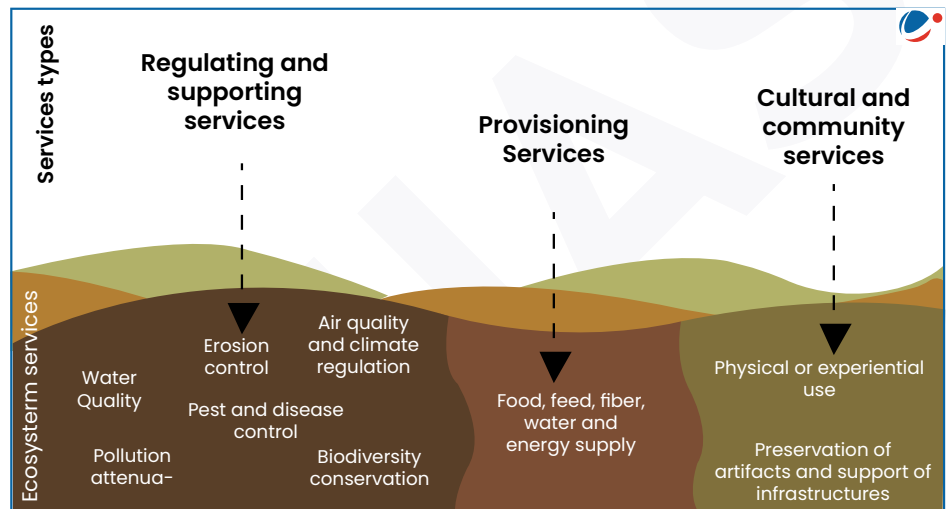
The study found that soil pollution by toxic metals has considerable **impacts on food production and food safety** and areas at **most risk** include southern China, **northern and central India**, and the Middle East.

### Metal Pollution in Soil

- Toxic metals including heavy metals and metalloids are **nondegradable** and therefore **accumulate over decadal timescales** in soils
  - ⊕ Heavy metals are **namely arsenic (As), cadmium (Cd), chromium (Cr), mercury (Hg), lead (Pb), copper (Cu), zinc (Zn), nickel (Ni)**.
  - ⊕ **Cadmium, the most widespread pollutant**, exceeds safe levels in 9% of soils globally.
- There are **two main sources of toxic metals** in soil:
  - ⊕ **Geogenic**: Through bedrocks (soil parent materials) and atmospheric transportation after volcanic emissions and wind erosion.
  - ⊕ **Anthropogenic**: Agricultural (irrigation, phosphorus fertilizers etc.), household (paints, batteries etc.), and industrial (mining, metal smelting etc.) activities.

### Consequences of soil pollution

- **Ecosystem Disruption**: Affects the primary productivity of natural and agricultural ecosystems and leads to the overall loss of soil ecosystem services (refer infographic).
- **Human health**: Exposure to soil pollution contributes to more than 500,000 premature deaths globally each year.
- **Bioaccumulation**: Bioaccumulation in organisms can render elements toxic in the human food chain.
- **Nutrient Imbalance**: Due to alteration in soil biodiversity and loads of nutrients.



## SC Asks Centre to Consider Mandating Minimum Vote Percentage for Uncontested Elections to Ensure Representation

Supreme Court's remarks came in response to a PIL challenging **Section 53(2) of the Representation of the People Act**, which provides for **direct election of candidates in uncontested elections**.

### Key Observations of Supreme Court (SC)

- **Democracy & Majority**: SC highlighted, **democracy** is based on **majority rule** and suggested that even in uncontested elections, candidate **should receive minimum percentage of votes** to be declared elected.
- **Representation**: Aim is to ensure that the **elected candidate** has some **level of popular support**, even when **no competition** exists.

### Landmark Supreme Court Judgements in Reforming India's Election Process

- **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) v. Union of India (2002)**: Mandated candidates to **disclose criminal, financial, and educational details**, enhancing voter transparency.
- **People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) v. Union of India (2013)**: Introduced **NOTA** option on Electronic Voting Machine (EVMs); empowering voters to **reject candidates as their fundamental right of choice (Article 19(1)(a))**.
- **Lily Thomas v. Union of India (2013)**: Struck down **Section 8(4) of RPA**, ensuring immediate disqualification of convicted legislators.
- **Lok Prahari v. Union of India (2013)**: Advocated for swift resolution of election-related disputes, emphasizing timely justice and transparency.
- **ADR v. Union of India (2024)**: Declared **Electoral Bonds Scheme unconstitutional**, restoring transparency in political funding.

### Steps Taken by the Election Commission of India for Electoral Reforms

- **SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation)**: Launched in 2009 by the ECI to enhance voter participation in India's electoral process.
- **Home Voting for Eligible Voters in General Elections 2024**: For the first time, home voting was extended nationwide for senior citizens above 85 years and PwDs with 40% disability, ensuring convenience and accessibility.
- **Elimination of duplicate voter IDs (2025)**: It is currently being undertaken in collaboration with **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)**.

## New UN report warns of global social crisis driven by insecurity, inequality, and distrust: World Social Report 2025

The **World Social Report** is the **flagship publication** of the **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)** on social development issues.

- **The Report** makes the case for a new policy consensus based on three principles – **equity, economic security for all, and solidarity.**

### Key Issues Highlighted by the Report

- **Insecure Livelihoods & Enduring Poverty Risks:** Over **690 million** live in extreme poverty, and **2.8 billion** are near it. Small economic shocks can push them back into poverty, making escapes fragile.
- **Persistent & Deep Inequalities:** Income inequality, measured by the Gini coefficient, has increased in 52 of 128 countries over the past 30 years.
  - ⊕ **E.g.,** Inequality has grown in populous nations like China and India, and in most high-income countries.
- **Declining Trust and Social Cohesion:** Trust in governments and institutions is declining globally, threatening social cohesion.
  - ⊕ **E.g.,** 57% of people worldwide express low confidence in their government.

### Recommendations

- **Apply a Social Lens to Policymaking:** Based on the Copenhagen Declaration (1995), development must put people at the center.
- **Human Development:** Invest in people through quality services—education, healthcare, housing—and universal, adequate social protection.
- **Institutions for Social Cohesion:** Institutions must be trustworthy, inclusive, and adaptable to ensure equity.

## Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development (1995)

### World Summit for Social Development



### OBJECTIVES

The Copenhagen Declaration, adopted at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, aim to make people the central focus of development.

### KEY COMMITMENTS



#### ERADICATION OF POVERTY

Declared the elimination of poverty as both an ethical and social imperative



#### FULL EMPLOYMENT

Promoted full and productive employment as a key goal



#### SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Stressed fostering social inclusion and integration for all members of society

### Also In News



#### Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)

CCS takes measures against Pakistan on Pahalgam.

#### About CCS

- **Composition:** chaired by the Prime Minister, includes the ministers for Finance, Defence, Home Affairs, and External Affairs. The defence chiefs and senior bureaucrats may also participate as needed.
- **Functions:**
  - ⊕ It handles key decisions on national security, defence, and major appointments in security bodies.
  - ⊕ It discusses internal security, law and order, foreign affairs with security concerns, etc.

#### About Cabinet Committees

- The **Prime Minister sets up these committees** with selected members of the Cabinet.
- There are eight Cabinet committees at present, including on issues such as Economic Affairs, Political Affairs, and Parliamentary Affairs.



#### Musk Deer

As per a **report by the Central Zoo Authority (CZA)**, currently **no breeding programme** has been started in Indian zoos for the conservation of musk deer.

#### About Musk Deer

- Musk deer are **small, solitary ungulates, active at night or twilight**, belonging to the family Moschidae.
- They comprise **7 species** (e.g., Kashmir, Himalayan, Anhui, etc.) and exist in **13 countries in Asia**, including **India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, Russia (Siberia), etc.**
- **They are hunted for their 'Musk Gland'**, a secretion (**only by adult males to attract mates**) highly valued in the **perfume industry**.
- **Habitat:** Askot Wildlife Sanctuary, Gangotri National Park, etc.
- **Conservation Status**
  - **IUCN:** Endangered, except Siberian Musk Deer (Vulnerable)
  - **CITES:** Appendix I (Only the populations of Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan; all other populations are included in Appendix II)
  - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I





### Inland Waterways

India achieved a **record 145.5 million tonnes cargo movement** on inland waterways in FY 2024–25, up from 18.1 MMT in FY 2013–14, registering a CAGR of 20.86%.

#### Key Takeaways

- **India aims** to increase IWT modal share from **2% to 5%**, and raise traffic to 200+ MMT by 2030 and 500+ MMT by 2047 under **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision**.
- Number of National Waterways increased from **5 to 111**, with the **operational length growing from 2,716 km (2014–15) to 4,894 km (2023–24)**.



### Underground Coal Mining

Recently, the **Ministry of Coal** has introduced measures aimed at **promoting underground coal mining**.

- These incentives address the traditional **challenges of high capital investment and longer gestation periods** in the mining sector.
- Underground coal mining is **inherently more environment-friendly**, as it causes significantly less surface disruption compared to opencast operations.

#### Measures Taken

- **Reduction in Floor Revenue Share:** From **4% to 2%** offering substantial **fiscal relief** and **enhancing the financial viability** of underground projects.
- **Waiver of Upfront Payment:** Encouraging **participation from the private sector** and facilitating **faster project implementation**.



### AI Kiran

AI Kiran, an initiative to empower women in Artificial Intelligence, has been launched.

#### About AI Kiran

- **Objective:** To foster a vibrant AI community where women can thrive as innovators, changemakers, and leaders.
- **Led by:** Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India.
- **Focus Areas:** It highlights contributions of over 250 women driving advancements in AI across critical sectors such as education, healthcare,

#### About KIRAN Scheme

- The Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN) Scheme was launched by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**
- **Aim:** Promote gender equality in science and technology by supporting and empowering women in the field.



### DigiLocker

The Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment launched the issuance of sports certificates via DigiLocker at the Indira Gandhi Stadium in New Delhi.

- **Significance:** Sports certificates issued via DigiLocker will soon be integrated with **the National Sports Repository System (NSRS)**, enabling automatic disbursement of Government cash rewards directly into athletes' bank accounts.

#### About DigiLocker

- **Launch:** 2015. (Secure cloud-based platform.)
- **Ministry:** flagship initiative of Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY) under Digital India programme.
- **Aims** at 'Digital Empowerment' of citizens by providing access to authentic digital documents to citizen's digital document wallet.



### Measles-Rubella

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the **National Zero Measles-Rubella Elimination Campaign**, on the occasion of World Immunization Week.

#### About Measles and Rubella

- Measles and Rubella are highly **contagious viral diseases** that can cause severe illness, lifelong complications, and death.
- India aims to **eliminate Measles-Rubella by 2026**.
- As part of Universal Immunization Programme, two free doses of the Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccine are given.
  - ⊕ Currently India's MR vaccination coverage stands at **93.7% for the first dose** and **92.2% for the second dose**, as per 2024-25 HMIS data.



### SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme

The Indian government has announced that Pakistan nationals will not be permitted to travel to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES).

#### About SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme

- **Launched:** In **1992**, following the decision at the 4th SAARC Summit held in Islamabad in 1988.
- **Aim:** **Promote** people-to-people contact and enhance regional cooperation among SAARC members.
- **Currently, the list included 24 categories of entitled persons**, which include Dignitaries, Judges of higher courts, etc.

#### About The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

- **Genesis:** It was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka in 1985.
- **Members:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



### Algorithmic management

As per a **new report by the International Labour Organization (ILO)**, algorithmic management of work is **leading to decline in job quality**.

#### Algorithmic Management (AM) of Work

- It refers to the **allocation, monitoring and evaluation** of work tasks and workers' performance **through extensive data collection, surveillance, real-time decision-making and metrics-driven evaluations**.
- It integrates digital technologies such as **big data analytics, machine learning, geolocation and wearable devices** to automate or support functions **traditionally performed by human managers**.
- AM has expanded to traditional sectors including warehouses, factories, call centres, transportation etc.



### BRIC-inStem

India achieved breakthrough in gene therapy for Haemophilia at **BRIC-inStem**.

- Haemophilia is an **inherited bleeding disorder** in which blood does not clot properly.

#### About BRIC-inStem

- Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine (inStem), is a state-of-the-art research institute in Bangalore, India under BRIC.
  - ⊕ **Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC)**, established in 2023, unified 14 autonomous institutions under one umbrella.
- inStem is a premier research institute focused on **stem cell science** and regenerative biology.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI