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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Hindu & The Indian express

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Govt. says SC cannot treat Governors as 'aliens or foreigners'

A Governor is not a mere 'post office', but a check on 'hasty legislation' by the States, Centre tells SC ahead of hearing on Presidential Reference

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court cannot treat Governors as "aliens" or "foreigners" on whom timelines can be imposed and whose discretion does not count, the Union government has said in a submission. It said that a Governor was not a mere "post office", but a check on "hasty legislation" by the States.

The submission by the Centre, made in a note authored by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, is part of the record in a Presidential Reference to be heard by a Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai from Tuesday. The reference

Governors are not just emissaries of the Centre. The Governors possess democratic legitimacy through indirect democratic representation. Governors are appointed by the President on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers... Governors are constitutional actors

stems from an April judgment by a two-judge Bench, imposing a three-month deadline on the Governors and the President when dealing with State Bills, and declaring that Governors could not use their discretion in dealing



The submission is part of the Presidential Reference over a judgment in a plea against the Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi's delay in clearing State Bills.

with these Bills.

Tamil Nadu submitted that Presidential References could not be used to re-open or nullify the top court's judgments.

CONTINUED ON
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Govt. says SC cannot treat Governors as 'aliens or foreigners'

The Hindu | Page 1 | 17th August 2025

Usage in Mains GS-II (Polity)

- Centre-State relations and federal balance.
- Governor's role as a constitutional check under Articles 200 & 201.

Context

- The Union Govt. told SC that Governors are not "aliens or foreigners" but constitutional actors.
- Centre argued Governors are not "post offices" but a check on "hasty legislation."
- Issue stems from April SC ruling fixing a 3-month limit for Governors/President on State Bills & restricting discretion.

Relevant Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 200 – Governor's Assent to Bills**
 - Options: Assent / Withhold / Reserve for President / Return for reconsideration (if not a Money Bill).
 - If Legislature re-passes the Bill → Governor must give assent (no further discretion).



- **Article 201 – President’s Role on Reserved Bills**

- Options: Assent / Withhold / Return for reconsideration (if not a Money Bill).
- If Legislature re-passes → Bill goes again to President.
- President not bound to give assent even after reconsideration.

State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu – Supreme Court Judgment (8 April 2025)

Precedent / Instructions from the Judgment

1. Governor’s Action on Bills (Art. 200):

- Governor must act within 1 month if giving assent on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.

- If withholding assent (returning to the Legislature) or reserving for the President, action must be taken within 3 months, with reasons communicated to the Legislature.
- If the Legislature re-passes the Bill, the Governor must give assent within 1 month (no further discretion).

2. Reservation for President (Art. 201):

- Once a Bill is re-passed after reconsideration, the Governor cannot reserve it again for the President—except in exceptional cases (like substantive new amendments).

3. President’s Role (Art. 201):

- President too must act within 3 months of receiving a reserved Bill (either assent, withhold, or return for reconsideration).

4. Judicial Review:

- Both Governor’s and President’s actions under Articles 200 and 201 are subject to judicial review—no indefinite delay or misuse of discretion allowed.

Grassland invaders stifle Assam's island-like national park home to feral horses: study

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

A new study has identified at least two native plants that have joined invasive species to alter the riverine ecosystem of eastern Assam's Dibru-Saikhowa National Park (DSNP), the only habitat of feral horses in India.

These species have added to the changes in the grassland-dominated DSNP landscape, largely attributed to the recurring Brahmaputra river floods and increasing anthropogenic pressures from villages located within its boundaries, the study said.

The native "grassland invaders" are *Bombax ceiba* and *Lagerstroemia speciosa* – flowering trees known as *Simalu* and *Ajar* in Assamese. Their impact on the local vegetation has been as worrying as that of the invasive species, which include shrubs *Chromola-*



Unwelcome guests: Native and invasive plant species are changing the riverine ecosystem of the national park. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

na odorata and *Ageratum conyzoides*, herb *Parthenium hysterophorus* and climber *Mikania micrantha*.

The study titled *Grasslands in Flux*, analysing the land use and land cover (LULC) changes in Dibru-Saikhowa from its designation as a national park in 1999 through 2024, was published in the latest issue of *Earth*, an international, peer-reviewed journal on earth science.

The researchers used remote sensing and geo-

graphic information systems to analyse the LULC changes in DSNP, an island-like formation between the Brahmaputra to the north and the Dibru river to the south.

According to their study, grasslands covered 28.78% of the 425 sq. km DSNP in 2000, followed by semi-evergreen forests (25.58%). By 2013, shrubland became the most prominent class (81.31 sq. km), and degraded forest expanded to 75.56 sq. km.

"During this period,

substantial areas of grassland [29.94 sq. km], degraded forest [10.87 sq. km], semi-evergreen forest [12.33 sq. km], and bare land [10.50 sq. km] were converted to shrubland. In 2024, degraded forest further increased, covering 80.52 sq. km [23.47%]," the study said.

This change was the outcome of the conversion of 11.46 sq. km of shrubland and 27.48 sq. km of semi-evergreen forest into degraded forest, indicating a substantial and consistent decline in grassland, the study noted. Forest degradation can lead to loss of biodiversity, threaten the survival of local fauna, and reduce carbon storage, potentially intensifying climate change.

The study stated that the changes in the "natural structure and function" of the DSNP landscape pose a serious threat to the survival of grassland-obligate fau-

nal species, many of which are already globally threatened due to ongoing habitat loss.

"The concern is heightened by the fact that numerous species are endemic to the grasslands found in the floodplains of this region. Notable species which are rapidly decreasing include the Bengal florican [*Houbaropsis bengalensis*], hog deer [*Axis porcinus*], and swamp grass babbler [*Prinia cinerascens*]," the study said.

The DSNP is also home to some 200 feral horses, which are descendants of military horses abandoned during World War 2.

The study recommended a targeted grassland recovery project that would encompass the control of invasive species, improved surveillance, increased staffing, and the relocation of forest villages and support community-based conservation efforts.

Grassland invaders stifle Assam's island-like national park home to feral horses: study

The Hindu | Page 6 | 18th August 2025 | GS-3 Environment

Context

- A study on Dibru-Saikhowa National Park (DSNP), Assam finds that both native and invasive plant species are altering the riverine ecosystem.
- Floods of the Brahmaputra, human pressures, and invasive species have led to conversion of grasslands into degraded forests/shrubland.
- This threatens endemic and globally threatened grassland species, including feral horses and the Bengal florican.

- Study recommends targeted grassland recovery, control of invasive species, surveillance, and community-based conservation.

About Dibru–Saikhowa National Park (DSNP)

- Location: Tinsukia & Dibrugarh districts, Assam.
- Declared a National Park in 1999; also a Biosphere Reserve.
- Unique island-like formation between Brahmaputra (north) and Dibru river (south).
- Major ecosystems: grasslands, wetlands, riverine forests.
- Known for high biodiversity and only habitat of feral horses in India.

Feral Horses (Fairy Horses)

- Locally called “Feral Horses of Dibru–Saikhowa”.
- Population: ~200.
- Origin: Descendants of military horses abandoned during World War II.
- Survive in wild without domestication; adapted to grassland habitat.
- Ecological importance: grazing maintains grassland balance.

Native invaders

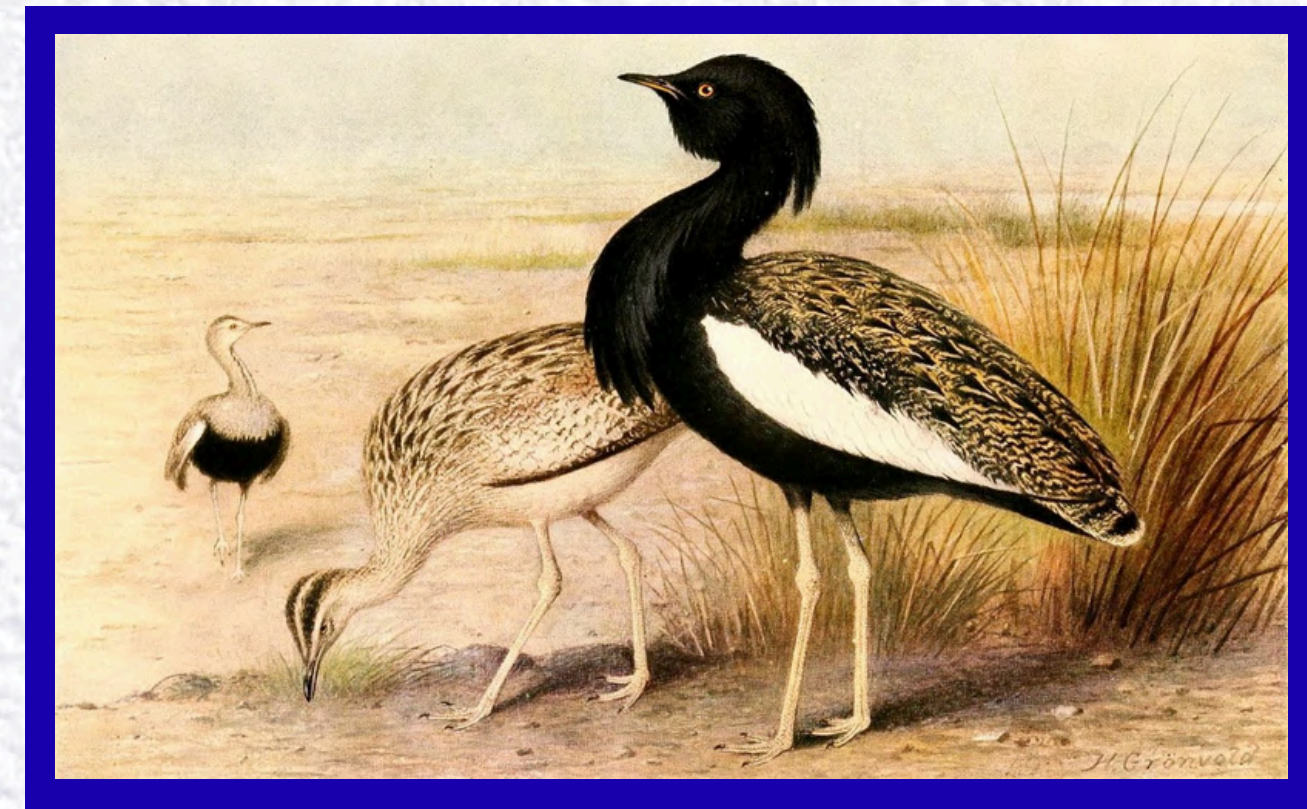
1. **Bombax ceiba** – Known locally as Simalu.
2. **Lagerstroemia speciosa** – Known locally as Ajar (Pride of India/Queen’s Crape Myrtle).

(Both are native flowering trees but have turned invasive in this ecosystem, altering grassland balance.)



7 NATIONAL PARKS IN ASSAM

- 6th : Raimona National Park (Notified in 2021)
- 7th : Dihing Patkai National Park (Notified in June 2021)





In Namibia, India shows a new way to engage Africa

In his address to Namibia's National Assembly in July this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi quoted a Namibian poet, invoked the symbolism of the *Welwitschia mirabilis* plant (the national plant) and the Springbok, and sprinkled his remarks with phrases in Oshiwambo, earning laughter and applause.

The gesture suggested a deliberate effort to engage with culturally meaningful terms, reflecting a more grounded approach to partnership-building. It is a sharp contrast to western engagement, which continues to be shaped by conditional aid, travel bans, and episodic withdrawals such as the recent USAID cutback, and is increasingly tied to migration deterrence, with assistance hinging on controlling outward migrant flows.

The steps being pursued

India is pursuing a quieter, adaptive approach, favouring alignment over instruction and forming issue-based coalitions. Underlying this appears to be a deliberate three-step logic: evoking shared historical solidarities, engaging in present-day pragmatic cooperation, and investing in long-term, future-oriented ties. This offers insights into what more thoughtful, durable partnerships with African states might look like.

The first step anchors diplomacy in a shared anti-colonial heritage, drawing on historical memory not as nostalgia, but as a legitimate force of solidarity. There are gentle but meaningful reminders: that New Delhi hosted the South West Africa People's Organization's first-ever diplomatic office during Namibia's liberation struggle; that Lieutenant General Diwan Prem Chand, an Indian officer, commanded the United Nations peacekeeping forces during Namibia's delicate transition to independence. These references are not incidental. They create a sense of long-haul engagement, contrasting with the episodic presence of many other powers.

Second is to highlight the depth and the breadth of current cooperation. New Delhi's bilateral trade with Windhoek is \$800 million, modest but growing, and supported by a \$12



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New Delhi is quietly reshaping its Africa engagement, with smart and issue-based partnerships

billion development partnership across Africa. More significant are India's targeted investments in capacity-building, including the India-Namibia Centre of Excellence in IT at the Namibia University of Science and Technology, and the 'India Wing' at the University of Namibia's Ongwediva campus, funded by a \$12 million grant. These efforts leverage India's strengths in IT and respond to Namibia's youthful population and digital readiness.

Third, and closely linked, India is laying out a road map for the future by pivoting toward knowledge-based cooperation. Namibia's recent adoption of India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI), the first country in Africa to implement this, signals a quiet revolution in tech diplomacy. If this succeeds, it will offer a model for transferring not just digital tools but also regulatory frameworks, institutional design, and user-centric tech architectures that India has stress-tested at scale.

Advantage Namibia

Crucial to this approach is the choice of partner. Namibia's political stability, rich mineral resources and growing technological base offer a strong foundation for India's engagement, grounded in shared histories and aligned futures. President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah's call to reform global economic and financial systems for fairness and resilience echoes India's own vision for inclusive, equitable governance. More than a bilateral partner, Namibia is a key collaborator in the Global South's broader effort to reshape international rules in line with their collective aspirations, agency, and demand for a more just world order.

While India and Namibia share a compelling vision for partnership, consistent follow-through remains a challenge. India's developmental ambitions are often criticised for uneven implementation, and its engagement with Africa has seen long lapses, evident in the recent visit to Namibia by an Indian head of government, the first in nearly three decades.

Though symbolically important, the visit's

outcomes were modest: two memoranda of understanding on entrepreneurship and health, and Namibia's accession to the Global Biofuels Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. These are valuable steps but fall short of the scale the moment, and the bilateral potential, clearly calls for.

Notably absent was any major agreement on Namibia's critical mineral reserves. As a leading uranium producer, Namibia is a natural partner for countries such as India seeking resilient low-carbon supply chains. The visit offered a clear opportunity to outline a strategic framework, including resource access, local workforce development, or investment in value addition. Though the issue was acknowledged, discussions ultimately failed to produce concrete outcomes.

Regardless, India's approach, while not without its gaps, stands out not just for what it offers but also how it engages. India's quiet recalibration emphasises trust built through inclusive dialogue, acknowledging histories, and letting African priorities shape the agenda.

Move beyond symbolism

The upcoming India-Africa Forum Summit, anticipated in the near term, could serve as a vital platform to formalise and solidify these diplomatic efforts through institutional cooperation. It presents an opportunity for India to build on recent momentum and demonstrate that its commitment to partnership and mutual respect is backed by enduring political resolve.

Delivering on this vision, however, will require more than symbolism. It will entail confronting structural and operational shortcomings at home and ensuring that India's strategic ambitions are matched by sustained investment and institutional coherence. Ultimately, India's credibility as a Global South partner will rest not only on what it commits to but also on how consistently and collaboratively it follows through.

The views expressed are personal

In Namibia, India shows a new way to engage Africa

The Hindu | Editorial | Page 6 | 18 Aug 2025 | GS-II (IR)

Context

India is recalibrating Africa outreach in Namibia—prioritising cultural sensitivity, capacity-building, and digital/public-goods cooperation over conditional aid.

India-Namibia: History Timeline (cut-short)

- **1970s–1990 (Liberation era):** India backs SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization); New Delhi hosts SWAPO's first diplomatic office. Lt Gen Dewan Prem Chand commands UN peacekeeping during Namibia's transition to independence.



- **1990s–2010s (Early ties → uneven follow-through):** Relations continue, but India's Africa engagement often criticised for implementation gaps.
- **2025 (Renewed push):** First visit by an Indian head of government in nearly three decades; launch/spotlight on capacity-building projects (India–Namibia Centre of Excellence in IT at NUST; “India Wing” at University of Namibia’s Ongwediva campus—\$12 mn grant); Namibia becomes first in Africa to adopt UPI.
- **Near term:** India–Africa Forum Summit expected to formalise and scale this approach.

Article's 3 Key Points (what the editorial stresses)

- Shared history as diplomatic anchor: India frames ties through anti-colonial solidarity and long-haul engagement (SWAPO office, UN role) to build trust.
- Capacity-building over conditionality: Focus on skills, digital readiness and institutions (IT centre, Ongwediva “India Wing”), backed by broader development partnership; trade ~\$800 mn and growing.
- Knowledge-/tech-led roadmap: Namibia’s UPI adoption signals a model to export not just tech but regulatory and institutional designs at India scale.

Gaps & Next steps (per editorial): No major deal yet on critical minerals (e.g., uranium); credibility hinges on consistent follow-through and institutionalisation at the India–Africa Forum Summit.



How 'honour' killings in India are reinforced and legitimised

States like Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Kerala – where Dalit communities have seen relatively greater empowerment – record higher rates of inter-caste marriages. Ironically, these are also the States with increased incidents of honour killings

Sivabalan Elangovan

Caste in India is not an individual problem – it is a deeply rooted social phenomenon. Caste survives and thrives not just because individuals insist on it, but because families, communities, and entire social structures continue to enforce and legitimise it, knowingly or otherwise.

At the heart of this caste endurance lie social customs passed down and protected within households. Children grow up internalising boundaries – who to talk to, who to marry, who to avoid – long before they can even articulate why. As a result, the caste system remains one of the most resilient social frameworks in India.

'Honour' killings

One of the biggest threats to the rigidity of caste has been social justice interventions. When marginalised communities, particularly Dalits, gain access to quality education and secure meaningful employment, it opens the gates for their integration into mainstream society. With that, a foundational shift begins. No longer confined to the margins, the oppressed now begin to interact with caste-Hindu society on an equal footing – in workplaces, colleges, cities, and most importantly, in relationships. This has created a new frontier of social tension: romantic unions that cross caste lines, especially those involving Dalit men and dominant caste women. These unions represent not just love or rebellion but a direct challenge to centuries-old caste hierarchies. And for many conservative

families, that challenge is intolerable.

States like Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Kerala – where Dalit communities have seen relatively greater empowerment – also record higher rates of inter-caste marriages. According to the India Human Development Survey (IHDS-II), the national rate of inter-caste marriages stands at around 5%, but States with empowered Dalit populations show higher numbers. Ironically, these are also the States with increased incidents of honour killings.

This paradox reveals a disturbing truth: honour killings occur not where casteism is strongest, but where it is most threatened. In States where the oppressed still maintain their "status quo," violence is less – not because casteism is absent, but because it remains unchallenged. Thus, caste-based violence is not a sign of persistent hierarchy alone, but of hierarchy under siege.

Tamil Nadu's caste paradox

When caste killings happen, democratic voices among the public are strong in Tamil Nadu as the State boasts a strong and vibrant civil society. At the same time, caste is glorified on social media. Due to the anonymity such platforms offer, some accounts go so far as to defend caste killings.

How do we understand this paradox? Perhaps in Tamil Nadu, while people possess a collective consciousness against casteism, shaped by decades of social justice politics, individual attitudes may not always align in the same way. The State's anti-caste culture is collectively progressive but individually conflicted. In public, caste violence is rejected but in

private conversations, WhatsApp groups, and through anonymous posts, caste continues to dictate social preferences, marriage alliances, and "honourable behaviour."

This paradox does not mean that Tamil Nadu's anti-caste movement is a failure. It means that one is living in a liminal space – between tradition and transformation. What we see on social media is not just caste pride, it's also the fear of losing inherited power and the anxiety of cultural change.

On family and caste

There's a popular belief that the caste system survives mainly because of political parties or caste-based organisations. While these certainly reinforce caste divisions in the public sphere, they are not the roots of the system. Caste survives because it is protected and transmitted within the family. Through everyday customs, rituals, marriage arrangements, social expectations, and inherited prejudices, caste becomes part of a child's consciousness long before they can question it. This is why caste has remained transgenerational, even in the face of rising education, urbanisation and exposure to new ideas.

However, the psychological and cultural importance of the 'family' itself is changing, especially among adolescents. Around the world, particularly in countries like South Korea and Japan, we are seeing dramatic shifts: marriage rates are falling, fertility rates are at historic lows, and the traditional family unit is losing its central place in people's lives. Instead, new models of relationship –

open partnerships, cohabitation, single living, and self-parenting – are emerging.

India's urban youth are slowly reflecting this trend too. Many adolescents today are increasingly prioritising individual growth, emotional well-being, and autonomy over traditional family obligations. As the value of the family unit weakens, so too does the primary mechanism through which caste is enforced and reproduced.

In other words, if the family becomes less central in shaping relationships and social norms, caste may lose its strongest and oldest vehicle of survival. This doesn't mean that caste will disappear overnight. But it suggests that the cultural infrastructure that sustains it is slowly being dismantled – not by revolution, but by changing lifestyles, shifting emotional priorities, and evolution of the self.

Caste in India is at crossroads. On one hand, we see violent reactions and online glorification. On the other, we witness strong democratic voices against honour killings and a new generation slowly withdrawing from social values. Tamil Nadu symbolises this contradiction in its most vivid form – a State where both the loudest resistance to casteism and the quietest internal caste pride coexist. But it also offers hope: if this contradiction is acknowledged, addressed, and challenged, especially through engagement and digital counter-narratives, we may finally move toward a society where caste loses its grip not only on our systems, but on our hearts and minds.

Sivabalan Elangovan is Professor and Head, Dept of Psychiatry, Dr MGR Educational and Research Institute.

How 'honour' killings in India are reinforced and legitimised

The Hindu | Page 11 | 18 Aug 2025 | GS-I (Society)

Context

The article examines why honour killings persist in India, particularly in States with higher empowerment of Dalit communities (Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Maharashtra, Kerala), where inter-caste marriages are relatively higher. It highlights how caste is deeply embedded in families, transmitted through customs, and legitimised socially, making it resilient despite modernisation.

Definition of Honour Killing

An honour killing is the murder of a family/community member for allegedly bringing 'dishonour' to caste, community, or family reputation, often due to inter-caste or inter-faith marriage, refusal to follow traditional norms, or exercising personal choice.



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Data (as per article)

- India Human Development Survey (IHDS): Inter-caste marriages at ~5% nationally.
- States with empowered Dalit populations have higher inter-caste marriages but also increased incidents of honour killings.

Q. Honour killings remain a blot on India's social fabric, particularly visible in South Indian states. Analyse. (150 words)

India's patent landscape: universities as changemakers

The country is steadily moving from being merely a consumer of global technology to becoming its creator

DATA POINT

Twinkle Halder
Vidhya Soundararajan

For 'Make in India' to succeed, India must "first discover, then invent, and then make," said David Gross, American theoretical physicist and co-recipient of the 2004 Nobel Prize in Physics, at the inaugural Quantum India Bengaluru Summit 2025. Investment in research and development (R&D) and the strengthening of innovation capabilities are particularly relevant, given the growing uncertainty in global trade and financial flows.

How is India faring on the innovation front? Are we moving towards producing technology of our own? Statistics from the Office of the Controller General of Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks are telling. In the early 2000s, countries such as China, the U.S., Japan, Germany, and South Korea dominated global filings, with Indian institutions accounting for less than 20% of the patents filed domestically. That picture has shifted dramatically (Chart 1). For the first time in 2023, Indian-origin filings surpassed those from any single foreign country. Indian applicants accounted for 57% of all patent filings – a milestone marking India's growing role in the global intellectual property ecosystem. Even among granted patents, India's share has been rising, overtaking the U.S. as the second-largest recipient in 2021.

This transformation did not happen overnight. India is steadily moving from being merely a consumer of global technology to becoming its creator. This shift reflects the government's sustained efforts to build an innovation-friendly environment and support local inventors through initiatives such as the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy and the Atal Innovation Mission, which

have encouraged startups, students, and researchers to think big and protect their ideas. Amendments to patent rules have introduced reforms such as expedited examinations for specific groups, simplified timelines, reduced application fees by 80% for educational institutions, MSMEs, and startups, and full digitalisation of filing and communication. With continued investment in faster, more efficient patent systems, stronger inventor support, and better linkage between patents and commercial value, India's innovation story could strengthen even further over the next two decades.

Historically, mechanical and chemical engineering dominated the patent landscape. By contrast, filings in computer science rose from just 1.27% in 2000 to 26.5% in 2023, while electrical engineering grew from 8.27% to 16.41%. Physics-related patents increased from 2% to 4%, and biomedical patents jumped from 0.6% to 10% over the same period.

Nearly 80% of patents filed in the past two years are still "awaiting decision," reflecting both rising volumes and bureaucratic and legal complexities. Nonetheless, processing times have improved. In the early 2000s, patent grants could take 8-10 years; by the late 2010s and early 2020s, many were approved within 2-3 years, with some granted in the same year of filing (Chart 2). This acceleration reflects the maturing of India's intellectual property infrastructure and its alignment with the government's innovation push.

Even the face of patent filers in India is changing. In 2000, about 43% of Indian patents were filed by companies. But by 2023, this share fell to under 17% (Chart 3). Meanwhile, the share of filings from individuals jumped from under 10% in 2000 to around 32% by 2023. Government bodies and hospitals remained minor contributors. Educational institutions also in-

creased their share steadily, reaching nearly 43% in recent years.

Government initiatives have helped drive this change. For example, KAPILA (Kalam Program for IP Literacy and Awareness), launched in 2020, promotes IP awareness in higher education institutions. The Atal Innovation Mission, launched in 2016 by NITI Aayog, fosters problem-solving skills and entrepreneurship within universities and research centres. Awards for outstanding patents by government and industry bodies further incentivise innovation.

Universities have also taken the lead by establishing dedicated IP cells and legal support units to assist faculty, researchers, and students with patent filing, technology transfer, and IP monetisation. For instance, IIT Madras doubled its patents granted from 156 in 2022 to 300 in 2023, while IIT Bombay led nationally in 2023-24 with 421 patents granted.

With government and universities creating an enabling environment, sustained increases in research funding are essential to maintain momentum. Foundational and technology-driven research often starts in university labs or early-stage startups – long before patenting. India's R&D expenditure currently stands at just 0.67% of GDP, far below the U.S. (3.5%) and China (2.5%). Raising this to around 2% of GDP is critical if India is to become a global knowledge leader. This investment is even more urgent in today's uncertain global trade and financial environment, as India must strive for self-sufficiency in both consumer and advanced technologies.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the relentless efforts of professors and researchers, often working with limited resources, to expand the boundaries of knowledge. Strengthening their work through greater funding is not just support for academia; it is a strategic investment in India's long-term growth and global standing.



Chart 1: Country-wise share of patent filings (left axis, in %) and the total number of filings over time (right axis)

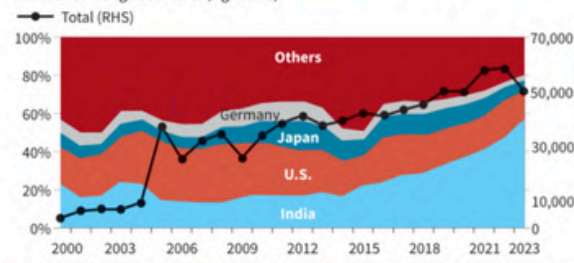


Chart 2: Average time taken to grant patents in India since 2000 (in number of years)

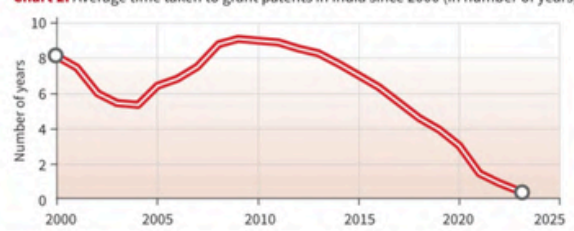
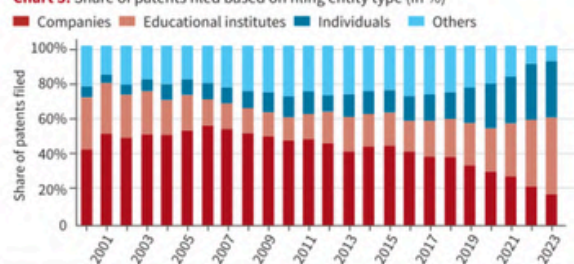


Chart 3: Share of patents filed based on filing entity type (in %)



Twinkle Halder and Vidhya Soundararajan are affiliated with Centre for Advanced Financial Research and Learning

India's patent landscape: universities as changemakers

The Hindu | Page 9 | GS Paper 3

Context:

India is steadily moving from being a consumer of global technology to becoming a creator. Universities and research institutions are emerging as key drivers in boosting patent filings and innovation, aided by government initiatives.

Definition of Patent (as per Indian Law):

- A patent is an exclusive statutory right granted for an invention under the Patents Act, 1970.
- It provides the patentee the right to prevent others from making, using, selling, or distributing the patented invention without consent, for a limited period (20 years) from the date of filing.
- In India, patents are granted by the Office of the Controller General of Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks (CGPD TM) after examination and meeting the criteria of novelty, inventive step, and industrial applicability.

India's R&D expenditure: 0.67% of GDP vs. 3.5% (U.S.) and 2.5% (China).



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Senegal's 'schools for husbands' promote gender equality and safer motherhood

Associated Press
SENEGAL

On a recent evening in Senegal's capital of Dakar, an imam named Ibrahima Diane explained to a group of men why they should be more involved in household chores.

"The Prophet himself says a man who does not help support his wife and children is not a good Muslim," the 53-year-old said, as he described bathing his baby and helping his wife with other duties.

Shift in behaviour

Mr. Diane was taking part in a "school for husbands," a United Nations-backed initiative where respected

male community members learn about "positive masculinity" in health and social issues and promote them in their communities.

In Senegal, men often have the final say in major household decisions, including ones related to health. Women may need their permission for life-changing decisions on accessing family planning or other reproductive health services.

Following his sessions at the school for husbands, Mr. Diane regularly holds sermons during Friday prayers where he discusses issues around gender and reproductive health, from gender-based violence to

fighting stigma around HIV. "Many women appreciate my sermons," he said. "They say their husbands' behaviour changed since they attended them."

Habib Diallo, a 60-year-old former Army commando, said attending the sermons and discussions with the imam taught him about the risks of home births.

"When my son's wife was pregnant, I encouraged him to take her to the hospital for the delivery," Mr. Diallo said. "At first, he was hesitant. But when I explained how much safer it would be for both his wife and the baby, he agreed."

The programme, launched in Senegal in



Worshippers listen to imam Ibrahima Diane deliver his sermon at the Great Mosque of Niety Mbar in Thiaroye in Senegal. AP

2011, has caught the attention of the Ministry of Women, Family, Gender, and Child Protection in recent years, which sees it as an effective strategy to combat maternal and infant mortality.

The classes for husbands follow similar efforts in other African countries, particularly Niger, Togo, and Burkina Faso, where the United Nations Population Fund said it improved women's access to repro-

ductive health services by increasing male involvement, growing the use of contraceptives by men and women, and expanding access to prenatal care and skilled birth attendants.

Discussions for men have also focused on girls' rights, equality, and the harmful effects of female genital mutilation.

The programme now operates over 20 schools in Senegal, and over 300 men have been trained.

Men join the groups after being recruited based on trust, leadership, and commitment. Candidates must be married, respected locally, and supportive of women's health and rights. After training, the

men act as peer educators, visiting homes and hosting informal talks.

'Long way to go'

While maternal and infant deaths in Senegal have declined over the past decade, experts said it still has a long way to go. It recorded 237 maternal deaths for every 1,00,000 live births in 2023, while 21 newborns out of every 1,000 died within their first month.

The UN globally wants to reduce maternal deaths to 70 deaths per 1,00,000 live births and newborn deaths to under 12 per 1,000 by 2030.

"By educating men about the importance of

supporting their wives during pregnancy, taking them to the hospital and helping with domestic work at home, you're protecting people's health," said El Hadj Malick, one of the Senegal programme's coordinators.

"When we just talk to them about gender, there is sometimes tension because it's seen as something abstract or even foreign," Mr. Malick said. Some men mistakenly believe such talk will promote LGBTQ+ issues.

"But when we focus on women's right to be healthy, it puts a human face on the concept and its becomes universal," he added.

Senegal's 'schools for husbands' promote gender equality and safer motherhood

The Hindu | Page 15 | GS Paper 1 (Society)

Initiative Name: School for Husbands (a United Nations-backed initiative)

Uses of this article for UPSC answers:

Contextual Example: Can be used as an international case study on gender equality, reproductive health, and family welfare.

Value Addition: Shows how community-based male involvement improves maternal and infant health outcomes.

Comparison Point: Highlights that social change programs work better when men are made stakeholders in family planning and safe motherhood.

Best Fit in Answers:

- GS1 → Society (role of social institutions, gender equality)
- GS2 → Governance, Health Policies (maternal and child health)
- GS3 → Social Development, Inclusive Growth
- Essay → Gender justice, Social reform through community participation

DAILY MCQs FOR PRACTICE

Q1. With reference to the powers of the Governor under the Indian Constitution, consider the following statements:

1. The Governor can return a Money Bill to the State Legislature for reconsideration.
2. A Bill reserved for the President under Article 200 can be withheld indefinitely.
3. Once a Bill is passed again by the State Legislature after reconsideration, the Governor is bound to give assent.

Which of the above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Q2. The Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, recently in news, is known for which of the following unique features?

- a) It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its rich coral diversity.
- b) It is home to feral horses locally called Fairy Horses.
- c) It is India's only biosphere reserve with snow leopards.
- d) It lies on the boundary of India and Bhutan.

Q3. Consider the following about India-Namibia relations:

1. India supported the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) during Namibia's struggle for independence.
2. India and Namibia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2022 for translocation of cheetahs.
3. Diplomatic relations were formally established between India and Namibia in 1990.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

DAILY MCQs FOR PRACTICE

Q4. Which of the following best defines Honour Killing in the Indian context?

- a) The killing of a person by the State to uphold law and order.
- b) The killing of a person accused of blasphemy or sedition.
- c) The killing of a family or community member, usually a woman, for allegedly bringing 'dishonour' by defying social norms, especially marriage choices.
- d) The killing of witnesses in caste or communal disputes.

Q5. The initiative called "Schools for Husbands", recently highlighted in The Hindu, aims primarily to:

- a) Educate men on modern agricultural practices to support food security.
- b) Train male community members on gender equality and maternal health to reduce maternal and infant mortality.
- c) Encourage men to take legal literacy classes to reduce domestic violence cases.
- d) Provide financial literacy to rural husbands for better household income management.

Answers

Q1 – c | Q2 – b | Q3 – c | Q4 – c | Q5 – b