



# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

**05<sup>th</sup> JULY, 2024**



S.NO.	TOPIC
1.	SCO- SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION SUMMIT - ASTANA
2.	PLACE IN NEWS- BELARUS
3.	DIGITAL LITERACY
4.	FUTURE AGENDA FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

The Hindu Analysis- 5th July

FRIDAY  
July 5, 2024  
INTERNATIONAL  
EDITION  
20 Pages

www.thehindu.com

# THE HINDU



INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

FOLLOW US  
<https://newsth.live/fb>  
<https://newsth.live/whatsapp>  
<https://newsth.live/x>  
<https://newsth.live/ig>

Vol. 2 • No. 160

Chennai » Coimbatore » Bengaluru » Hyderabad » Madurai » Noida » Visakhapatnam » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Tiruchirappalli » Kolkata » Hubballi » Mohali » Malappuram » Mumbai » Tirupati » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna



**SEEKING AID**  
Chandrababu Naidu  
meets Prime Minister  
NEWS » PAGE 4



**NO STEPPING BACK**  
White House  
clears the air  
over Biden's  
candidacy  
WORLD » PAGE 14



**INTERVIEW**  
India, U.S. share goals  
on Ukraine: Garcetti  
NEWS » PAGE 4



**PARLEY**  
Should India  
review its policy  
on Myanmar?  
New Delhi could provide

Article with title: Jaishankar meets Wang Yi, says LAC must be respected, peace ensured

OPINION » PAGE 9



**OLYMPIC GAMES**  
Neeraj to lead India's  
athletics team at Paris  
SPORT » PAGE 17

**INSIDE**



**NEET candidates  
move SC against  
cancelling test**

## 6 held for U.P. stampede; godman left out in FIR

Police announce a reward of ₹1 lakh for information on Devprakash Madhukar, the main accused; probe teams formed to search for persons who were part of the organising committee responsible for all aspects of the religious gathering in Hathras; police say Bhole Baba will be interrogated if required during the course of the investigation

**Ishita Mishra**  
NEW DELHI

**T**he Uttar Pradesh Police arrested six persons, including

Devprakash Madhukar, the main accused of the incident. He was a follower of Bhole Baba and collected funds for his events, the police said.



rested persons told us that the followers of Bhole Baba feel blessed to collect his charan raj [soil under his feet]. On the day of the stampede, volunteers

er policeman whose real name is Suraj Pal, would be interrogated in the case, the official said that interrogation will be done if required during the course of

SCO Summit- Astana:

# Jaishankar meets Wang Yi, says LAC must be respected and peace ensured

**Suhasini Haidar**

NEW DELHI

In their first such meeting since the Lok Sabha election, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council meeting on Thursday.

Both sides stressed the importance of “mutual respect” in resolving the boundary issues that have frozen ties between them for the past four years.

Mr. Jaishankar told Mr. Wang that it was important that the “Line of Actual Control must be respected and peace and tranquillity in the border areas always ensured”, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) after the meeting, which lasted about an hour, and was held just before the start of the SCO Summit.

“The two Ministers agreed that the prolongation of the current situa-



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on the sidelines of the SCO meet in Astana on Thursday. ANI

side. EAM highlighted the need to redouble efforts to achieve complete disengagement from the remaining areas in Eastern Ladakh and restore border peace and tranquillity in order to remove obstacles towards the return of normalcy in bilateral relations,” the MEA said.

### Full disengagement

The two Ministers were meeting for the third time in the past 12 months, and have made a push for complete disengagement and the resolution of the military border standoff since

border commanders and defence officials in the meetings of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) have thus far yielded no further breakthrough, which hinges on the Chinese position at the Demchok and Depsang sectors.

In a separate readout of the meeting, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that it was important to find the “correct way”.

“We must adhere to positive thinking, on the one hand properly handle and

hand actively resume normal exchanges, promote each other and meet each other half way,” a translated version of the MFA statement read.

### ‘Global situation’

The MEA statement also said that the two leaders had “exchanged views on the global situation”, and that India had extended its support to China’s presidency of the SCO in 2025.

Speaking at the SCO Council of the Heads of State, Mr. Jaishankar read out Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s address in his absence, reiterating the SCO’s “respect for sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity” as a basis for its foreign policies. “We have also agreed not to take any measures contrary to the principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity,” the PM’s speech read, signalling China.

It added that the “priority must naturally be given to combating terrorism, one of the original goals of

- ❖ External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar reached **Astana in Kazakhstan** on Tuesday, to lead the Indian delegation at the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** Council of Heads of State in place of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Currently, the SCO countries includes:

❖ 9 Member States —



In addition to official member states, the SCO has one observer state and 14 dialogue partners



© GIS Section, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses, New Delhi. Disclaimer - Map not to scale.



### Agenda of meeting:

1. **Security-related matters:** "three evil forces" within the borders of SCO states: **terrorism, separatism and religious extremism.**
  2. **Consideration of Belarus membership in the SCO.** (At present, there are three SCO observer states: Afghanistan, Belarus and Mongolia. It appears highly likely that Belarus will soon be admitted as a full member)
  3. Promoting stability in Afghanistan was another important topic of discussion.(instability in Afghanistan could allow for violent extremist groups to grow and threaten the region at large.)
- ❖ **The Indian PM's no-show** is being perceived as **India was distancing itself from the SCO:** a move that was interpreted by many as **India's attempt to avoid direct interactions with China and Russia,** both of which have **strained relations with the West.**

### Question:

- Q.1 'Virus of Conflict is affecting the functioning of the SCO'. In the light of the above statement point out the role of India in mitigating the problems. [10 Marks] [2023]



**PLACE IN NEWS: BELARUS**





# Computer literacy in India needs a reboot

**C**omputer literacy is essential in today's world as critical services such as banking, health care and various government services have become digital. Computer literacy implies the knowledge and the ability to use computers and technology efficiently. It ensures that individuals can access and use these services effectively, enhancing their quality of life. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of computer and Internet access, from ordering groceries and online education to managing banking and health-care services. Recognising this, the Indian government launched the Digital India campaign in 2015 to transform the country into a digitally empowered society. Moreover, computer education is increasingly being integrated into the formal education system – in schools from an early age. Additionally, numerous skill development and vocational training programmes are focusing on enhancing computer literacy among youth and adults, mainly targeting underprivileged and marginalised communities to bridge the digital divide.

The recently released NSS 78th round of the Multiple Indicator Survey (conducted in 2020-21) is a household survey that provides individual-level information on computer literacy. Computer literacy, defined as the ability to use a computer, stands at 24.7% among individuals aged 15 years and above.

This marks an increase from 18.4% in 2017-18 to 24.7% in 2020-21 overall. In rural areas, it is an increase from 11.1% to 18.1%, while in urban areas, it was from 34.7% to 39.6%. These figures are cause for concern and cast a shadow over the nation's digital aspirations. Unless there are serious measures to universalise digital literacy, rural India's population, which is nearly 70%, will face significant disadvantages. More importantly, given the government's aim to provide various public services through digital technology, a significant portion of the population will remain excluded.

## Unequal literacy across age groups

Expectedly, the proportion of computer-literate individuals varies across various age groups in India. The survey reveals that computer literacy diminishes with age, with higher rates observed among younger demographics. This trend, common in societal contexts, reflects the disparity in computer education accessibility between recent and older age cohorts, often referred to as a "cohort effect" or "generation effect" in social sciences. Hence, the overall computer literacy rate of 24.7% exhibits significant inequality across age cohorts. It peaks among individuals aged 20-24 years, reaching 45.9%, and declines to its lowest point among the oldest age group of 65-69 years, at 4.4%. Even



**Vachaspati Shukla**

Assistant Professor at the Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research (SPEISR)



**Santosh Kumar Dash**

Assistant Professor at the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA)

With a clear plan to run various public services with technology, a significant portion of the country's population needs to be able to cross the digital divide

among the youngest age cohorts, computer literacy has not reached 50%. Looking at the increasing spread of computer technology in every aspect of life, a larger chunk of the population will be excluded in the modern development journey.

Given that individuals aged 20-39 years are typically in the midst of their careers or job searching, representing a middle-aged population, it is noteworthy that their computer literacy rate stands at just 34.8%. Further, there is significant variation in computer literacy for this particular age group across the various States of India. Our analysis of computer literacy rates among individuals aged 20-39 years across States shows a striking 55.1 percentage point gap between Kerala (72.7%), and Assam, where only 17.6% possess computer skills in this age group. Economically disadvantaged States such as Assam (17.6%), Bihar (20.4%), Madhya Pradesh (21%), Jharkhand (21.2%), Uttar Pradesh (22.9%), Odisha (25.1%), Chhattisgarh (26%), and Rajasthan (27.6%) lag behind, with less than 30% proficiency in computer operation. Given that computer literacy is pivotal to the social and economic development of States, the lower rates in economically backward States exacerbate their disadvantage in benefiting from modern development. A failure to address this divide will widen the development gap across Indian States. Bridging the digital divide and fostering inclusive growth necessitates sustained efforts by government, private sector, and civil society stakeholders.

## Understanding India's modest progress

One reason could be that many schools and colleges across India lack the necessary infrastructure and qualified teachers to impart adequate computer training. This shortfall contributes to significant deficiencies in computer literacy among young students and new graduates, which could constrain their employment opportunities. Although computer education is a part of the school curriculum, there are significant gaps in access and instructional standards, highlighting the need to prioritise computer literacy within the education system. Among older age groups, computer illiteracy could be attributed to a lack of motivation to learn or due to limited access to learning resources. It is a common observation that older demographics tend to exhibit less enthusiasm in embracing new technologies.

Computer illiteracy in today's digital society can severely restrict an individual's opportunities and experiences. It leads to limited job prospects, social isolation, financial exclusion from online transactions and services, and restricted access to vast information resources. As Artificial Intelligence advances, employers seek individuals not only familiar with computers but also

equipped with the capability to execute complex tasks. Thus, learning how to use a computer and the Internet can help employees develop skills that employers are looking for. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) survey (2014-15) found that adults without computer experience are more often unemployed, with a 52.5% employment rate, compared to 72.7% for those with basic computer skills. In a 2017 study, "Do Computer Skills Affect Worker Employment? An Empirical Study from CPS Surveys", economist Gang Peng finds that computer skills enhance employability and worker productivity. In a separate investigation, Preston-Lee Govindasamy in South Africa validated a positive correlation between computer literacy, employment probability, and earnings.

Further, computer literacy exacerbates socio-economic inequalities by creating a digital divide and a skill gap, leading to unequal job market opportunities. Those with better computer skills can leverage technology for personal and professional development, while those lacking these skills face barriers in accessing essential services, participating in the digital economy, and advancing their careers, thus perpetuating economic disparities.

## Schools, older population as focus areas

While India has made some progress in computer literacy, the outreach and outcomes of this mission remain limited. Further, the data show that there is significant disparity in both the level and distribution of computer literacy across States. The existence of a wide digital divide between economically prosperous and disadvantaged States will hinder inclusive growth and development opportunities for large segments of the population.

Thus, schools should equip students with computer skills that will allow them to fully participate in our rapidly changing economies. School education should ensure that all graduating students possess computer literacy skills, as this is crucial to bridge the digital divide. The government should allocate resources towards the training of computer personnel and ensure sufficient staffing levels. Additionally, for the older population outside the formal education system, targeted programmes are essential. These should involve various institutions, including local governing bodies such as panchayats and non-governmental organisations, to effectively reach and empower older individuals with computer literacy skills. Finally, the government should also conduct a thorough review of such computer literacy and develop strategies to achieve higher literacy and reduce disparities in the coming years.



## FUTURE AGENDA FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

# The shape of a five-year climate agenda for India

**A**s the new government settles in, what it does to scale up climate action will affect every Ministry, new and old, and every sector, big and small. Some of its choices would be pivotal to how India structures its economic path in a sustainable way, positions itself as the voice of the Global South at the right tables, and fights for climate finance and justice over the next five years.

### India's transformation

Over the last decade, India has shown significant climate intent and progress on many fronts. It has moved on from being a hesitant participant reacting to developments in the global climate discourse to being a bold leader shaping narratives and institutions. First, it has laid the foundation for global institutions such as the International Solar Alliance, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, and the Global Biofuels Alliance, as well as shaped the Green Development Pact under its G-20 presidency last year. Second, for the first time, India has started talking about bolder and more ambitious emission mitigation targets. The 2070 net-zero target and ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) are milestones. With the net-zero announcement, India has acknowledged the criticality of absolute emission reductions over the near-term relative emissions-intensity-based targets. The net-zero goal has changed the debate domestically with various actors, policymakers and the private sector. Third, sustainability-linked domestic economic policies are no longer on the margins. The creation of an Indian emissions carbon trading scheme, an institution that should operate for at least 30-40 years, is a case in point. In the next five years, the government must accelerate and show the world that economic development can be sustainable, too. India should follow the mantra of 'go higher, go wider,



**Vaibhav Chaturvedi**

a Senior Fellow at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and leads its low carbon economy and carbon markets research

The new government should aim to take India's global climate leadership to the next level with a 'higher, wider, deeper' plan

go deeper' to align its climate leadership with economic prowess.

### A plan sheet for India

'Go higher' relates to India's global leadership. The country could, sooner or later, host important international climate summits. If it were to host the United Nations Conference of Parties in 2028, it would need to be as successful as the G-20 Presidency. In global negotiations, four years is not that far. Does India want 'the world agrees to no new investment in oil and gas after 2030' as part of the decision text? Does it want a big commitment on adaptation finance so that developing countries can shield themselves against increasing heatwaves, storms, floods and droughts? It takes at least four to five years to achieve consensus on contentious issues. Deciding on what could potentially be the big wins in 2028 and socialising these across countries to stitch alliances and allay concerns must start right away. Alongside, India should continue doubling down on the narrative of equity in international forums, and create leadership space for itself in global institutions that can deliver climate finance.

'Go wider' means India has to adopt and strongly communicate sectoral emission reduction targets that go beyond the power sector. India has achieved significant progress in the power sector and will continue to do so to keep pace with its international non-fossil share-related and domestic renewable energy capacity targets.

The next step is to broaden the target to other sectors. For instance, it could be related to the private mobility space, giving a clear target for zero-carbon two- and four-wheelers. This is not just an urban India project. It will help rural India become mobile, drive jobs in clean energy and sustainability, and promote economic growth. As the last decade has shown, credible policy goals

have been powerful signals and forced relevant industries and stakeholders to act. The NDC for 2035, due to be submitted next year, can be an opportunity for going wider with India's energy transition targets.

### State-level plans are important

Finally, going deeper implies that sub-national climate action and resilience must come to the fore in this term of the government. Some shoots of this are already visible. The Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) is working across many States in India to support their net-zero plans through long-term climate and energy modelling. For instance, we collaborated with Tamil Nadu and Bihar for their recently-released plans for a transition towards a net-zero future. The government should think about creating a Centre-State coordination group, incentivising State-level climate actions through the Sixteenth Finance Commission, promoting a deeper integration of scientific modelling capabilities in policymaking, and facilitating a unified data measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) architecture at the State level. Given India's federal structure, this recommendation does not mean centralising climate actions, but ensuring that State-level actions are better coordinated without compromising their autonomy. This is possible only if the process goes beyond States individually trying to understand and respond to the climate crisis, and the Centre comes in as an active facilitator.

The new government should aim to take India's global climate leadership to the next level in its new term. It should look ahead for at least the next four to five years, and not just a year at a time. On most international tables now, India has a seat. It must now demonstrate prowess.

*The views expressed are personal*