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The Hindu Analysis- 14th November 2025

- India's carbon emission rise slower this year, says report
- Donald Trump shakes up the global nuclear order
- SC bats for protection of pristine sal forest in Jharkhand's Saranda
- India, Nepal ink pact to step up trade ties

India's carbon emission rise slower this year, says report

According to Global Carbon Project:

India's carbon emissions in 2025 went up, but **the increase was much smaller than last year.**

This year, India's emissions are expected to rise by **1.4%**, compared to a **4% rise in 2024.**

This slower growth happened because **renewable energy increased** and a **good monsoon reduced electricity demand**, especially for cooling.

Globally, carbon emissions are expected to reach **38 billion tonnes**, rising by **1.1%**.

China's emissions are rising slowly (**0.4%**), while the **U.S. (1.9%)** and **EU (0.4%)** are seeing higher increases.

- India is the **third largest emitter** (after China and the U.S.) with **3.2 billion tonnes** of emissions in 2024, but its **per capita emissions are low** (2.2 tonnes per person).
- Worldwide, emissions from coal, oil, and gas continue to rise slightly. Loss of forests adds about **4 billion tonnes per year**, but re-growing forests remove only half of that.
- Scientists warn that the **remaining carbon budget to keep global warming below 1.5°C is almost finished**. At current emission levels, it will run out **within four years (by 2030)**. This means staying below 1.5°C warming is now **almost impossible** unless emissions drop sharply.

These findings come as global leaders meet in Brazil to discuss reducing fossil fuel use and dealing with climate impacts.

Donald Trump shakes up the global nuclear order

- The world has **not used nuclear weapons for 80 years**, and global nuclear arsenals have reduced from **65,000 (1970s) to 12,500 today**. Only **9 countries** have nuclear weapons.
- Despite this progress, the **global nuclear order is weakening**.

Nuclear Weapon States: United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel (undeclared but widely accepted), North Korea

Donald Trump shakes up the global nuclear order

Today, the global nuclear order offers a curious contradiction – since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, nuclear weapons have not been used during the last 80 years. The global nuclear arsenals have come down from a high of 65,000 bombs in late 1970s to less than 12,500 today. And, despite concerns in the 1960s that by 1980, there may be at least two dozen states with nuclear weapons, the total today remains nine – five (the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China) are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council who had tested before the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into being while four more developed their nuclear arsenals later (Israel, Pakistan, India and North Korea).

Looking back, these would seem to be impressive achievements but nobody is celebrating. In fact, the prevailing sentiment is that the global nuclear order is under strain and the recent announcements by U.S. President Donald Trump may weaken all three elements of the global nuclear order.

Resumption of 'nuclear tests'

On October 30, 2025, on his way to a meeting with China's President Xi Jinping in Busan, Mr. Trump announced on Truth Social, "Because of other countries testing programs, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our Nuclear Weapons on an equal basis. That process will begin immediately." He added, "Russia is second, China is a distant third, but will be even within 5 years."

While it was clear that the message was directed at Russia and China, it was unclear whether Mr. Trump was referring to 'nuclear explosive testing' or the testing of nuclear weapon systems. Second, the nuclear labs (Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore, and Sandia) and the Nevada testing facilities fall under the Department of Energy and not the Department of War.

It is no secret that China, Russia, and the U.S. are designing and developing new nuclear weapons. In late October, Russia tested a nuclear-powered cruise missile (Burevestnik) that travelled 14,000 kilometres, following a week later, with a test of an underwater nuclear-powered torpedo (Poseidon). China has been testing hypersonic missiles and, in 2021, tested a nuclear capable hypersonic glide vehicle carried on a rocket, capable of orbiting the earth before approaching its target from an unexpected direction that was passed off as a satellite launcher.

The U.S. is producing new warheads – a variable yield B61-13 gravity bomb, a low yield W76-2 warhead for the Trident II D-5 missile, while working on a new nuclear armed



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submarine launched cruise missile.

Yet, they have refrained from explosive testing. Russia's last explosive test was in 1990 while the U.S. declared a moratorium on tests in 1992. In 1993, the U.S. created a Stockpile Stewardship and Management Programme under the National Nuclear Security Administration to work on warhead modernisation, life extension and development of new safety protocols in warhead design. U.S. President Bill Clinton also took the lead in pushing negotiations in Geneva for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). China and France concluded their tests in 1996, six months before the negotiations ended.

Why the CTBT lacks a definition

Twenty-nine years later, the CTBT has not entered into force despite 187 countries signing it. Among the necessary ratifications, the U.S., China, Israel, Egypt, and Iran have not done so, Russia did and withdrew its ratification in 2023, and India, Pakistan and North Korea have neither signed nor ratified it. India and Pakistan tested in 1998 and have since observed a voluntary moratorium, and North Korea conducted six tests between 2006 and 2017. Given today's geopolitics, the prospects for the CTBT entering into force appear bleak.

Second, the CTBT obliges states "not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion". The U.S. was opposed to defining the terms, and instead, worked out private understandings with Russia and China on 'zero-yield-tests'; this permitted hydro-nuclear tests that do not produce a self-sustaining supercritical chain reaction.

The U.S. had conducted over a thousand nuclear tests and Russia 727 tests, giving them an adequate data base. China, with only 47 tests, also went along with this understanding. Thus, the CTBT delegitimised only nuclear-explosive testing, not nuclear weapons, the reason why India never joined it.

In 2019-20, the U.S. State Department assessed that Russia and China "may have conducted low yield nuclear tests in a manner inconsistent with the U.S. zero-yield standard" though this was negated by the CTBT organisation that declared that their monitoring network with over 300 monitoring stations spread over 89 countries had not detected any inconsistent activity.

In a TV interview on November 2, Mr. Trump doubled down on resuming nuclear testing, this time including Pakistan and North Korea among the countries testing. A clarification came the same day from U.S. Secretary of Energy Chris Wright on Fox News, calling the U.S. tests 'systems-tests'. "These are not nuclear explosions. These are what we call noncritical explosions," he said. However, Mr. Trump's intention remains unclear.

The new low-yield warheads being designed make them more usable and the new systems (hypersonics, cruise and unmanned systems) are dual capable systems, leading to renewed research for missile defences such as the U.S. 'golden dome'. Meanwhile, doctrinal changes are being considered to cope with new technological developments in cyber and space domains. This raises doubts about the nuclear taboo in the coming decades.

The sole surviving U.S.-Russia arms control agreement, the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) that limits the U.S. and Russian strategic forces to 700 launchers and 1,550 warheads is due to expire on February 4, 2026 with no prospects of any talks on the horizon. China is not a party to any arms control and its nuclear arsenal that had remained below 300, is undergoing a rapid expansion, estimated at 600 today, and likely to exceed 1,000 by 2030. An incipient nuclear arms race was already underway; a resumption of explosive testing will just take the lid off.

Russia and China have denied Mr. Trump's allegations regarding clandestine tests, but will follow if the U.S. resumes explosive testing. China will be the biggest beneficiary because with only 47 tests (compared to over 1,000 by the U.S.), resumed tests will help it to validate new designs and accumulate data.

India has been observing a voluntary moratorium. But if explosive testing resumes, India will certainly resume testing to validate its boosted fission and thermonuclear designs, tested only once in 1998. Undoubtedly, Pakistan will follow but given its growing strategic linkages with China witnessed during Operation Sindoor, this need hardly adds to India's concerns.

Though the CTBT is not in force, it did create a norm. But a resumption of explosive testing will lead to its demise. It will also tempt the nuclear wannabes to follow and mark the unravelling of the NPT led non-proliferation regime.

The taboo against use must remain intact

The U.S. has been the most significant player in shaping the global nuclear order. It would be ironic if Mr. Trump's actions now become the catalyst for its demise. The reality is that the present global nuclear order was shaped by the geopolitics of the 20th century. The challenge today is to craft a new nuclear order that reflects the fractured geopolitics of the 21st century while ensuring that the taboo against their use remains intact.

The United Nations Secretary General has cautioned that "current nuclear risks are already alarmingly high" and urged nations "to avoid all actions that could lead to miscalculation or escalation with catastrophic consequences." But is anyone listening?

Trump's Announcement

- In Oct 2025, Donald Trump said the U.S. will resume nuclear testing because Russia and China are "testing".
- It is unclear whether he meant explosive nuclear tests or weapons system tests.
- U.S. officials later said these are non-explosive system tests, but intentions remain unclear.

Global Nuclear Developments

- Russia, China, and the U.S. are all developing **new advanced nuclear weapons** (hypersonics, cruise missiles, underwater systems).
- **No country has conducted explosive nuclear tests** since the 1990s (U.S. last in 1992, Russia in 1990).

CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) Issues

- CTBT bans nuclear explosions **but has never come into force**.
- Many key countries (U.S., China, Israel, Iran, Egypt) have **not ratified** it; India, Pakistan, N. Korea have not signed.
- Treaty bans “explosive tests”, but allows **zero-yield (non-explosive) tests**, which major powers use.
- Geopolitical tensions make CTBT’s future **very bleak**.

Why resuming tests is dangerous

- If the U.S. resumes explosive testing:
 - ◆ **Russia and China will follow.**
 - ◆ **India and Pakistan will also restart tests** to validate advanced designs.
 - ◆ This will **collapse the global non-proliferation system** (CTBT + NPT norms).

Growing Nuclear Arms Race

- The last U.S.-Russia arms control treaty (**New START**) expires in 2026 with **no negotiations underway**.
- China is expanding its arsenal rapidly (likely **1,000 warheads by 2030**).
- New low-yield and dual-use weapons increase the risk of **actual use**.
- Nuclear taboo is under threat.

Bottom Line

- The global nuclear order is **straining and may unravel**.
- Resuming nuclear explosive testing could trigger:
 - ◆ **A new global arms race**
 - ◆ Collapse of decades-old **non-proliferation norms**
 - ◆ Higher risk of **nuclear weapon use** for the first time since 1945.



SC bats for protection of pristine sal forest in Jharkhand's Saranda

SC bats for protection of pristine sal forest in Jharkhand's Saranda

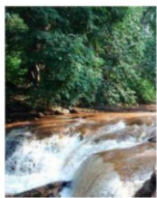
Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Jharkhand government to declare 31,468.25 hectares (approximately 314 sq. km.) of the Saranda forest area as a wildlife sanctuary, balancing biodiversity protection with sustainable iron ore mining.

"The State cannot run away from its duty to declare the extent of 31,468.25 hectares as Saranda Wildlife Sanctuary," a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai observed in the judgment.

Part of the ecosystem

Saranda is one of the world's most pristine sal forests, the court noted. It is home to critically endangered species, including



The court said that 314 sq. km. of the Saranda forest should be a wildlife sanctuary.

the endemic sal forest tortoise, four-horned antelope, Asian palm civet, and wild elephants. For centuries, the area has been inhabited by the Ho, Munda, Uraon and allied Adivasi communities whose subsistence and cultural traditions are intrinsically tied to forest produce.

The Saranda forest division also accounts for 26% of India's iron ore reserves. The steel plants of SAIL and Tata are critically dependent on mining in this area. *Amicus curiae*, senior advocate K. Parameshwar, had submitted to the court that a judicial declaration of the entire area as a wildlife sanctuary would halt mining and affect employment opportunities.

The hearings had seen the Jharkhand government dither about the area that ought to be cordoned off from mining and declared a wildlife sanctuary. The State had initially suggested that only 24,941.64 hectares of forest area should be declared a sanctuary, arguing that "vital public infrastructure" in the area would have to be demolished to make space for the

sanctuary. However, the Jharkhand government later clarified in court that 31,468.25 hectares of forest area, consisting of 126 compartments, neither hosted mining activities nor was used for any non-forest use.

The court, in its judgment, reminded Jharkhand that a "State has a positive obligation and a mandate to provide statutory protection to forests and wildlife and declare ecologically significant areas to be statutorily protected".

The Bench ordered the Jharkhand government to widely publicise that neither the individual nor community rights of tribals and forest dwellers in the Saranda area will be adversely affected by the judgment.

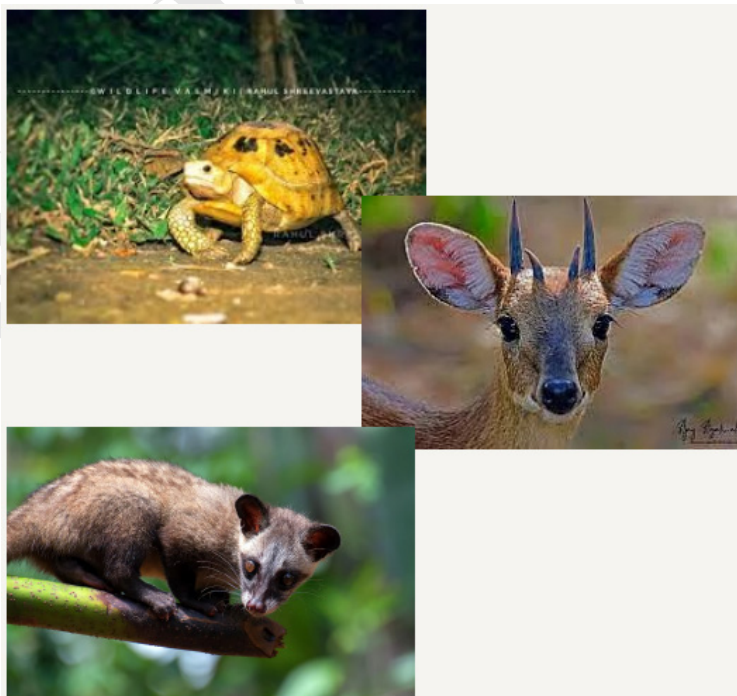


The Supreme Court has ordered the Jharkhand government to declare 31,468.25 hectares (314 sq km) of the Saranda forest as a wildlife sanctuary.

This decision aims to protect biodiversity while allowing sustainable iron ore mining in other areas.

Why is Saranda important?

- It is one of the world's most pristine sal forests.
- Home to critically endangered species like the sal forest tortoise, four-horned antelope, Asian palm civet, and wild elephants.
- Indigenous communities — Ho, Munda, Uraon — depend on this forest culturally and for livelihood.



Saranda forest

Conflict

- Saranda has **26% of India's iron ore reserves**, essential for **SAIL** and **Tata Steel**.
- Declaring the entire area a sanctuary could affect mining and jobs.

Court's stand

- The State **must protect biodiversity** and has a **legal duty to declare ecologically important areas** as protected.
- Since **31,468.25 hectares** are not used for mining or non-forest purposes, this area must be declared a sanctuary.
- The State must ensure and publicise that **tribal community rights will not be harmed**.

India, Nepal ink pact to step up trade ties

India, Nepal ink pact to step up trade ties

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India and Nepal have amended the Treaty of Transit between the two countries to facilitate the movement of rail-based freight between Jogbani in India and Biratnagar in Nepal, including bulk cargo.

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and Nepal's Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies Anil Kumar Sinha met in New Delhi on Thursday to exchange the letters amending the pro-

TOCOL to the Treaty of Transit between India and Nepal. "This liberalisation extends to key transit corridors – Kolkata-Jogbani, Kolkata-Nautanwa (Sunauli), and Visakhapatnam-Nautanwa (Sunauli), thereby strengthening multimodal trade connectivity between the two countries and Nepal's trade with third countries," the government said in a release.

The two Ministers also welcomed the ongoing bilateral initiatives to boost cross-border connectivity and trade.

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