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GLOBAL GENDER GAP INDEX 2026



- It is an **annual index** designed to measure **gender equality**.
- It is released by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**.
- It benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity

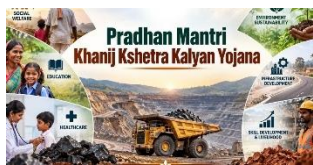
across **four key dimensions (subindexes): Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment.**

- Since **launching in 2006**, it is the longest-standing index tracking the progress of numerous countries' efforts towards closing these gaps over time.
- **Global Gender Gap Index 2026 Highlights:**
 - **Globally, 2 percent** of the gender gap has now been closed, up by 0.4 percentage points over the last year.
 - **Iceland** is still the world's **number one**, with **93 percent** of its gender gap closed.
 - **Finland and Norway** follow with 87.2 percent and 85.7 percent, respectively.
 - **Namibia is fourth**, followed by the UK, New Zealand, Sweden, Australia, Germany, and Ireland.
 - Australia cracked the top 10 for the first time.
 - **Across the 143 economies** covered in both the 2025 and 2026 editions, the overall score **increased by 0.4 percentage points**.
 - **Education** recorded the **largest increase** year on year, rising from 95.3 percent to 96.9 percent.
 - Economic participation score increased from 61.3 percent to 61.7 percent, and health and survival improved from 96.1 percent to 96.2 percent.
 - Political empowerment, however, moved in the opposite direction, sliding down from 22.5 percent to 22.1 percent.
 - **India** stands at **131st spot**, with **5 percent**.
 - **Chad** was the **lowest-ranked** country in the index, with **Iran and Pakistan** joining it in the bottom three.

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- Only 14 countries ranked below India on the index of 145 countries. These include Papua New Guinea, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Mali, Algeria, and Congo.
- Overall, India's gender parity increased by 4.3 percentage points since 2006, primarily due to gains in educational attainment.
- In the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex, India reported a 2 percent parity score, 0.5 higher than the previous edition but 3.5 percentage points lower from its best result in 2013.

PRADHAN MANTRI KHANIJ KSHETRA KALYAN YOJANA

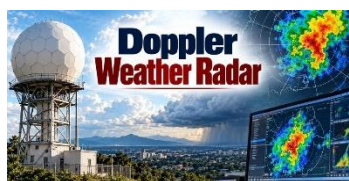


- It was **launched in 2015**.
- It aims to provide for the **welfare of areas and people affected by mining related operations**, using the **funds generated by District Mineral Foundations (DMFs)**.
- **Objectives:**
 - To implement **various developmental and welfare projects** in mining affected areas, complementing the existing ongoing schemes of State and Central Government;
 - To **minimize/mitigate the adverse impacts**, during and after mining, on the environment, health and socio-economics of people in mining districts; and
 - To **ensure long-term sustainable livelihoods** for the affected people in mining areas.
- **Implementation:** It is **implemented by the District Mineral Foundations (DMFs)** of the respective districts using the funds accruing to the DMF.
- The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 requires States to incorporate PMKKKY into their DMF rules.
- **Utilization of Funds:**

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- At least **60% of the funds on High Priority areas** like: drinking water supply, environment preservation and pollution control measures, health care, education, welfare of women and children.
- Up to **40% on Other Priority areas** like: physical infrastructure, irrigation, energy and watershed development; and any other measures for enhancing environmental quality in mining district.

DOPPLER WEATHER RADAR



- It is a specialized radar that uses the **Doppler Effect** to produce velocity data about objects at a distance.
- These radar systems can provide **information regarding the movement of targets as well as their position.**
- **Types of weather Radar Bands:** Varying frequencies like S-band, C-band and X-band — are commonly used by the IMD in India.
- **Working of Doppler weather Radars:**
 - In radars, a beam of, **energy, called radio waves** is emitted from an antenna.
 - When this beam strikes an object in the atmosphere, the energy scatters in all directions, with some reflecting directly back to the radar.
 - The **larger the object deflecting the beam, the greater is the amount of energy** that the radar receives in return.
 - Observing the time required for the beam to be transmitted and returned to the radar allows weather forecasting departments to “see” raindrops in the atmosphere, and measure their distance from the radar.
- **Applications of Doppler weather Radars:**
 - **Weather System:** It is used to track the movement of weather systems and cloud bands, and gauge rainfall over its coverage area of about 500 km.
 - **X-band radar** is used to **detect thunderstorms** and lightning, whereas a **C-band radar** helps in cyclone tracking.

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MELTING HIMALAYAN GLACIERS AND "PEAK WATER": WHY ONE-FIFTH OF INDIA'S GDP IS AT RISK

The recent floods along the Trishuli River in Nepal have put the Himalayas' melting glaciers back in focus.

But the damage from a warming Himalaya is not only sudden disasters. It is also a slow economic drain as glaciers retreat, water supplies grow unreliable and rivers that sustain agriculture, industry, cities and hydropower change course.

A new report puts a number on this dependence: more than one-fifth of India's GDP is underpinned by the Himalayas.

The Report

- The report, "A Resilient Himalaya: Protecting a Region at Risk and Securing Future Prosperity", was compiled by the global consultancy Systemiq in partnership with the Integrated Mountain Initiative.
- It was supported by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal, and the GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, Uttarakhand.

Why Glaciers Matter to the Economy?

- Glaciers act as natural water stores. They hold water as ice and release meltwater into rivers, especially during the dry season.
- The Himalayas feed the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra river systems, which support:
 - Wheat and rice cultivation across the Indo-Gangetic plain
 - Tea in Assam and Bengal
 - Hydropower in the Northeast
 - Pilgrimage economies in downstream towns
- The Gangotri glacier, for instance, is the primary source of the Bhagirathi, which becomes the Ganga.

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The Himalayas as a Disaster Hotspot

- The Himalayas account for 18 per cent of India's land area but around 35 per cent of its disasters. Disasters trigger a damaging cycle:
 - Food and water insecurity
 - Disrupted supply chains
 - Displacement of people
 - Rising macroeconomic and sovereign-debt pressures
 - Reconstruction spending that leaves less money for future resilience

The Brick Kiln Solution

- The report proposes a targeted fund to modernise brickmaking by upgrading viable kilns, retiring the worst-performing ones and reducing demand for fired bricks.
- Zigzag kiln technology, which burns fuel more efficiently, cuts black carbon and particulate emissions by roughly 70 per cent and fuel use by 20–30 per cent.
- But adoption is uneven:
 - Punjab and Haryana have completed the switch to zigzag kilns.
 - Uttar Pradesh, India's largest brick producer, is at only 56 per cent.
 - The rest of India still runs on traditional technology.

Beyond Brick Kilns

- Experts caution that kilns are not the whole story.
- Real progress requires tackling kilns, cookstoves, transport and crop-residue burning together, coordinated at the airshed scale rather than kiln by kiln or city by city.

Conclusion

The Himalayas are both a water tower and a disaster hotspot for India, underpinning over a fifth of its GDP. With "peak water" approaching mid-century and glacier loss of up to 80 per cent possible by 2100, the threat is structural.

While global warming needs global action, black carbon from brick kilns is a lever India can pull now, with immediate gains for both air quality and glacier health.

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A WAR ROOM FOR INDIA IN AN AGE OF SANCTIONS

- In an interconnected global economy, **economic sanctions** have become instruments of geopolitical power.
- Measures taken by Washington or Tehran can move through banks, insurers, shipping routes and commodity markets before affecting Indian companies, workers and households.
- Recent U.S. sanctions on Indian entities over alleged Iranian oil and petrochemical dealings, alongside Iran's listing of vessels connected with India, reveal India's growing exposure to **external economic coercion**.
- The central challenge is developing the institutional capacity to anticipate and manage such pressures while preserving strategic autonomy.

Weaponised Interdependence

- Globalisation has created extensive financial, technological and maritime networks.
- States controlling critical nodes within these networks can use them to exert pressure, a phenomenon known as weaponised interdependence.
- An Indian company may comply with domestic law but still depend on an American bank for payments, foreign insurers for shipping or international infrastructure for cargo delivery.
- **Secondary sanctions** can therefore influence businesses outside the sanctioning country's jurisdiction.
- Fear of losing access to American finance and dollar payments can discourage companies from conducting otherwise lawful trade.
- Since 2018, sanctions on **Iran** and, particularly after 2022, sanctions on **Russia** have increasingly targeted banks, insurers, tankers, traders, ship managers and technology suppliers.
- Sanctions consequently affect entire transaction networks rather than merely the original target.

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The Way Forward

- **Need for an Economic Security Framework**
 - India could establish an **Economic Security and Sanctions Office** under the Cabinet Secretariat to coordinate responses to economic coercion.
 - It could bring together officials dealing with foreign affairs, finance, commerce, energy, shipping, law and defence, alongside the RBI and market regulators.
 - Its responsibilities could include:
 - Monitoring sanctions and counter-sanctions.
 - Identifying vulnerabilities in **payments, insurance, shipping and logistics**.
 - Examining the basis of foreign sanctions.
 - Supporting legitimate delisting requests.
 - Negotiating exemptions and transition periods.
 - Issuing clear guidance to banks and businesses.
 - Developing alternative payment and shipping arrangements.
 - Banks should distinguish between **legally prohibited transactions** and commercially risky transactions, while companies should receive early warnings about vulnerable payment channels, insurers and ports.

Conclusion

- Modern sanctions demonstrate that **economic sovereignty** depends not only on domestic law but also on access to critical global networks.
 - India cannot control every external chokepoint, but it can reduce the consequences of dependence on them.
 - The objective should neither be automatic compliance nor unnecessary confrontation.
 - India needs the capacity to anticipate economic coercion, protect citizens and businesses, and preserve relationships with competing powers.
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WHAT IS THE PATRIOT MISSILE SYSTEM?

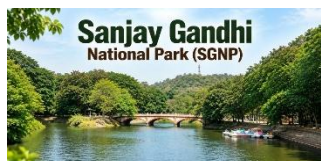


Patriot Missile System

- Patriot, short for **Phased Array Tracking Radar for Intercept on Target**, is a mobile **surface-to-air missile defense system**.
- It was originally developed by **S. weapons maker Raytheon Technologies**.
- The system can **intercept aircraft, tactical ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles**, depending on the interceptor used.
- It is the **United States Army's most advanced air defense system**.
- The system was first used in combat during the 1991 Gulf War, with batteries protecting Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Israel, and later used during the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.
- **Nineteen countries now operate** the Patriot system, including the **S., Germany, Poland, Ukraine, Japan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt**.
- **Features:**
 - A Patriot battery (i.e., the basic firing unit) consists of a phased array radar, an engagement control station, computers, power generating equipment, and launchers, each of which holds four ready-to-fire missiles.
 - It is equipped with a **track-via-missile (TVM) guidance system**. **Midcourse correction commands** are transmitted to the guidance system from the mobile engagement control centre.
 - The system's radar has a **range of over 150 km** and can **simultaneously track up to 100 potential targets**.
 - The system has different capabilities depending on the type of interceptor used.
 - The **PAC-2 interceptor** uses a **blast-fragmentation warhead**, while the newer **PAC-3 missile** uses more advanced **hit-to-kill technology**.
 - **Depending on the version** in use, the interceptor missiles can **reach an altitude of more than 24 kilometers**.

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SANJAY GANDHI NATIONAL PARK (SGNP)



- It is located near Borivali in the **northern part of Mumbai, Maharashtra.**

- **In the early days**, the park was known as **Krishnagiri National Park**. However, in 1974 the name of this park was changed to '**Borivali National Park**' and in 1981 to '**Sanjay Gandhi National Park**'.
- The **Kanheri Caves** in the center of the park were an important **Buddhist learning center** and pilgrimage site **sculpted by Buddhist monks** between the **9th and the 1st centuries BCE**.
 - They were chiseled out of a **massive basaltic rock outcropping**.
 - Caves feature **viharas, stupas, prayer halls**, and other structures of old-style Buddhist architecture.
- There is a **Jain Temple** with three **huge carved idols** situated on the way to the caves.
- Besides, the park also has two lakes, namely **Tulsi Lake and Vihar Lake**, the **deer park**, the lion safari, and the **Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi**.
- **Flora:**
 - **Kadamba, teak, karanj, shisam**, and species of acacia, ziziphus, euphorbia, flame of the forest, red silk cotton and a number of other varieties of flowers.
 - **Karvi, or karvy**, a **flowering plant** that **flowers once in seven years**, can be found in the park.
- **Fauna:**
 - Leopard, sambar, chital, barking deer, rusty spotted cat, hyena, common palm civet, small Indian civet, Indian crested porcupine, Indian hare, Indian flying fox, common langur, and bonnet macaque.