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The Hindu & The Indian express

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Centre finalises National Designated Authority to kick-start carbon markets

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has announced a National Designated Authority (NDA), a mandatory requirement under the provisions of the 2015 Paris Agreement, to enable a carbon emissions trading regime.

Within the Paris Agreement, a section called Article 6 defines the contours under which such an emissions trading regime or a market can take shape. A long-standing bone of contention among countries, Article 6 was finally passed at the 29th edition of the climate COP in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2024.

The creation of an NDA is a mandatory requirement under Article 6.

A notification from the Environment Ministry on

The authority is a mandatory body to be set up under the provisions of 2015 Paris Agreement

Friday lays out the composition of the NDA, which is a 21-member committee headed by the Secretary of the Environment Ministry. Representatives include officials from the Ministries of External Affairs, Steel, and Renewable Energy, and NITI Aayog.

The NDA's responsibilities include recommending to the Union government a list of activities that can be considered for the trading of emission reduction units from projects under Article 6, modifying them from time to time in line with national sustainable goals, country-specific criteria and other national

priorities; receive projects or activities for evaluation, approval and authorisation; and authorise the use of emission reduction units from projects for use towards achievement of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

The NDC refers to commitments by countries to reduce emissions by diverting their energy consumption towards renewable energy sources and taking action to reduce carbon concentrations in the atmosphere.

India's NDC commits to reducing its GDP's emission intensity by 45% by 2030 from 2005 levels, achieving 50% electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, and creating an additional carbon sink equivalent to 2.5-3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide by 2030 through afforestation.

Centre finalises National Designated Authority to kick-start carbon markets

The Hindu, Page 6 | GS3 Environment

Context of the Article

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has announced the formation of a National Designated Authority (NDA), as required under the provisions of the 2015 Paris Agreement, to enable a carbon emissions trading regime in India.

About the New Authority

- The NDA is a mandatory body set up under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
- Article 6 provides the international legal framework for countries to cooperate through carbon markets and other mechanisms to achieve emission reductions.
- The NDA will be a 21-member committee headed by the Environment Secretary, with representatives from ministries including External Affairs, Steel, Renewable Energy, and NITI Aayog.





- Its core responsibilities include:
 - Recommending a list of activities and projects for trading emission reduction units.
 - Modifying them over time as per national sustainable goals and criteria.
 - Evaluating, approving, and authorizing projects for use towards achieving Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

India's Climate Goals (NDCs)

India's NDCs under the Paris Agreement include:

- Reducing GDP emission intensity by 45% by 2030 (from 2005 levels).
- Achieving 50% electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.
- Creating a carbon sink equivalent to 2.5–3 billion tonnes of CO₂ by 2030 through afforestation efforts.

Consider the following statements :

Statement I :

Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on climate change is frequently discussed in global discussions on sustainable development and climate change.

Statement II :

Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on climate change sets out the principles of carbon markets.

Statement III :

Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on climate change intends to promote inter-country non-market strategies to reach their climate targets.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct and both of them explain Statement I
- (b) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct but only one of them explains Statement I
- (c) Only one of the Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I
- (d) Neither Statement II nor Statement III is correct

pyq 2025

Govt. schools account for 55.9% of total enrolments, says survey

66% of students are in public institutions in rural areas as against 30.1% in urban; private unaided schools account for 31.9% of enrolment; nearly a third of all students get private coaching, says study undertaken as part of **National Sample Survey**

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

Students enrolled in private or non-government schools across India end up paying nearly nine times more in school fees than those enrolled in government schools.

A third of all students across education Boards opt for private coaching in addition to classes in school, data collected by the Comprehensive Modular Survey (Education) for April-June 2025 as part of the 80th round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) revealed.

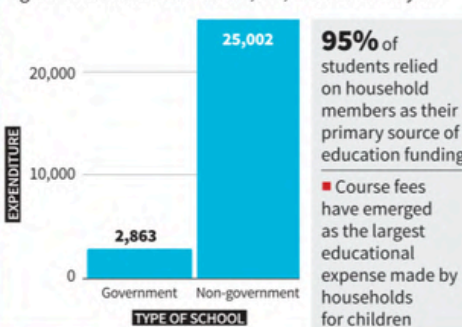
The average per-student expenditure made by households on school education during the current academic year (2025-26) in government schools is estimated at ₹2,863, while it was significantly higher at ₹25,002 in non-government schools.

Nearly a third of all students (27%) were taking or had taken private coaching during the current academic year. This trend was more common in urban areas (30.7%) than in rural



The price of education

Households spent an average of ₹2,863 per student in government schools, while the expenditure for non-government schools was ₹25,002, this academic year



areas (25.5%).

The data focused specifically on household expenditure for currently enrolled students in school education. Data were collected from 52,085 households and 57,742 students across India through computer-assisted personal interviews.

The survey says government schools play a key role in providing education across India, accounting for 55.9% of total enrolments.

It is higher in rural areas, where two-thirds (66%) of students are en-

rolled as against 30.1% in urban areas. Private unaided (recognised) schools account for 31.9% of enrolment nationwide.

Education expenses

Among the students who paid for school education, 95% reported that the first major source of their funding was from other household members. This trend is consistent across both rural (95.3%) and urban (94.4%) areas.

On the other hand, 1.2% of the students reported that government scholarships were their first major

source of funding for school education.

Course fees have emerged as the largest education expense made by households for children's education.

Across all types of schools at the all-India level, the highest average expenditure per student during the current academic year was on course fees – ₹7,111 – followed by textbooks and stationery – ₹2,002.

Rural-urban differences

Urban households pay significantly more for educa-

tion and related expenses across all categories.

Notably, the average expenditure on course fees in urban areas is estimated at ₹15,143, whereas it is ₹3,979 in rural areas.

"This trend of higher expenditure in urban areas is evident for other types of education-related expenses such as transportation, uniforms, and textbooks," the survey states.

Only 26.7% of students enrolled in government schools reported paying course fees, in contrast to 95.7% of students in non-government schools. Among different types of non-government schools, 98% students reported paying course fees in private unaided schools in urban areas. In rural areas, 25.3% of students reported paying course fees in government schools.

The primary objective of the survey was to generate national-level estimates of average expenditure on school education and private coaching during the current academic year, a press statement released by the Ministry of Statistics said.

Govt. schools account for 55.9% of total enrolments, says survey

The Hindu, Page 6 | GS2 Education

Context

Students enrolled in private or non-government schools across India end up paying nearly nine times more in school fees than those enrolled in government schools.

A third of all students across education Boards opt for private coaching in addition to classes in school, data collected by the Comprehensive Modular Survey (Education) for April-June 2025 as part of the 80th round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) revealed.

Important Data Extracted

- Govt. schools account for 55.9% of total enrolments.
- 66% of students are in public institutions in rural areas, as against 30.1% in urban.
- Private unaided schools account for 31.9% of enrolment nationwide.
- Households spent an average of ₹2,863 per student in government schools, while the expenditure for non-government schools was ₹25,025 this academic year.
- Nearly a third of all students across education Boards opt for private coaching (30.7% in urban and 25.5% in rural areas).



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- Only 26.7% of students enrolled in government schools reported paying fees; 95.7% of students in non-government schools paid fees.
 - Among those paying for school education, 1.2% said government scholarships were their first major source of funding.
- Average reported expenditure on course fees in urban areas was ₹15,143, whereas it stood at ₹3,979 in rural areas.
- For all types of schools at the all-India level, the current academic year expenditure was ₹7,111, followed by textbooks and stationery at ₹2,002.



The gender angle to India's economic vulnerabilities

India's economic ascent, which is now valued at \$4.19 trillion, has earned it a firm place in the global growth story. The country is poised to become the world's third-largest economy. Yet, this momentum now faces a formidable disruption – the proposed 50% tariffs by the United States President Donald Trump on Indian exports. Targeting \$40 billion in trade, these tariffs could shave off nearly 1% from India's GDP striking labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, gems, and leather and footwear which are critical industries that disproportionately employ women.

Unlike China, which has weathered U.S. tariffs through its manufacturing scale and diversified exports, India remains vulnerable. The U.S. accounts for 18% of India's exports; an increase in tariff could lead to 30%-35% cost disadvantage against competitors such as Vietnam leaving Indian exporters exposed. In this moment of crisis, these words appear prescient: "The strength of a nation lies in the strength of its women." India's failure to economically empower half its population is not just a social concern. It is now a strategic liability.

The tariffs threaten to destabilise employment for millions of Indian women. The textiles, gems, leather and footwear sectors, which employ nearly 50 million people, face a projected export decline of up to 50%. Additionally, India's existing low female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) has remained stuck between 37% and 41.7% far below the global average and China's 60%. According to the International Monetary Fund, closing the gender gap could boost India's GDP by 27% in the long term. Yet, this is a promise that is stifled by cultural constraints, policy inertia and systemic barriers to employment.

The ticking clock

India is inching closer to its peak of its demographic dividend – a period where the working-age population vastly outnumbers dependents. This window, which could close by 2045, once fuelled growth in China, Japan, and the U.S. – economies now past their prime



Anurodh Lalit Jain

is Vice-Chairman, All India Congress Committee (Minority Department) and a Social Economic Analyst

The imposition of U.S. tariffs that threatens to impact millions of Indian women in labour-intensive sectors is a wake-up call – women need empowerment as economic agents

demographic advantage, with flattening growth curves. India must act to convert this fleeting dividend into sustained prosperity, and this means fully integrating women into the workforce.

Labour participation by rural women has inched up, but mostly in unpaid and low-productivity family work. In urban India, female workforce participation has stagnated. Safety concerns, unreliable public transport, lack of sanitation, and the crushing burden of unpaid care work continue to push women out of schools and jobs.

India risks the fate of Southern European economies such as Italy and Greece, where low FLFPR has placed a long-term drag on growth. The urgency is clear as it is a now-or-never moment.

Lessons from abroad, solutions at home

Global superpowers offer a road map. The U.S. leveraged women's labour during the Second World War with equal pay and childcare. China's post-1978 reforms drove 60% FLFPR through state-backed care and education. Japan raised its FLFPR from 63% to 70%, boosting GDP per capita by 4%. The Netherlands' part-time work model, with equal benefits, suits India, where women prefer such roles. These nations invested in legal protections, care infrastructure, and skills training, which are areas where India lags. Instead of short-term populism or blanket cash transfers, India needs structural reforms that empower women as economic agents.

Karnataka's Shakti scheme, which offers free public bus travel to women, is one such intervention. Since its launch in 2023, female ridership has surged by over 40%. The scheme has enhanced women's mobility for work, education, and enterprise – especially in rural and peri-urban areas. This has enabled more women to gain improved access to job markets, decrease their dependence on male family members, and achieve greater autonomy.

Redirecting spending from broad welfare schemes to targeted programmes such as tax

incentives for female entrepreneurs, digital inclusion drives, and gender-focused skilling platforms can yield more sustainable gains. Formalising gig and part-time work through updated labour codes and social protections would bring millions of women into the formal economy.

Urban Company, a leading gig platform, has onboarded over 15,000 women service providers. These workers earn ₹18,000-₹25,000 in a month, along with access to accident insurance, maternity benefits, and skill development. The platform's emphasis on safety, training and transparent pay highlights how gig work can be empowering particularly for semi-skilled urban women.

On the public side, Rajasthan's Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme has created over four crore person-days of work, with nearly 65% of jobs going to women. Its flexible, neighbourhood-based jobs in sanitation, greening and care work have enabled many first-time workers – especially those restricted by domestic duties – to enter the workforce. These cases show that when the state recognises and supports non-traditional work, it can unlock massive economic value.

A moment of reckoning

The looming U.S. tariff shock should serve as a wake-up call. India's economic vulnerabilities are not just due to external threats. They also stem from internal neglect, especially in tapping the potential of working-age women.

Empowering women is not a social gesture. It is a growth imperative. It is the linchpin of demographic dividend utilisation, export competitiveness and equitable development. If India seeks to become a true global powerhouse, its progress must be built on the shoulders of both its men and women. India stands at a crossroads. It can rise by investing in its women. Or it can falter by ignoring them. One path leads to resilience and inclusive growth. The other path leads to missed opportunities and economic fragility.

The gender angle to India's economic vulnerabilities

Source: The Hindu Page No.: 8 (Editorial)

Subject Mapping:

- GS1: Women empowerment, social issues
- GS2: Policies & governance, welfare measures
- GS3: Economic development, employment, inclusive growth

Context:

India faces a dual challenge: external threats

(U.S. tariffs on exports) and internal barriers

(low female labour participation rate).

Without integrating women into the

economy, India risks wasting its

demographic dividend.



Summary

1. External Threats

- India's economy: \$4.1 trillion, firm place in global growth story, poised to be world's 3rd largest economy.
- U.S. proposed 50% tariffs (by Donald Trump) on Indian exports.
- \$40 billion trade at risk; could shave 1% from GDP.
- Affects labour-intensive sectors — textiles, gems, leather, footwear — employing millions of women.
- U.S. accounts for 18% of India's exports; tariff hike could lead to 30%–35% cost disadvantage vs. Vietnam.

2. India's Gendered Economic Weakness

- Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR): 37%–41.7%, below global average and China's 60%.
- Closing the gender gap could boost GDP by 27% (International Monetary Fund).
- Current barriers: policy inertia, social constraints, economic barriers.

3. Demographic Crossroads

- India nearing peak demographic dividend — working-age population exceeds dependents until ~2045.
 - Risk: like Italy and Greece, where low FLFPR caused long-term stagnation.
 - Now-or-never moment to act.

4. Barriers to Women's Participation

- Rural women: mostly in unpaid, low-productivity family work.
- Urban women: stagnation due to
 - Safety concerns
 - Unreliable public transport
 - Lack of sanitation
 - Crushing unpaid care burden
- These factors push women out of schools and jobs.

5. Global Lessons

- U.S. (WWII): leveraged women's labour with equal pay and childcare.
- China (post-1978 reforms): drove 60% FLFPR via state-backed care and education.
- Japan: raised FLFPR from 63% → 70%, boosting GDP per capita by 4%.
- Netherlands: part-time work with equal benefits, suiting India's needs.

6. Indian Examples

- Karnataka's Shakti Scheme: free public bus travel → women ridership ↑ 40%, improving access to jobs, education, autonomy.
- Urban Company (gig platform): 15,000+ women onboarded, earning ₹18,000–₹25,000/month with insurance, maternity benefits, skilling.

- Rajasthan's Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme: created 4 crore person-days of work; 65% of jobs for women, esp. first-time earners in sanitation, care, green work.

7. Way Forward

- Formalise gig and part-time work with labour codes + protections.
- Provide tax incentives for female entrepreneurs.
- Build gender-focused skilling platforms.
- Redirect spending from cash transfers → structural reforms to empower women as economic agents.

GS 1/ GS2 / GS3 Question (150 words)

Low female labour force participation is a key economic vulnerability for India. Discuss its implications and suggest measures for improvement.

What is the air drop test conducted by ISRO?

How was the first Integrated Air Drop Test conducted? Which departments and agencies were involved in it? How are preparations for the Gaganyaan mission coming along? Is it necessary to conduct multiple tests for a crewed space flight? What are India's long term spaceflight goals?

EXPLAINER

Vasudevan Mukunth

The story so far:

In August 24, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully carried out its first Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-1), a crucial milestone in the preparation for the country's maiden human spaceflight mission, Gaganyaan. A dummy crew capsule weighing nearly five tonnes was dropped from a helicopter to test whether its parachute system could slow it safely for splashdown.

What is IADT-1?

The IADT is designed to evaluate the parachute-based deceleration system that will bring the Gaganyaan crew module down safely after reentry. In IADT-1, the parachutes were expected to deploy in a precise sequence after the module was released from a height of about 3 km.

Although the capsule was uncrewed and the drop was conducted from a helicopter, the test simulated the last stages of an actual space mission. In the real scenario, the capsule will first be slowed by atmospheric drag and its heat shields, followed by smaller drogue parachutes and finally the three 25-m main parachutes. The aim was to ensure the capsule slowed to around 8 m/s before splashdown.

How was the test carried out?

For IADT-1, an Indian Air Force Chinook helicopter lifted a 4.8-tonne dummy crew module into the air. At the designated altitude, the helicopter released the capsule. From then on, automated systems triggered the sequential deployment of parachutes. ISRO reported that the touchdown conditions matched expectations, demonstrating that the design worked in real-world conditions. The exercise involved extensive modelling, instrumentation, and coordination among multiple agencies.



One step closer: ISRO successfully conducts the first IADT-01 test in Bengaluru on August 24. ANI

Aside from the Air Force, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) contributed to materials and safety systems. The Indian Navy and Coast Guard prepared for post-splashdown recovery. Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre Director A. Rajarajan has said that his centre was responsible for nearly "90%" of IADT-1 activities. In a crewed space mission, ascent, descent, and recovery are the riskiest phases. Even after a successful launch and orbital stay, astronauts' survival hinges on whether the capsule can decelerate safely for re-entry and landing. A failure in parachute deployment would be catastrophic. Ground testing is thus indispensable.

Where does IADT lie on the roadmap?

Gaganyaan's ultimate objective is to send Indian astronauts to low-earth orbit on a human-rated LVM3 rocket. But before that

happens, ISRO must conduct a series of tests to validate safety systems. Unlike previous satellite or planetary missions, human spaceflight requires human-rating of every system. This involves engineering redundancies, fault detection, and life support. The Crew Escape System tests are to demonstrate whether astronauts can be pulled away from the rocket in case of launch failure. The first such test vehicle flight, TV-D1, took place in October 2023. TV-D2, scheduled next, will attempt a more complex abort scenario.

The uncrewed Gaganyaan-1 (G1) mission will launch a crew module aboard the LVM3 to orbit. The module will house 'Vyommitra', a humanoid robot designed to mimic astronaut operations. The recent IADT-1 success will pave the way for TV-D2 and G1. Further drop tests and subsystem trials, including more IADTs and subsystem checks, will continue in parallel, refining the systems before

astronauts are cleared to fly. In all, by the time the first human flight (H1) has happened, ISRO will have conducted several thousand tests.

Some of the critical systems under development include the environmental control and life support system (ECLSS) for oxygen, temperature, waste management, and fire safety; the integrated vehicle health management system (IVHMS), capable of autonomously detecting faults and triggering abort actions; and the strengthened LVM3 rocket, modified to meet the reliability standards necessary to carry humans. India has also had to indigenise many technologies that were unavailable from abroad, from escape motors to specialised composites. Each subsystem has to pass hundreds of tests before being certified.

What are India's long-term goals?

Gaganyaan is not an end in itself but the foundation of a broader human spaceflight roadmap. The Indian government has announced plans to establish the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) by 2035 and to achieve an Indian crewed lunar landing by 2040. These goals will demand repeated flights, extended orbital missions, and deep-space technology. In this regard, while schedules may slip – IADT-1 was originally planned for April 2024 – each milestone will build capability for more ambitious tests. For example, according to ISRO, the TV-D2 mission "will demonstrate Gaganyaan Crew Escape System by simulating an abort scenario. The crew module will separate and descend using thrusters and parachutes before sea splashdown, followed by recovery operations." In tandem, ISRO is currently operating its SpaDeX mission in its extended phase, after the mission's twin satellites successfully demonstrated in-orbit docking in May 2025. This technology will be an important part of the Gaganyaan, Chandrayaan-4, and BAS missions. H1 is currently scheduled for 2027 but is likely to be delayed further.

THE GIST

▼ The IADT is designed to evaluate the parachute-based deceleration system that will bring the Gaganyaan crew module down safely after reentry.

▼ Gaganyaan's ultimate objective is to send Indian astronauts to low-earth orbit on a human-rated LVM3 rocket.

▼ Gaganyaan is not an end in itself but the foundation of a broader human spaceflight roadmap.

What is the air drop test conducted by ISRO?

Source: The Hindu Page No.: 10

GS Paper: GS3 – Science & Technology
(Space Technology)

Context

ISRO has conducted the first Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-1) of the Gaganyaan mission to validate the parachute system for crew module recovery after re-entry.

What is Splashdown?

- **Definition:** Splashdown is the process of safely landing a space capsule in the ocean or sea after re-entry from space.
- Water bodies are used as a natural cushion, reducing landing impact, followed by naval recovery of the astronauts.

Process of Splashdown:

1. **Re-entry:** Capsule re-enters Earth's atmosphere at very high speed (7–8 km/s); heat shield protects against extreme heat (~1600°C).
2. **Atmospheric Drag:** Initial slowing happens naturally due to friction with air.
3. **Drogue Parachutes:** Small parachutes deploy to stabilise the capsule.
4. **Main Parachutes:** Large parachutes open sequentially, reducing speed to ~8 m/s.
5. **Splashdown:** Capsule descends steadily and lands in the sea; water cushions the impact.
6. **Recovery:** Flotation devices keep capsule upright until Navy/Coast Guard teams retrieve crew and module.

Summary

- On August 24, ISRO conducted the first IADT-1 in Bengaluru.
- A dummy crew module (~5 tonnes) was dropped from an IAF Chinook helicopter at 3 km altitude.

Purpose: test whether parachutes could bring the capsule down safely for splashdown.

The test simulated the final stages of a real mission. Sensors confirmed descent and parachute performance.

Agencies involved: Indian Air Force, DRDO, Indian Navy, Coast Guard.

Why multiple tests? Unlike planetary missions, human spaceflight requires rigorous validation of every system; failures are unacceptable.

Future tests:

- Test Vehicle (TV-D1) in October 2023 conducted.
- More TV-D missions will validate re-entry, deceleration, and recovery.

Long-term goals:

- Establish Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) by 2035.
- Achieve Indian crewed lunar landing by 2040.

U.S. bids to trump China in struggle to secure DR Congo's critical minerals

DRC has some of the richest mineral reserves on the planet, vital for weapons and electric cars; threatened by the resurgence of the M23 militia in the DRC's east, Congolese President seeks a deal with Washington, trading direct access to those minerals for beefed-up security cooperation

Agence France-Presse
KINSHASA

The United States wants to secure its supply of strategic minerals in conflict-torn Democratic Republic of Congo, hoping to challenge China's near-monopoly on the lucrative sector.

While the strategy has been in the works for years, Washington has doubled down on it since Donald Trump's return to the White House in January.

Although it is among the world's 15 least developed countries, the DRC has some of the richest mineral veins on the planet.

Besides gold and uranium, its mines contain significant deposits of copper, cobalt, coltan and lithium, with uses ranging from weaponry to mobile phones and electric cars.

More than three-quarters of the world's cobalt came from the DRC in 2024, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Threatened by the resurgence of the Rwanda-backed M23 militia in the DRC's east, Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi has sought to strike a deal with the United States, trading direct access to those minerals for beefed-up security cooperation.

But the Congolese mining sector is rife with chronic trafficking, organ-



Strategic move: Copper being extracted in Kolwezi, DRC. More than three-quarters of the world's cobalt came from the DRC in 2024, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. FILE PHOTO

ised crime and corruption, discouraging businesses from investing.

Skirting eastern conflict Since taking up arms again in 2021, the M23 has taken control of a raft of mining sites in the eastern DRC, notably in North and South Kivu provinces, with Rwanda's help.

However, Washington's gaze has turned further to the southeast, to the cobalt and copper-rich Katanga region, which has been spared by conflict in recent times, according to experts.

To rival China's Belt and Road global infrastructure initiative, the United States has worked for years to es-

tablish the "Lobito Corridor", an ambitious infrastructure project which would allow minerals mined in the southeastern DRC to be transported thousands of kilometres (miles) overland to the Atlantic Ocean.

Chinese businesses are involved in mining the vast majority of the DRC's deposits, often taking over from Western companies put off by conflicts or the business environment.

"If the Americans want to enter into the sector today and begin to make a profit immediately, that will involve snatching mining permits away from certain companies," said Christian-Geraud Neema,

an expert for the China Global South Project, a non-profit group.

"If they want to start from zero, they will have to request research permits and get involved in exploration, which could take a minimum of eight to nine years before achieving any results," he added.

AI mapping

To that end, KoBold Metals, an American start-up specialised in using artificial intelligence to discover new mineral deposits, especially of lithium, signed a declaration of principles with the DRC's government in July for the exploration of 1,700 new potential mining sites.

With financiers including Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates, the group likewise obtained the authorities' assent to comb through its precious mining information database.

"All the mines which we know of come from searches done 80, even 100 years ago," under Belgian colonial rule, said Jean-Jacques Kayembe, coordinator for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in the DRC.

"Less than 20% of the territory has been subject to sustained study," he added.

Plots up for grabs

In July, the DRC's mining registry made more than 600 mining titles up for grabs following a major clean-up of its records.

Several sources and security officials said the government was piling on the pressure to make those plots available to respond to US demands.

Crispin Mbindule, chairman of the board of directors of the Congolese mining registry, denies those claims, insisting that the DRC "is not selling off its assets". He said that the Americans "followed all the procedures and paid all the fees".

Besides discovering new deposits, the DRC is attempting to respond to the United States's interests by offering up joint ventures

in mining companies owned by the state, according to Kayembe.

Looming over proceedings is Israeli investor Dan Gertler, who continues to wield significant influence in the DRC's mining sector despite being sanctioned by the United States over his dealings and business practices.

"He still collects royalties from three of the biggest mining projects in the country," said Jean Claude Mputu of the non-profit group The Congo is Not for Sale.

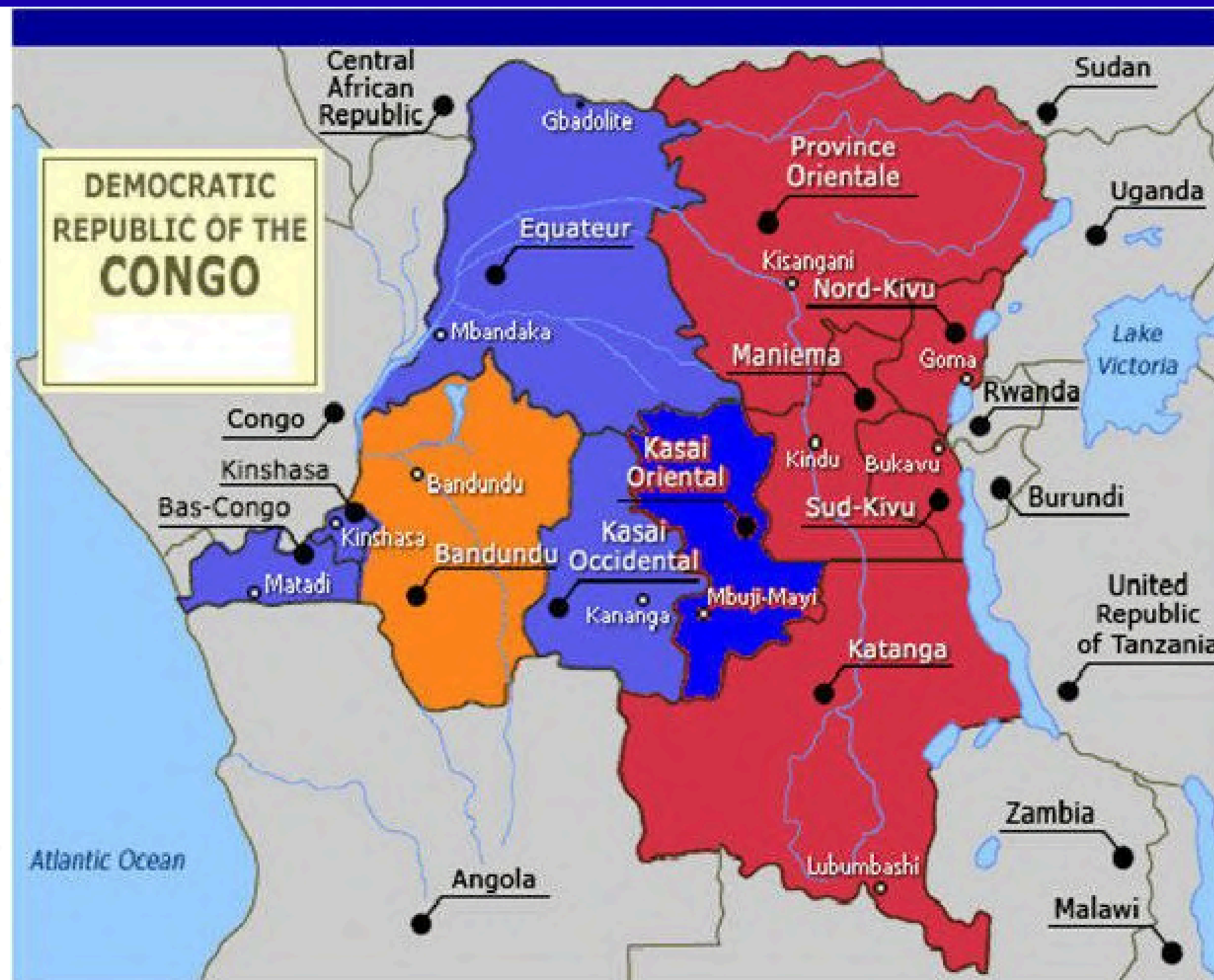
In March 2021, the United States re-imposed sanctions on Gertler, first set in 2017 for allegedly cheating the DRC of about \$1.4 billion in revenues through opaque mining deals.

Mr. Trump had reversed some of the sanctions just before the end of his first term.

"It's impossible that someone who has his know-how will not be involved" in the ongoing negotiations, a European diplomat said.

Congolese civil society representatives launched a campaign in July demanding an end to the sanctions against Gertler.

The Israeli businessman, who has denied any suggestion of being involved in any massive resource corruption in Africa, could not be reached for comment.



U.S. bids to trump China in struggle to secure DR Congo's critical minerals

Source: The Hindu, Page 15

Subject: Important for map location – Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central Africa

Context (in simple words)

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is one of the world's richest sources of minerals like cobalt, copper, lithium, coltan, and uranium—vital for weapons, electric cars, and green technologies. Currently, China dominates this sector. The U.S., under Donald Trump, is now pushing hard to reduce China's monopoly by securing direct mineral access through deals with the Congolese government. However, instability in eastern DRC caused by the M23 rebel group complicates this race for resources.

Tutsi–Hutu Conflict in DRC

In Rwanda: Tutsis (minority) and Hutus (majority) had long tensions. In 1994, Hutu extremists killed nearly 8 lakh Tutsis (genocide).

After genocide:

Many Hutu fighters fled into Congo (DRC).
Tutsi refugees also lived in Congo (called Banyamulenge).

This created fighting in Congo:

Hutu militias in Congo attacked Tutsis.
Rwanda supported Tutsi groups in Congo to protect them and to keep Hutu militias in check.

M23 Rebel Group

Formed in 2012 by Congolese Tutsi fighters.
Name from a March 23, 2009 peace deal with govt. (they said govt. broke it).
Claims to protect Tutsis in Congo.
Actually also fights to control mineral-rich areas (gold, coltan, cobalt).
Accused of being backed by Rwanda, which denies it.
Came back strong in 2021, now controls parts of North Kivu (eastern DRC).

Summary

U.S. Strategy:

The U.S. wants to secure direct access to Congo's mineral wealth (cobalt, copper, lithium).

Trump administration doubled down on this strategy since January 2025.

Washington is pushing projects like the Lobito Corridor to transport minerals to the Atlantic Ocean, bypassing China's Belt and Road routes.

China's Dominance:

China currently controls the majority of DRC's mining through Belt and Road projects and heavy investments.

Western companies struggle due to corruption, poor regulation, and instability.

Security Challenges:

The M23 rebel group controls much of eastern DRC's mining regions.

This threatens U.S. deals, as violence discourages foreign investment.

Less than 20% of Congo's mineral-rich land has been properly explored due to instability.

Recent Developments:

Congo's mining registry opened 600 new mining titles in July 2024.

U.S. is trying to push for transparent mapping of mineral resources.

Sanctions remain on controversial Israeli businessman Dan Gertler, who still influences Congo's mining.

DAILY MCQs FOR PRACTICE

Q1. Which of the following ministries is the National Designated Authority (NDA) for carbon markets in India headed by?

- A) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
- B) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- C) Ministry of Power
- D) Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Q2. According to the National Sample Survey, what percentage of students receive private coaching in India?

- A) About one-third
- B) About one-fourth
- C) About half
- D) About two-thirds

Q3. Which sector is most threatened by the proposed 50% U.S. tariffs on Indian exports as per recent reports?

- A) Information Technology
- B) Labour-intensive sectors like textiles, gems, leather, and footwear
- C) Agricultural exports
- D) Pharmaceutical products

DAILY MCQs FOR PRACTICE

Q4.What is the key infrastructural project mentioned that aims to facilitate transport of minerals mined in southeastern DR Congo?

- A) North–South Corridor
- B) Lobito Corridor
- C) Eastern Economic Corridor
- D) Trans-African Highway

Q5.In space missions, what is the main advantage of a splashdown landing?

- A) It allows the spacecraft to land without parachutes
- B) Water cushions the impact, reducing landing shock on the crew and capsule
- C) It enables accurate landing on lunar surface
- D) It uses magnetic levitation for precision landing

DAILY MCQs FOR PRACTICE

1. Which of the following ministries is the National Designated Authority (NDA) for carbon markets in India headed by?

Answer: B) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

2. According to the National Sample Survey, what percentage of students receive private coaching in India?

Answer: A) About one-third

3. Which sector is most threatened by the proposed 50% U.S. tariffs on Indian exports as per recent reports?

Answer: B) Labour-intensive sectors like textiles, gems, leather, and footwear

4. What is the key infrastructural project mentioned that aims to facilitate transport of minerals mined in southeastern DR Congo?

Answer: B) Lobito Corridor

5. In space missions, what is the main advantage of a splashdown landing?

Answer: B) Water cushions the impact, reducing landing shock on the crew and capsule