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NETWORK ANUBHAV PLATFORM



- It is a **geospatial dashboard** that allows consumers to view **location-specific network test** results and access **Do Not Disturb (DND)** services through a web interface.
- It was launched by **the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).**
- **Features**
  - It combines **consumer test data with its independent drive test** results to help consumers compare networks by location and telecom operators identify areas for network improvement.
  - User test data comprises of the test results from **MySpeed and MyCall apps of TRAI.**
  - It delivers insights on various network parameters to consumers, service providers and TRAI.
  - The platform displays **speed indicators** based on tests conducted by users in a given area. These include **median speeds** and values indicating the speeds recorded at or above a specified level in **80 per cent of mobile broadband tests** and 90 per cent of fixed broadband tests.
  - The portal also provides web access to DND facilities, allowing consumers to register preferences for **commercial communications**, **submit complaints** about unsolicited communications and track their status.

PRAKASAM BARRAGE



- It is a **modern regulator and road bridge** located at the southern entrance of **Vijayawada**, **Andhra Pradesh.**
- It is built **across** the **Krishna River.**

- **Construction**:
  - It was constructed between 1954 and 1957 and **inaugurated** on December 24, **1957**.
  - It **replaced** the **old Krishna Anicut (built by Sir Arthur Cotton** between 1852 and **1855**), which **suffered a major breach during severe floods** in September
  - This is one of the earliest major irrigation projects in Southern India.
  - It was **named after the first Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh**, **Tanguturi Prakasam.**
- **Purpose**:
  - The scheme **irrigates** nearly **one million hectares of land,** converting the **Krishna delt**a into a rich granary in Andhra Pradesh.
  - This barrage also **supplies water to Buckingham Canal,** which was constructed as an **inland navigation canal** initially but later used as an irrigation water supply canal.
  - While irrigation is a primary function, the barrage also plays a crucial **role in flood control** and maintaining ecological balance in the region.
- **Features**:
  - The structure runs nearly **1223 m** and features 70 gates that regulate the flow of water.
  - Constructed primarily from **locally sourced granite,** the barrage exhibits **significant thermal mass properties,** which help in **moderating temperature fluctuations** in the surrounding environment.
  - The gates are engineered using high-strength steel, providing durability against the dynamic hydraulic forces exerted by the Krishna River.
  - The barrage's design incorporates a **reinforced concrete structure** that supports a **series of sluice gates**, allowing for precise control of water levels.
  - It has **three canals** (Bandar canal, Eluru canal, and Ryves canal) that r**un through the city of Vijayawada**, giving it a Venetian look.

Cross And Climb

VISTAR SCHEME



- VISTAR **(Viksit Bharat Initiative for Statistical Transformation, Analytics & Research)** is designed to **establish a dynamic, real-time** and future-ready official **statistical architecture** for enhanced timeliness, data granularity, interoperability with harmonised and AI ready datasets.
- **Time Period:** FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31
- **Components of the VISTAR scheme**
  - **Component 1: Comprehensive Statistical Operations and Strengthening of Ecosystem**
    - MoSPI proposes conducting **59 surveys during the 16th FC cycle**, as compared to 43 major surveys conducted previously,
    - It will focus on the **end-to-end digitalization of statistical processes** and embedding Artificial Intelligence and **Machine Learning into regular workflows**.
    - It is planning to **release new metrices**, including the **Headline Index of Services Production,** the Index of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises.
  - **Component 2: Support for Statistical Strengthening (SSS)**
    - Under this component, the **Centre will provide funds to State governments** to help transform the statistical capabilities of States and Union Territories through a redesigned, deliverable-linked framework.
    - The vision focuses on **building state-level capacity** to generate high-quality, granular data at the **district and other disaggregated levels,** developing indigenous data processing capabilities, and embedding data use cases into localized policymaking.
    - MoSPI will provide technical support to scale up **generation of district-level estimates** and million-plus city level estimates in flagship national

surveys (e.g., PLFS, HCES, ASUSE) as well as in **compilation of State/District level GDP and State level IIP.**

- **Component 3: Economic Census (EC):**
  - MoSPI will undertake the **8th Economic Census** (EC) in **collaboration with the States and** Union Territories in order to obtain granular data and activity details of all the non-farm establishments and workers hired down to the gram panchayat and ward levels.

US MIDTERMS 2026: TRUMP'S BIG REBUKE AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR INDIA

The 2026 US midterm elections dealt President Donald Trump a severe setback, with Republicans losing control of both the Senate and House of Representatives.

How US Congress Works?

- **House of Representatives**: 435 voting members, serving 2-year terms; seats allocated based on state population.
- **Senate**: 100 members (2 per state), serving 6-year terms; about one-third elected every 2 years.
- **Passing laws**: Both chambers must approve legislation before the President can sign it into law or veto it.
- **Who does what**: Revenue bills originate in the House; the Senate can amend them.

US Midterm Elections

- Americans elect members of Congress — comprising the House of Representatives and the Senate.
- Elections occur **every two years**; when held midway through a president's four-year term, they are called midterms.
- **Who Is Being Elected Through 2026 Midterm?**
  - House of Representatives (Lower Chamber) - All 435 members up for election.
  - Senate (Upper Chamber) - 35 of 100 seats contested this cycle.

Implications for the World and India

- **Foreign Policy Pivot**: Presidents constrained domestically often turn to foreign policy — raising risks of further Trump adventurism, even as a Democratic Congress can curb war funding (though not wartime executive budget powers already committed).
- **Economic Fallout and Investigations**: A prolonged West Asia war keeps energy prices elevated, hurting India's growth. A Democrat-controlled Congress is likely to investigate Trump's crypto, critical-minerals and hotel deals — probes that could implicate Pakistan's military and Indian businesses linked to the Trump family.
- **Tariff Powers and Trade Deal**: Trump's expanded, congressionally-delegated tariff authority undermines global economic predictability. With India's US trade deal negotiations already stalled, Washington's weakened post-midterm position could shift leverage toward Delhi.
- **Immigration and H1B**: Backlash against anti-immigrant crackdowns highlights the political "veto power" of immigrant communities and big business. H1B visa restrictions, student visa and OPT curbs remain live concerns as more Indian-American and African-American lawmakers enter Congress.
- **China-Russia Approach**: Trump's handling of Xi Jinping and Russia over the next two years is geopolitically critical; any US dealmaking with both powers could unsettle long-standing allies like India.
- **AI and Technology**: Washington's focus on semiconductors and data centres, alongside its stance on Chinese state-controlled AI, remains a closely watched strategic area.
- **Human Rights Scrutiny**: A Democrat-led Congress is expected to intensify scrutiny of India's record on religious freedom, voter registration, and minority treatment — a diplomatic challenge for the Modi government.
- **2028 Race Begins**: On the Republican side, VP JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio must now distance themselves from Trump's legacy; the Democratic field will see new entrants beyond establishment names.

INDIA'S PROSPERITY GAP: WHY ESCAPING POVERTY ISN'T THE SAME AS ACHIEVING PROSPERITY

India has achieved one of the world's **fastest declines in extreme poverty**, but a new World Bank framework — the **prosperity gap** — reveals that most Indians remain far from a genuinely comfortable standard of living.

This distinction between "poverty alleviation" and "prosperity" is critical for assessing whether India's growth is truly inclusive.

India's Poverty Decline: The Good News

- Between 2011 and 2023, an estimated 496 million people moved out of poverty, as per the World Bank's latest Poverty and Equity brief.
- Extreme poverty ($3/day) fell to just 2.6%.
- The share below the lower-middle-income line ($4.20/day) dropped from 57.7% to 16.1%.
- Non-monetary poverty also declined sharply: the Multidimensional Poverty Index (OPHI) fell from 53.8% (2005-06) to 16.4% (2019-21).

Understanding the Prosperity Gap

- The prosperity gap is a World Bank indicator measuring how far a society's average income is from the global benchmark of $28/person/day (2021 PPP).
- **India's score: 4.9** — meaning average consumption must rise nearly five-fold to reach the prosperity standard. Unlike per capita income, this metric is **sensitive to distributional issues**, emphasising that growth must benefit the least advantaged most.
- **Income Segmentation (2023):**
  - Below $3/day (extreme poverty): 2.6%
  - Below $4.20/day: 16.1%
  - Below $8.30/day: 80.0%
  - Nearly **64%** of the population falls in the **$4.20–$8.30 band** — **just above poverty but far from prosperity**, requiring incomes to rise three to sevenfold.

Why the Labour Market Is the Real Bottleneck

- Escaping poverty is largely a statistical shift; building a secure economic life is a **labour-market phenomenon** — and India's labour market isn't delivering.
- **Youth unemployment** rose from 14.6% to 15.9% (Q1 FY26 to Q1 FY27).
- **Youth are hit hardest**: only 46.7% of 20–29-year-olds were employed (NCAER, Time Use Survey 2024); educated youth comprised 65.7% of all unemployed youth in 2022 — highlighting a skills-jobs mismatch.

The Human Capital Market Problem

- Households investing in private education and healthcare to climb the economic ladder often cannot judge service quality.
- Scholars describe these as "human capital markets" — fee-charging private providers where quality is hard to verify, and paid schooling doesn't guarantee graduates convert investment into employment.

Stagnant Wages: The Final Barrier

- Even employed Indians often don't gain economic security, as **real wages have remained broadly flat**.
- ILO data shows real wages for **regular salaried workers stagnated or declined between 2012 and 2022**.
- Without wage growth adjusted for inflation, employment alone doesn't translate into improved consumption or comfort.

Conclusion

India has proven it can combat extreme poverty — but prosperity remains elusive for the vast majority. The **real bottleneck lies in the labour market**: informal jobs, stagnant real wages, rising youth unemployment, and a mismatch between education and employment opportunities.

True **Viksit Bharat** ambitions demand more than poverty reduction; they require structural reform in job quality, human capital services, and wage growth to convert statistical escapes from poverty into genuine, durable prosperity for ordinary Indians.

Cross And Climb

AGNIPATH SCHEME REFORMS - TWO-YEAR EXTENSION AND NEW PATHWAY FOR REGULAR ENROLMENT

- The Agnipath scheme was introduced in 2022 as a recruitment reform for the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force. It aims to maintain a younger, fitter and technologically equipped military workforce.

Major Changes in the Revised Agnipath Framework

- The Union Cabinet has approved an additional two-year engagement period for Agniveers who are not selected for regular enrolment after their initial four-year tenure.
- The revised arrangement introduces a two-stage pathway:
- **First Stage: Selection After Four Years**
    - The top 25% of Agniveers will continue to be selected on merit for absorption into the regular cadre.
    - Selection will be based on performance evaluations and the requirements of the respective services.
- **Second Stage: Additional Two-Year Engagement**
    - The remaining 75% of Agniveers will be offered an additional two-year engagement.
    - At the end of six years of service, they will be eligible for consideration for enrolment as regular soldiers.
    - Regular enrolment will depend on their willingness and fulfilment of objective military selection criteria.
- The revised arrangement therefore provides all Agniveers with an opportunity to pursue regular military service, although enrolment is not guaranteed.

Enhanced Remuneration and Seva Nidhi Benefits

Component	Revised Provision
First-year salary during extension	₹43,500 per month
Second-year salary during extension	₹47,500 per month
Government contribution to enhanced Seva Nidhi	70%
Initial engagement	Four years
Additional engagement	Two years

- The additional engagement period will provide improved financial benefits to Agniveers.

Cross And Climb

Selection Criteria for Regular Enrolment

- The opportunity to join the regular cadre after the additional two-year engagement will depend on objective performance and service requirements.
- The selection process will consider:
    - **Adaptability:** Ability to adjust to military responsibilities and changing operational requirements.
    - **Discipline:** Maintenance of military discipline and professional conduct.
    - **Performance:** Overall performance during the extended service period.
    - **Vigilance record:** Absence of vigilance-related cases.
    - **Organisational requirements:** The manpower requirements and operational needs of the respective services.
- The Chief of Defence Staff, General N.S. Raja Subramani, stated that a centralised database had been maintained across all three services to track Agniveers' performance, with annual reviews forming part of the assessment process.

Government's Rationale Behind the Reform

- The decision follows a four-year assessment of the Agnipath scheme by the three services, incorporating performance reviews, operational requirements and organisational feedback.
- According to the government, Agniveers have demonstrated strong performance in:
    - Physical fitness and military preparedness
    - Motivation, morale and competitive spirit
    - Technological proficiency and adaptability
    - Skills and educational qualifications

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