

CURRENTLY — 13 OCTOBER 2026

- 1. Nobel Prize in Economics 2026: Macroeconomic Stability | Source: The Hindu | GS-3: Economy**
- 2. India's Elderly Care Workforce | Source: The Hindu | GS-2: Social Justice**
- 3. Drone Strike in Sudan's Blue Nile State | Source: The Hindu | GS-2: International Relations**
- 4. Russian Attacks on Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Region | Source: The Hindu | GS-2: International Relations**
- 5. WWF Living Planet Index 2026: Wildlife Population Decline | Source: The Hindu | GS-3: Environment**
- 6. INS Mangrol Commissioned: Indigenous Anti-Submarine Warfare Capability | Source: The Indian Express | GS-3: Defence**
- 7. Jantar Mantar De-notified as a Protest Site | Source: The Indian Express | GS-2: Fundamental Rights and Governance**

• NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS 2026

How to keep an economy stable using policy tools

The Great Depression prompted policymakers to advocate government intervention in economic crises. Hall and Woodford's work refines that idea



UDIT MISRA

THE ROYAL Swedish Academy of Sciences has awarded the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2026 — commonly called the Economics Nobel — to two American economists: Robert E Hall of Stanford University and Michael Woodford of Columbia University. They will share the prize money of 12 million Swedish kronor (approximately Rs 12 crore).

What have they been awarded for?

The official citation states they have received the award "for microeconomic foundations of macroeconomic stabilisation". Macroeconomic stabilisation refers to policies that governments and central banks use to "stabilise" an economy.

For instance, the Reserve Bank of India last week raised interest rates with a view to contain inflation. Inflation in India has been going up owing to a rise in crude oil prices and prices of other commodities in the wake of the US-Iran war, the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, etc. There are also worries that inflation will rise further because deficient rainfall and higher temperatures due to El Niño may hurt food production and push up food prices.

If the government and the central bank followed the dictum that the government should not intervene and that the markets will price things correctly on their own, inflation can potentially soar quite high. That would hurt most Indians, since they are not rich enough to handle such a situation. It could lead to people cutting down all other expenses to focus on the essentials, which would cause many businesses to fail and lots of job losses. The economy, as a whole, may take a much longer time to recover.

But an RBI intervention could stabilise the path in such a manner that the situation never becomes as dire as it could become if nothing was done.

Similarly, over the past few years, the Union government has been cutting taxes —

• 'For microeconomic foundations of macroeconomic stabilisation'



Developed new macroeconomic models, leading to policies that reduced the economy's peaks and troughs.

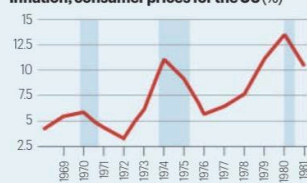


ROBERT E. HALL, 83
Stanford University, U.S.



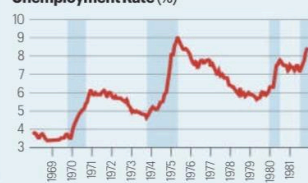
MICHAEL WOODFORD, 71
Columbia University, U.S.

Inflation, consumer prices for the US (%)



SOURCE: WORLD BANK. SHADED AREAS INDICATE U.S. RECESSIONS

Unemployment Rate (%)



SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

both direct taxes (personal income tax and corporate tax) and indirect taxes (GST) — with a view to boost consumption by individuals and investments by companies. That's because in the years leading up to and during the Covid-19 pandemic (and resulting lockdowns), India's economy struggled.

Through tax cuts, the government tried to boost economic activity — the RBI also helped in those years by cutting interest rates. Without such interventions, a recovery might have taken much longer.

These are the examples of macroeconomic "stabilisation" policies that academics such as Hall and Woodford helped refine through their work.

To understand the "microeconomic foundations" of these macro policies, one has to understand the trigger for their work.

What is their contribution?

A crash in the stock markets in October 1929 marked the start of the Great Depression in the US. As the days and months rolled by, the US gross domestic product — the value of annual output — fell by 30% and the unemployment rate soared to 25%.

Thousands of banks and businesses went under. The crisis reverberated through the world, especially affecting Europe.

Demand and supply

Hall focused on the demand side of the economy: how do people decide how much they would consume, and when and how do they choose to raise or cut consumption.

Woodford's work focused on the supply side: how firms behaved and took decisions such as changing prices.

The dominant policy paradigm leading up to the Great Depression was that governments should not intervene, letting markets resolve through forces of demand and supply instead. But the widespread devastation made everyone rethink.

British economist John Maynard Keynes provided a solution that seemed to work: Governments and central banks should "stabilise" the economy through policy interventions. When growth is slow (and unemployment high), policymakers should cut interest rates and taxes, and the governments should spend more even at the cost of borrowing money itself and having a budget deficit, thus incentivising economic activity.

When the economy starts overheating and the inflation rate starts rising fast, the policymakers should slow down the economy by policies like raising interest rates. Thus, government intervention could save economies from suffering from wild fluctuations.

This broad policy formula worked until the experience of the 1970s. As the charts show, this was a decade when economies faced high inflation and high unemployment both at the same time, thanks to repeated oil price shocks. Efforts to boost a slowing economy only spiked inflation. Efforts to contain inflation further worsened

unemployment. The situation became so bad (shaded areas in the charts show recessions) that the Keynesian recipe of government intervention was seen as the problem, not the solution.

Through their work from the late 1970s onwards, Hall and Woodford revitalised the Keynesian approach by making it grounded in research. Keynes had assumed a linear or straight relationship between variables such as inflation and unemployment, and consumption and production. Hall and Woodford started studying the ground-level data.

Hall focused on the demand side of the economy: questions such as, how do people decide how much they would consume, and when and how do they choose to raise or cut consumption. A better understanding of these, based on household data, has informed policy choices.

For instance, in 1982, he used microdata for a number of individual households to arrive at the insight that not everyone in the economy increases consumption based on income and future expectations; households that are living hand-to-mouth do not follow that assumption.

Woodford's work focused on the supply side: how firms behaved and took decisions such as changing prices. The assumption is that markets find the ideal price based on supply and demand, but businesses don't change prices everyday. He found that businesses look to the future when fixing prices. This means that expectations about future interest rates are important for inflation. In turn, this had a tremendous policy implication: Central banks must clearly convey what they intend to do, which is important for firms when they fix prices.

What is its significance?

Over the past few years, the global economy has faced an exceptional number of risks and challenges: from a global pandemic that brought all economic activity to a sudden halt, to a growing number of wars that have spiked prices of essential commodities, to policy missteps like tariffs.

And yet, far from a recession, the economic growth continues to surprise on the upside. A big reason why policymakers worldwide have been able to avoid worse outcomes is because their policies are informed by the work of academics such as Hall and Woodford.

1. Nobel Prize in Economics 2026: How to Keep an Economy Stable

GS-3 — Economy, Monetary Policy, Inflation and Unemployment

Context: Robert E. Hall (Stanford University) and Michael Woodford (Columbia University) were awarded the 2026 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for their work on the microeconomic foundations of macroeconomic stabilisation.

1. Core Contribution

- 1. Robert E. Hall — Demand and Consumption:** Used household-level data to understand how people make consumption decisions based on income and future expectations, improving the understanding of aggregate demand.
- 2. Michael Woodford — Supply and Price-Setting:** Examined how firms set prices and respond to expectations, explaining why prices may not adjust immediately to changing market conditions.
- 3. Combined significance:** Their research connects individual decisions by households and firms with economy-wide outcomes, helping policymakers understand why inflation, output and unemployment fluctuate.

2. Implications for Economic Policy

- 1. Inflation control:** Interest-rate decisions must account for how households and firms respond to policy changes and expectations.
- 2. Recession management:** Fiscal and monetary interventions can support demand and economic activity during downturns.
- 3. Policy trade-offs:** Measures to control inflation may slow growth and employment, requiring careful calibration.
- 4. Evidence-based policymaking:** Household data, business behaviour and expectations improve the design of stabilisation policies.

PULSE CHECK



Unpaid and unseen: India has millions of informal, unpaid family caregivers who need to be recognised and upskilled as trained caregivers. GETTY IMAGES

Why does India need a trained workforce for elderly care?

India's 60-plus population is projected to touch 347 million by 2050, underscoring the need for a robust caregiving ecosystem; a formal training programme, building on existing small-scale initiatives, could promote gender parity in caregiving and recognise informal, unpaid family caregivers

T.C. Suseel Kumar
R. Sudhakar

Every day Sreeni wakes up at 4.30 am and checks on his mother. If she is unsteady on waking up, he will assist her to the raised toilet and wait outside as she independently uses it, assuring her that help is just outside. There is a schedule of medicines, clearly sorted and kept by her bedside. The BP monitor and the glucometer reassure him that everything is in the range for her age. He learnt it all by himself, one emergency visit after another to the hospital. Hip pain was ignored till it became a debilitating fracture, a sudden loss of consciousness detected as low sodium – each crisis was a hard lesson in the trial-and-error reality of informal caregiving. Every day millions like Sreeni wake up and perform their respective self-taught routines to take care of their parents or dependants.

As our country's population ages over the next two decades, the topic of caregiving and the need for formal training for the task will assume larger dimensions, and this is precisely what the Budget 2026-27 has highlighted in a timely manner with the announcement of training of 1.5 lakh caregivers aligned to the National Skills Qualifications Framework.

The NITI Aayog's August 2026 report "Reimagining Care: Strategies for Empowering Caregivers in Viksit Bharat@2047" frames caregiving as an economic activity rather than just welfare work, and this is the first time that such an intention is explicitly articulated by the Government at a national policy level, which indicates that the urgency has been acknowledged by policymakers.

To put it in perspective, India's 60-plus

population, estimated at approximately 149 million in 2022, is projected to touch 347 million by 2050, forming roughly 20.8% of the total population. Assuming NITI Aayog's estimate that 10% of the population today is engaged in caregiving while being untrained and unpaid, the current total works out to about 146 million.

The planned 1.5 lakh formally trained workforce is just a drop in the ocean even by today's requirements. The caregiving ecosystem will be at a serious juncture if we don't plan now.

Gender parity in caregiving

For most of its history, India never needed a long-term care system because it had one: the joint family. Three generations under one roof was an insurance contract written in spirit and practised willingly. In the present scenario, with micro family units, most of the time, it is the housewives who take upon themselves the additional task of caregiving, having no formal training, learning by trial and sometimes serious error. Combined with the need to manage their own household chores, such situations increase household stress considerably. The aged who need assistance and the differently abled, about 26.8 million, are surviving, thanks to the love, care and affection of these unpaid, informal care givers.

An NSO survey has worked out that women, on average, spend 299 minutes per day on unpaid domestic work and caregiving, whereas for men it is only 97 minutes. What is required is an appreciation of the situation and the demands of caregiving being shouldered by both genders. A formal training programme, designed exclusively around caregiving, covering the detection of

age-related events needing attention in the elderly, assessment of needs, continuous monitoring protocols, emergency care and psychological interventions, ideally attended by at least two family members, would improve the sharing of the duties and responsibilities.

Skilling and upskilling

If we need to have a large number of skilled, formally trained caregivers in a few years' time, we need to start in earnest.

Two structures are functioning in India, albeit on a small scale and untested. Kudumbashree is a State mission based in Kerala that runs a network of self-help groups. It launched the K4 Care training programme in February 2024 under which its members qualify as certified geriatric/patient/disability care executives. Recent data shows that only 838 have completed the course, a rather slow progress. We can incentivise and accelerate the programme.

The other group is the ASHA workers for whom the NHRSC (National Health Systems Resource Centre) has prepared a Training Manual on Elderly Care, with training delivered via Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres. However, granular details as to the number of ASHA workers who have completed this training are not available publicly. A meaningful intervention here can have a positive impact.

Informal caregiving is not always physical, like mobility assistance or medicine management. Age-related cognitive decline – as seen in Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease – involves several emotional challenges as well. Any national curriculum must factor in geriatric mental health and behavioural

management along with physical care protocols.

The way forward

There are millions of informal, unpaid family caregivers. We need to validate and upskill them into recognised caregivers.

Kudumbashree and ASHA workers who are formally trained, can serve as trainers to train more people, allowing the chain to continue. The National Caregiver Council (NCC), as envisaged in the NITI Aayog report, can act as an apex body. It can set benchmarks and supervise skill development, update training modules, standardise curricula, come out with useful FAQs and regulate and manage a national caregiver portal with a list of certified caregivers.

Transforming India's care economy is an economic strategy waiting to be unlocked. By creating such a robust ecosystem, India can turn informal dedication into professional expertise with great economic value. For millions like Sreeni, being recognised as a caregiver for the elderly and being trained formally to deal with the associated challenges bring dignity to the relationship.

Just as India is recognised the world over for its healthcare nursing professionals, its approach to managing the challenges of elderly care too could be adopted as the compassionate alternative to the many models being practised globally. The fact that this has been announced as a Budget item is just the seed, and operationalising it at the ground level is where the final success lies.

(T.C. Suseel Kumar a former Managing Director and R. Sudhakar is a former Executive Director, LIC. Views expressed are personal.)

12. 'देखभाल अर्थव्यवस्था' और 'मुद्रिकृत अर्थव्यवस्था' के बीच अंतर कीजिए। महिला सशक्तिकरण के द्वारा देखभाल अर्थव्यवस्था को मुद्रिकृत अर्थव्यवस्था में कैसे लाया जा सकता है? (उत्तर 250 शब्दों में दीजिए)

Distinguish between 'care economy' and 'monetized economy'. How can care economy be brought into monetized economy through women empowerment?
(Answer in 250 words)

2. Why Does India Need a Trained Workforce for Elderly Care?

GS-2 — Social Justice and Governance; GS-3 — Employment and Care Economy

Context: India's rapidly ageing population, changing family structures and dependence on unpaid caregiving highlight the need for a trained, certified and professionally recognised elderly-care workforce.

1. Growing Need for Elderly Care

1. **Ageing population:** India's population aged 60 and above was estimated at 149 million in 2022 and is projected to reach 347 million (20.8% of the population) by 2050.
2. **Changing family structures:** Nuclear families, migration and smaller households reduce the availability of family members for full-time care.
3. **Complex care needs:** Older persons may require assistance with mobility, medication, daily activities, dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
4. **Growing care burden:** The article estimates that around 146 million people provide informal, unpaid caregiving.
5. **Workforce shortage:** The proposed training of 1.5 lakh caregivers under the Union Budget 2026–27 highlights the need to expand the supply of trained personnel.

2. Gender Inequality and Unpaid Care

1. **Disproportionate burden:** Women perform a substantial share of unpaid caregiving, often alongside domestic responsibilities.
2. **Time-use gap:** The National Statistics Office survey cited in the report records women spending an average of 299 minutes daily on unpaid domestic and caregiving work, compared with 97 minutes for men.
3. **Economic invisibility:** Unpaid caregiving contributes to social welfare but is generally not directly counted in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
4. **Employment constraints:** Care responsibilities can restrict women's access to education, paid work and career progression.
5. **Gender-responsive opportunity:** Professional training and paid caregiving can recognise care as skilled work and improve women's economic participation.

3. Existing Initiatives and Implementation Gaps

1. **Union Budget 2026–27:** Announced training for 1.5 lakh caregivers, aligned with the National Skills Qualifications Framework.
2. **NITI Aayog:** Its August 2026 report, *Reimagining Care: Strategies for Empowering Caregivers in Viksit Bharat@2047*, advocates recognising caregiving as an economic activity.
3. **Kudumbashree K4 Care:** Kerala's programme trains and certifies workers in geriatric, patient and disability care; the article reports only 838 course completions.
4. **ASHA-worker training:** The National Health Systems Resource Centre has prepared an elderly-care training manual for Accredited Social Health Activists, but implementation needs strengthening.
5. **Systemic gaps:** Limited training capacity, inconsistent standards, inadequate certification and a lack of comprehensive workforce data restrict professionalisation.

4. Way Forward

1. **Standardised curriculum:** Include geriatric care, mobility assistance, dementia, mental health, medication support and emergency response.

- 2. Certification and recognition: Provide formal certification for newly trained workers and upskilling opportunities for informal family caregivers.**
- 3. Scale up successful models: Expand K4 Care and strengthen training through community health networks.**
- 4. National Caregiver Council: Establish the proposed apex body to coordinate training, set standards and maintain a registry of certified caregivers.**
- 5. Build an affordable care economy: Improve wages and working conditions, expand accessible elderly-care services and create sustainable employment opportunities.**

CAIRO

Rights group says paramilitary drone strike in Sudan killed 41



AFP

▲ A drone strike blamed on Sudan's notorious paramilitaries hit a gathering of displaced people on the border with Ethiopia and killed 41, a rights group said. The strike by the Rapid Support Forces, which killed eight children, took place in the Abu Shandi area in Sudan's Blue Nile province, Emergency Lawyers said. AP

67. Consider the following pairs :

	<i>Country</i>	<i>Reason for being in the news</i>
1.	Argentina	Worst economic crisis
2.	Sudan	War between the country's regular army and paramilitary forces
3.	Turkey	Rescinded its membership of NATO

How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched ?

- (a) Only one pair
- (b) Only two pairs
- (c) All three pairs
- (d) None of the pairs



3. Sudan: Home Fighting and Places in News

GS-1 — World Geography; GS-2 — International Relations

Context: Sudan's ongoing home fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has caused widespread civilian casualties and displacement. A drone strike in the Blue Nile region reportedly killed 41 displaced people, including eight children.

1. Important Places

- 1. Blue Nile State: Southeastern Sudan, near Ethiopia and South Sudan; the region associated with the reported strike.**
- 2. Abu Shandi: Reported location of the drone strike, in the Wad al-Mahi area.**
- 3. Khartoum: Sudan's capital, where the Blue Nile and White Nile meet.**
- 4. Port Sudan: Major port on the Red Sea.**
- 5. Darfur: Western Sudan, affected by prolonged conflict and displacement.**

2. Prelims Pointers

- 1. Location: Northeastern Africa; Sudan has a coastline along the Red Sea.**
- 2. Neighbouring countries: Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea.**
- 3. Blue Nile: Originates in Ethiopia's Lake Tana and flows into Sudan.**
- 4. Nile confluence: The Blue Nile and White Nile meet at Khartoum; the Nile flows north through Egypt into the Mediterranean Sea.**
- 5. Conflict: The civil war began in April 2023 between the regular army (SAF) and the paramilitary RSF, creating a major humanitarian crisis.**

Russian attacks on Zaporizhzhia region in Ukraine kill 20

Associated Press

KYIV

Russian strikes killed at least 20 people in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region, Ukrainian officials said on Saturday.

Three children were among those killed when Russian aerial bombs hit residential buildings in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine's State Emergency Service said on Saturday. At least 18 people were wounded in the attack.

Missiles also struck Kyiv

in a daytime attack on Saturday. Mayor Vitalii Klitschko said four people were wounded.

"Today, Russia expressed its thanks for the lifting of sanctions on diesel exports by dropping five glide bombs on residential buildings in Zaporizhzhia," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on Saturday on X.

"Russia's choice is war," Mr. Zelenskyy said after drone attacks on energy facilities and a ballistic missile attack on Kyiv.

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93. Consider the following pairs :

<i>Regions often mentioned in news</i>	<i>Reason for being in news</i>
1. North Kivu and Ituri	: War between Armenia and Azerbaijan
2. Nagorno-Karabakh	: Insurgency in Mozambique
3. Kherson and Zaporizhzhia	: Dispute between Israel and Lebanon

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

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



4. Ukraine: Russian Attacks on Zaporizhzhia

GS-2 — International Relations; GS-1 — World Geography

Context: Russian strikes reportedly killed at least 20 people, including three children, in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region. Residential buildings were hit by aerial bombs, while Kyiv also faced missile attacks.

Key Facts: Places in News and Prelims Relevance

1. **Zaporizhzhia:** Located in southeastern Ukraine, near the Sea of Azov; the region is strategically important in the Russia–Ukraine war.
2. **Kyiv:** Capital of Ukraine and a major political and administrative centre, targeted in missile attacks.
3. **Sea of Azov:** Connected to the Black Sea through the Kerch Strait; important for regional maritime access.
4. **Black Sea:** Borders Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Türkiye, Bulgaria and Romania; strategically important for shipping, trade and security.
5. **Ukraine:** Eastern European country bordering Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. The full-scale Russian invasion began in February 2022.

Additional Prelims Fact

Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant: Located near Enerhodar in southeastern Ukraine. It is Europe's largest nuclear power plant by installed capacity and has been a major concern for nuclear safety during the conflict.

Contextualising WWF's report on wildlife population decline

The Living Planet Index report shows that exactly 50% of populations were in decline, 43% were increasing, and the remaining 7% were stable

DATA POINT

Hannah Ritchie

There has been a 73% decline in wildlife populations since 1970, according to the 2026 Living Planet Index report. As with previous editions, it makes for a concerning read, despite this year's title being about the "Science of Hope".

While these trends are worrying, the numbers presented in the Living Planet Index (LPI) report, released by the Worldwide Wildlife Fund (WWF), are often misunderstood or misreported. The headline figure from the 2026 update of the LPI shows that studied wildlife populations declined by an average of 73% from 1970 through 2022, as shown in **Chart 1**. The data covers mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish; it doesn't yet include invertebrates or plants.

To clarify what this doesn't mean – it doesn't tell us anything about the number of species lost; the number of populations or individuals that have been lost; the number or percentage of species or populations that are declining; or the number of extinctions.

The authors of the LPI go to great lengths to explain this. Yet, there is inevitably a long list of headlines claiming that we've "lost 73% of wildlife", "73% of species have gone extinct", or "73% of species are declining". All of these are incorrect. But then, what does this metric actually tell us?

Across the 35,803 wildlife populations studied, the average decline was 73%. This doesn't mean that 73% of populations are in decline; in fact, around half of the studied populations were in decline, while half were either increasing or stable.

To calculate the LPI, researchers collect data on the change in wildlife numbers across tens of thousands of populations. While the data is measured relative to

1970, very few populations have data stretching back this far. Many populations only have data for much shorter and sparser timelines. For every population, the change in numbers over time is calculated, giving a rate of change. It can be positive, negative, or zero. To obtain the final LPI number, researchers take the geometric mean of the rates of change across all these populations. They also provide different weights to different populations, which affects the final result.

The 2022 Living Planet Index reported an average decline of 69% since 1970. In 2024, it reported a 73% decline. And this latest report finds the same figure. From this, you might assume that wildlife populations dropped by four percentage points between the 2022 and 2024 editions, and nothing has changed since then.

But that's not the case. Almost none of this change has happened in the last few years, and the new LPIs should not be seen as simple extensions of the previous ones.

Instead, the entire trend line for the LPI has shifted as the project has gained access to data from more populations and species, and the types of populations included have changed. Since the last report, the number of populations in the LPI increased by around 1,000 (a 3% increase), and the number of species by about 300 (a 5% increase). An important change from the 2022 to the 2024 report was that both native and non-native species were included in the former, but since then, only native species have been included.

In this particular release, the number of populations and species from Africa increased substantially. The number of populations increased by 14%, and the number of species by 38%. Data coverage of this region, which had been under-represented in previous reports, has increased.

Chart 2 compares the LPI for 2022, 2024, and 2026 across different regions. Here, one can see

that whole lines have shifted, rather than things changing dramatically in just the last four years. Almost as many populations are increasing as decreasing.

Across the entire dataset, exactly 50% of populations were in decline, 43% were increasing, and the remaining 7% were stable.

Chart 3 shows the share of populations in the LPI that have trended in a given direction for different taxonomic groups. Around half of wildlife populations have declined in numbers. The rest were either increasing or stable. So, not all populations are struggling. This is not to dismiss the steep decline many populations are seeing. Instead, it's useful to know this so we can direct resources more efficiently to the areas and populations that need them most. It's more effective to target restorative and protective efforts to populations in serious trouble than to assume that all populations are struggling.

The index also varies from region to region. Latin America and the Caribbean have seen the most severe decline of any region. It experienced an average decline of 95% across its studied populations. In recent decades, it has experienced intense deforestation and expansion of agricultural land: the primary driver of habitat loss. It is also a biodiversity hotspot, being home to many endemic (unique) tropical species. These species are often highly specialised, and don't adapt well to changes in local conditions.

Africa is still rich in biodiversity. It's the only continent with a significant number of large mammals left. Unfortunately, it has dramatically declined in recent decades, with an average decline of 80% since 1970. Asia has also seen a decline of 49%. Europe has seen the smallest decline of all the continents, with an average of 23% since 1970.

Hannah Ritchie is Deputy Editor and Science Outreach Lead at Our World in Data

Is wildlife vanishing?

Data were sourced from the 2026 Living Planet Index (LPI) report by the Worldwide Wildlife Fund (WWF). This analysis was published by OurWorldInData, a non-profit website from the University of Oxford and the Global Change Data Lab

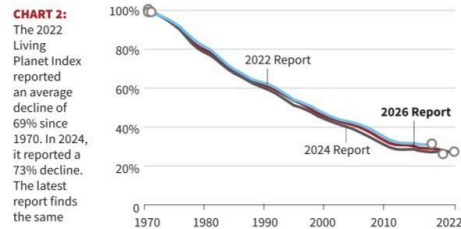
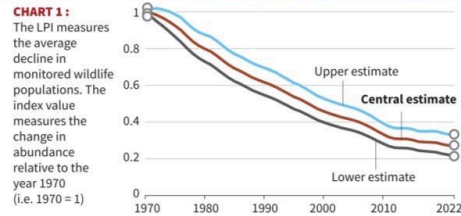
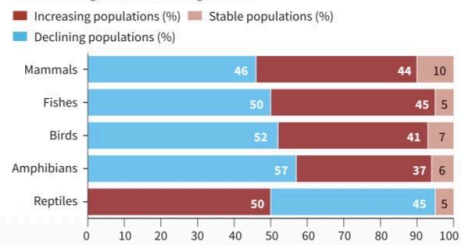


CHART 3: The share of globally studied populations in each taxonomic group with increasing, stable or declining numbers



ly 112. Which of the following statements is/are correct with regard to the Living Planet Report – 2014 (Species and Spaces, People and Places) released by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) ?

1. The Living Planet Index (LPI), which measures more than 10,000 representative populations of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish, has declined by 52% since 1970.

2. The most dramatic regional LPI decrease occurred in Africa.

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

5. WWF's Living Planet Report 2026: Wildlife Population Decline

GS-3 — Environment and Biodiversity

Context: The 2026 Living Planet Index (LPI), published by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), reports a 73% average decline in monitored wildlife population sizes between 1970 and 2022. This does not mean 73% of species have become extinct.

1. Key Findings

- 1. Population decline:** The index records an average 73% decline across 35,803 monitored populations.
- 2. Population trends:** Of the studied populations, 50% declined, 43% increased and 7% remained stable.
- 3. Species coverage:** The data covers mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians; it does not include plants or invertebrates.
- 4. Regional differences:** Latin America and the Caribbean recorded the steepest average decline at 95%, followed by Africa at 80% and Asia-Pacific at 49%.
- 5. Europe:** Recorded the smallest average decline among the regions discussed, at 23% since 1970.

2. Major Drivers of Decline

- 1. Habitat loss:** Deforestation and agricultural expansion destroy or fragment natural habitats.
- 2. Overexploitation:** Unsustainable hunting, fishing and wildlife trade reduce populations.
- 3. Climate change:** Changing temperatures and rainfall disrupt habitats and species distribution.
- 4. Pollution:** Contaminants and waste degrade terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
- 5. Biodiversity hotspots:** Tropical species with specialised habitat requirements are particularly vulnerable to environmental change.

3. Understanding the Index

- 1. What it measures:** Changes in the relative abundance of monitored wildlife populations over time.
- 2. What 73% means:** The average monitored population index fell to approximately 27% of its 1970 baseline.
- 3. What it does not mean:** It does not indicate that 73% of all animals or species have disappeared.
- 4. Changing dataset:** The 2026 report incorporates additional populations and species, so comparisons with earlier editions require caution.
- 5. Policy significance:** Population-level data helps identify ecosystems under pressure and direct conservation resources towards priority areas.

4. Way Forward

- 1. Protect habitats:** Prevent deforestation and strengthen protected areas and wildlife corridors.
- 2. Restore ecosystems:** Rehabilitate degraded forests, wetlands, rivers and grasslands.
- 3. Promote sustainable use:** Regulate hunting, fishing and wildlife trade.
- 4. Integrate climate action:** Combine biodiversity conservation with climate adaptation and mitigation.
- 5. Strengthen monitoring:** Improve long-term wildlife data collection and evidence-based conservation planning.

Navy commissions its third Mahe-class anti-submarine ship

Saurabh Trivedi

NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy on Monday commissioned *INS Mangrol* (P82), the third Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC), at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai, strengthening its capabilities to detect and counter underwater threats.

Vice-Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, presided over the commissioning ceremony. Senior defence officials, representatives from the Ministry of Defence, Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), and industry partners attended the



INS Mangrol, the Navy's new anti-submarine watercraft. AFP

dia's naval capabilities. Designed for operations in coastal and shallow waters, the vessel is equipped to undertake anti-submarine warfare, underwater surveillance and low-intensity maritime operations

6. Indian Navy Commissions Third Mahe-Class Anti-Submarine Warfare Ship

GS-3 — Defence and Security

Context: The Indian Navy commissioned INS Mangrol (P82), the third Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC), at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai to strengthen underwater surveillance and coastal defence.

1. Key Features

1. **Indigenous construction:** Designed and built by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi.
2. **Indigenous content:** Over 80%, supporting the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.
3. **Primary role:** Detecting and countering submarines in coastal and shallow waters.
4. **Other roles:** Underwater surveillance and low-intensity maritime operations.
5. **Industrial contribution:** Reflects the role of domestic defence industries and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

2. Prelims Pointers

1. **Class:** Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft.
2. **Commissioning location:** Naval Dockyard, Mumbai.
3. **Shipbuilder:** Cochin Shipyard Limited, based in Kochi, Kerala.
4. **Name origin:** Named after Mangrol, a coastal town and fishing harbour in Gujarat's Junagadh district.
5. **Historical link:** It carries forward the name of the earlier INS Mangrol (M85), a minesweeper that served the Navy until April 2004.

Jantar Mantar de-notified: What courts have said about designating protest sites

Amaal Sheikh
New Delhi, October 12

THE DELHI Police on Monday de-notified Jantar Mantar as a designated protest site, naming Ramlila Maidan and Burari Ground in north Delhi and CBD Ground in east Delhi as alternatives.

According to the official notification, the decision follows a recommendation by a committee constituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The move comes amid the Delhi police's heavy barricading and crackdown on protesters in central Delhi since October 10. Protesters have gathered at several locations, including outside areas where prohibitory orders have been imposed under Section 163 of the BNSS.

The designation of protest sites is intended to regulate demonstrations while addressing concerns over traffic, public safety, and residents' rights.

Who decides Delhi's protest sites?

Article 19 of the Indian Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights to freedom of speech and expression, and to assemble peaceably, subject to reasonable restrictions — including in the interests of "public order".

Unlike other states, Delhi's police and public order fall outside the powers of the Delhi Assembly. Under Article 239AA(3)(a), the Legislative Assembly has the power to make laws for NCT Delhi except on three issues: public order, police, and land.

The Delhi Police thus function under the MHA. The police regulate demonstrations, including applications for permission and compliance with conditions governing designated sites. Organisers had to apply 10 days in advance to protest at Jantar Mantar, which had a cap of 1,000 people. Ramlila Maidan was another designated site, with a capacity of around 50,000 people.

Law and order vs 'public order'

While the police often cite law and order when regulating protests, Article 19 permits restrictions on fundamental rights on specified grounds, including "public order". The Supreme Court has treated them differently.

In the 1966 SC ruling of *Ram Manohar Lohia v. State of Bihar*, the court observed that an act may affect law and order without affecting public order. It described law and order, public order, and security of the state as three concentric circles, with public order occupying a narrower category.

"Law and order represent the largest circle within which is the next circle representing public order and the smallest circle represents security of State. It is then easy to see that an act may affect law and order but not public order, just as an act may affect public order but not security of the State," it said.

In *Re: Ramlila Maidan Incident* (2012),

the court said a restriction imposed to maintain law and order "would be least intruding into the guaranteed freedom", while public order "may qualify for a greater degree of restriction" since it was of greater social concern. The court clarified that "every breach of peace may not always lead to public disorder."

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan explained that law and order issues can involve localised disturbances, such as two people fighting on a street. Public order, he said, concerns disturbances that affect the wider community, such as large-scale disruption of transport.

"Law and order is not a valid basis to limit the right to speech and expression," he said, adding that the police cannot invoke public order on their own to justify restricting fundamental rights. "The first step is a law needs to be made which gives police that

power. Then the police exercise the power under that law," he said, adding that the police must identify the law under which they are exercising their powers.

Professor G Mohan Gopal told *The Indian Express* that dissent is the "lifeblood of a peaceful and law-abiding society" and democracy exists to accommodate different opinions. He added that shutting down designated protest sites and suppressing peaceful dissent under "law and order" grounds risks driving citizens to desperation, "because all the legitimate channels, democratic channels for defending the public order based on democracy have been closed".

How can protest sites be designated?

The bench in *Himat Lal K. Shah v. Commissioner of Police, Ahmedabad* (1972), held that the police could require prior permission for public meetings on streets. But it added that the State "cannot by law

abridge or take away the right of assembly by prohibiting assembly on every public street or public place".

In *Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan v. Union of India* (2018), the case pertained to restrictions on demonstrations at Jantar Mantar and moving them to Ramlila Maidan. The petitioners argued that the ground would be too far from the "concentration of power" in New Delhi, and would impact the protests' goals, concerning the very authorities the slogans are raised against.

While the court accepted that contention, it underlined the need to balance the rights of protesters with those of residents and held that "while regulating such demonstrations in public interest, particular areas can be earmarked". It thus allowed a limited portion of Jantar Mantar Road to remain open for regulated demonstrations, noting that the site had been used for protests for a considerable period.

7. Delhi Police De-notifies Jantar Mantar as a Designated Protest Site

GS-2 — Fundamental Rights, Governance, Policing and Centre–Delhi Relations

Context: On 11 October 2026, Delhi Police Commissioner Anurag Kumar issued Standing Order No. L&O/48/2026, removing Jantar Mantar from the list of designated protest venues and identifying Ramlila Ground, Burari Ground and Central Business District (CBD) Ground as alternatives, following recommendations of a committee constituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

1. What Has Changed?

1. Jantar Mantar has been removed from the list of designated protest venues.
2. Alternative venues: Ramlila Ground (Central Delhi), Burari Ground (North Delhi) and Central Business District (CBD) Ground (East Delhi).
3. The order partially modifies Standing Order No. L&O/48/2022, dated 28 April 2022. Detailed revised Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were to be issued separately.

2. Who Can Change a Designated Protest Site?

1. **Administrative control:** Delhi Police functions under the Union Government's administrative control through the MHA.
2. **Review and recommendation:** An MHA-constituted committee examined alternative venues and made recommendations.
3. **Issuing authority:** The Delhi Police Commissioner issued Standing Order No. L&O/48/2026 to implement the change.
4. **Legal position:** The reported order does not identify a separate statutory provision specifically authorising permanent de-notification of a designated protest site. The decision must be assessed within the applicable police laws, constitutional rights and judicial directions.

3. Constitutional and Legal Framework

1. **Article 19(1)(a):** Protects freedom of speech and expression.
2. **Article 19(1)(b):** Guarantees the right to assemble peacefully and without arms.
3. **Articles 19(2) and 19(3):** Permit reasonable restrictions on these freedoms on specified grounds, including public order.
4. **Delhi Police Act, 1978 — Sections 29 and 30:** Provide powers to regulate assemblies and processions and impose specified restrictions to maintain public order. These provisions should not automatically be treated as an express, standalone power to permanently de-notify a protest venue.
5. **Article 239AA:** Public order, police and land fall outside the Delhi Legislative Assembly's legislative competence and remain under Union control.
6. **Section 163, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023:** Enables urgent preventive orders when statutory conditions are met. It is distinct from the administrative standing order changing designated protest venues.

4. Judicial Principles

1. **Himat Lal K. Shah v. Commissioner of Police (1973):** Authorities may regulate public meetings but cannot arbitrarily deny the right to assemble.

2. **Re: Ramlila Maidan Incident (2012): State action affecting peaceful assemblies must respect constitutional protections and cannot be arbitrary.**
3. **Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan v. Union of India (2018): Authorities must balance the right to protest with the rights of residents and commuters.**

5. Governance Concerns and Way Forward

1. **Accessibility:** Alternative venues should be accessible and suitable for peaceful demonstrations.
2. **Transparency:** Establish clear criteria for venue selection, permissions and restrictions.
3. **Proportionality:** Restrictions should address genuine security, traffic and public-order concerns without making peaceful protest ineffective.
4. **Accountability:** Administrative decisions must remain open to judicial scrutiny for legality, arbitrariness and infringement of fundamental rights.