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Israel set for full control of Gaza City after security vote; EU, U.K. urge for Gaza ceasefire



Israel's military will "take control" of Gaza City under a new plan approved by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's security cabinet, touching off a wave of criticism.

Objectives:

- Establish a security perimeter rather than govern Gaza indefinitely
- Evacuate civilians from Gaza City—estimated at up to a million—and move them to central Gaza camps by around October 7, the anniversary of the Hamas attack in 2023
- The plan includes five strategic pillars: disarming Hamas, returning hostages, demilitarizing Gaza, imposing Israeli security control, and creating a new civilian administration that is neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Authority

Internal dissent: The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), particularly Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir, has warned against the plan, citing risks to hostages and military overextension. Opposition voices, including those of hostage families and political figures like Yair Lapid, have also criticized the move.

Humanitarian concerns: Aid organizations, doctors in Gaza, and international bodies warn of a catastrophic humanitarian fallout—including collapsed health services, severe malnutrition, mass displacement, and escalating violence.

Global reaction:

- Germany suspended arms exports to Israel that could be used in Gaza
- The UK, EU, Australia, and other countries have condemned the plan or urged Israel to reconsider.



STATE



Kannur's famous two rupee doctor

Dr Rairu Gopal was more than just a healer. He touched hearts with his genuineness and ethical approach to what he saw as his calling. In an era when the medical profession has come to be viewed as a money-spinning machine, it would do well to understand the beliefs and values that Kannur's 'two-rupee doctor' espoused. On most days, he would see more than 200 patients. He charged just Rs 2 as consultation fee for nearly half a century, before he increased it to Rs 10. He dedicated himself to the service of humanity. Dr. Rairu passed away on Aug 02.

TN govt unveils education policy, commits to two language formula as against NEP

- Tamil Nadu explicitly rejects the NEP's three-language formula and continues its long-standing tradition of teaching only Tamil and English, without Hindi or any third language.
- It is positioned as a state-specific alternative to the central government's National Education Policy, reflecting Tamil Nadu's distinct cultural and educational priorities.
- The policy continues the no-detention policy up to Class VIII, retains board exams for Classes X and XII, and abolishes examinations for Class XI.
- Upholding Tamil and English marks the state's effort to preserve regional identity and resist perceived imposition of Hindi. This reflects a deep-rooted socio-political stance dating back decades.
- In light of the Centre withholding over ₹2,152 crore under Samagra Shiksha—owing to Tamil Nadu's refusal to implement NEP—the state is allocating its own funds to maintain education infrastructure and teacher salaries.
- Tamil Nadu has adhered to the two-language policy since the 1960s, dating back to C.N. Annadurai's government. This position has remained consistent across party lines, including both DMK and AIADMK governments.
- Policy experts have raised concerns that the SEP (State Education Policy) lacks forward-looking reforms. Critics argue that it largely replicates the NEP under a different label, neglects critical recommendations from the drafting committee, and misses opportunities to overhaul pedagogy, entry age norms, and teacher recruitment processes.



Why NASA wants to send a nuclear reactor to moon. How it will work?



NASA's interest in sending a nuclear reactor to the Moon is tied to its long-term plans for a sustained human and robotic presence there, especially under the Artemis program.

Why NASA Wants a Nuclear Reactor on the Moon?

Reliable, Continuous Power

- Solar power works well on the Moon's surface during the 14-day lunar daytime, but during the 14-day lunar night, temperatures plunge to -173°C , and solar panels produce no electricity.
- A nuclear reactor can provide constant power regardless of sunlight, dust, or weather conditions.

Support for Permanent Bases

- Long-term lunar habitats, mining operations, and scientific experiments will need 24/7 electricity for life support, communications, and industrial processes.

High Energy Demand Projects

- Producing rocket fuel from lunar ice (via electrolysis) or extracting oxygen from regolith requires substantial, uninterrupted energy.

Gateway to Mars Missions

- The technology tested on the Moon could later be used on Mars, where dust storms can block sunlight for weeks.

How It Will Work – Fission Surface Power (FSP) System

NASA is developing a small, modular fission reactor, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Energy and private companies like Lockheed Martin and Westinghouse.

Basic Design: Uses low-enriched uranium fuel. Fission reactions split uranium atoms, releasing heat.

Heat-to-Electricity Conversion-Heat is transferred to a power conversion unit—often using Stirling engines, thermoelectric devices, or gas turbines—to produce electricity.

Advantages Over Solar-Works during lunar night and in shadowed craters, Not affected by lunar dust covering panels, Smaller footprint for same energy output.

Global free market is a myth

The idea of a global free market is a myth; powerful countries pursue self-interest regardless of free-market rhetoric.

- Donald Trump's 50% tariff on Indian exports illustrates protectionist policies that contradict free-market ideals.
- US actions, including complicity in Gaza's devastation and strategic use of oil imports, show economic policies driven by political motives.

Historical Context

- Since 1991, Indian economic policy has been based on the American-led free-market ideology, focused on dismantling trade barriers.
- Economists believed that global free markets benefit all if countries specialize and trade freely.
- India integrated into global trade and benefited, especially in sectors like IT.
- But recent events show there is no genuine free market globally.

Impact of Trump's Actions

- Tariffs on India disrupt the premise of global free markets.
- India has realized the need for self-reliance and strategic thinking.
- The real lesson: political and strategic motives override market principles.

Recommended Actions for India

1. Reciprocal Tariffs

Impose a 50% tariff on US goods to signal that India will respond to unfair trade actions.

2. Diversify Oil Sources

- Strengthen ties with Russia and Iran for oil imports.
- Consider purchasing oil from Iran despite US sanctions.

3. Reduce External Dependence

- Focus on domestic manufacturing to meet demand and boost competitiveness.
- Build a nimble government role in guiding industry, not leaving it entirely to market forces.

Strategic Imperatives

- Ensure sovereignty in economic policy.
- Secure reliable oil supply.
- Build global competitiveness for goods and services.
- Develop self-reliance to reduce vulnerability to foreign economic pressures.

India must adopt a more imaginative, self-sufficient economic policy. The naive belief in the global free market must be replaced with strategic realism. In the face of growing external threats, India should assert sovereignty in trade and production.



With tariffs, India's growth rate needs a careful watch



Context

- **The U.S. has imposed:**
 - a. 25% reciprocal tariff on Indian exports (effective August 7, 2025).
 - b. 25% penal levy on Indian exports (effective August 29, 2025) due to continued oil imports from Russia.
- **Aim:** Narrow U.S. trade deficit with India, which in 2024–25 was \$41.18 billion in India's favour.

Impact of Reciprocal Tariffs

- **Trade Balance:**
 - Could lower India's exports to the U.S.
 - **Example:** If elasticity = 1, a 25% tariff may reduce India's exports to the U.S. by ~25%.
- **Current Account Deficit (CAD):**
 - Could rise from 6.5% of GDP to around 6.59–6.74%.
- **GDP Growth:**
 - Likely to be ~0.5% lower than base forecast if tariffs remain in effect for the whole year.

Caveats & Mitigating Factors

- New trade agreements (UK, EU) may boost exports and reduce negative effects.
- Tariff increases by other countries on U.S. goods could improve India's competitiveness.
- Rupee depreciation (hovering near ₹87.5 per USD) may offset part of CAD impact by boosting export competitiveness.

Policy Suggestions

1. Negotiate with the U.S. to avoid prolonged tariffs and levies.
 2. Diversify export markets to reduce dependence on the U.S.
 3. Review India's own tariffs and adjust to support competitiveness.
 4. Use world trade forums to push back against unilateral U.S. actions.
 5. Manage imports from Russia to balance geopolitical and economic needs.
- Tariffs and levies together pose a serious risk to India's external account and growth.
 - Without effective negotiation and diversification, India's GDP growth could fall by over 0.6 percentage points in 2025–26.
 - Strategic trade diplomacy is essential to protect India's economic interests.

India's EV push : as cars fall behind centre bets big on electrifying trucks



Context

- India's electric vehicle (EV) transition has been faster in two- and three-wheelers but slower in electric cars.
- The central government is now shifting focus to electrifying trucks, especially medium and heavy commercial vehicles (M&HCVs), to cut emissions and reduce fuel imports.

Reasons for Focus on Trucks

- Trucks account for ~2% of vehicles but contribute ~40% of road transport CO₂ emissions.
- Heavy reliance on diesel makes them a major driver of oil imports.
- Electrification can significantly reduce both emissions and import bills.

Government Plans & Incentives

- Under the PM e-Drive Scheme (part of FAME-III framework), subsidies will be extended to encourage fleet operators to adopt electric trucks.
- Focus areas:
 - a. Medium-duty trucks for intra-city logistics.
 - b. Heavy-duty trucks for inter-city freight corridors.
- Financial support to be given to both battery-electric trucks and hydrogen fuel cell trucks.

Challenges

1. High upfront cost – Electric trucks can be 2–3× more expensive than diesel trucks.
2. Charging infrastructure gap – Need for megawatt charging systems along highways.
3. Battery weight & range issues – Heavier batteries reduce cargo capacity; current ranges may not match diesel trucks' efficiency.
4. Grid readiness – Large-scale truck charging could strain the electricity grid without upgrades.

Market Response

- Logistics giants like Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland, and Mahindra are working on prototype e-trucks.
- Fleet operators are open to adoption if operating cost per km drops below diesel levels.
- Pilot projects are underway on Delhi–Mumbai and Bengaluru–Chennai freight corridors.

Expected Impact

- Could accelerate decarbonisation of freight transport.
- Boost demand for domestic battery manufacturing and renewable power generation.
- If successful, may shift India's EV narrative from car-focused to freight-focused logistics.

Russia launches construction of Kazakhstan's first nuclear facility



Russia on Friday launched work to build the first nuclear power plant in Kazakhstan, the world's biggest uranium producer and vast Central Asian state where Moscow, Beijing, and Europe are all vying for influence. Russia has historically been the sole dominant player in the region and is trying to maintain its leading position, while China has invested billions of dollars as part of its "Belt and Road Initiative". Kazakhstan supplies 43% of the world's uranium. China is set to build two more plants in the resource-rich country.

Authorities on high alert after France's largest wildfire

France is facing large-scale wildfires, particularly in its southern regions and Mediterranean coast. The blazes have been fueled by intense heatwaves, strong winds, and prolonged drought conditions. There is significant air quality deterioration due to heavy smoke. Firefighters are struggling to contain multiple simultaneous fire fronts. European Union emergency assistance is requested; Italy and Greece have offered firefighting support. Authorities have restricted access to high-risk forest zones. Severe water shortages in many regions is hampering firefighting efforts. Weather forecasts suggest continued high temperatures, which could worsen the situation. Focus is now on preventing fire spread to populated areas and protecting key infrastructure.



Explained:

Rain, flash floods and landslides: an uncertain mix



Context

- On August 5, a flash flood devastated Dharali village in Uttarakashi district, Uttarakhand.
- At least four lives lost, many missing, and hundreds left homeless.
- Similar incidents have occurred in Himachal Pradesh recently, affecting thousands.

Causes of Flash Floods

- Usually triggered by extreme rainfall, leading to landslides or mudslides.
- Large debris flows into rivers, sweeping away buildings, vegetation, and roads.
- In Dharali's case, cause unclear — possibly linked to a glacial lake breach, but not confirmed.

Combination of Factors

- No fixed cause-effect link between heavy rain, landslides, and flash floods.
- Even low-intensity rain can cause floods if:
 - Area is already saturated.
 - Slopes are steep and unstable.
 - Debris finds its way into rivers.
- Other triggers: glacier ice-breaks, seismic activity, deforestation, construction, and traffic.

Himalayan Vulnerability

- Young, fragile mountains; rocks prone to erosion.
- Earthquake-prone region; seismic activity can worsen landslide and flood risks.
- Greater risk compared to older mountain ranges like Aravalis.

Challenges in Early Warning

- Heavy rainfall can be predicted days ahead.
- Landslide prediction improving, but predicting flash floods remains hard.
- Dharali shows even moderate rain can cause major floods.

Mitigation Measures

- Limit construction near riverbanks.
- Relocate villages away from flood-prone areas.
- Store debris and construction material away from rivers.

Quote of the Day:

The Machine does not isolate man from the great problems of Nature but plunges him more deeply into them - ANTOINE DE SAINT EXUPERY