



Union Minister withdraws 'objectionable' word after sparring with DMK MPs

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's comment in the Lok Sabha on Monday that the Tamil Nadu government had taken a "U-turn" on the issue of the National Education Policy for "politics" and was "dishonest" in implementing the PM Schools for Rising India scheme led to an uproar, with DMK MPs disrupting the proceedings for half an hour. "They are dishonest and they are ruining the future of the students of Tamil Nadu ... they are misleading the people," Mr. Pradhan said while replying to a query on the Centre not releasing funds for the PM SHRI scheme.

About PM SHRI Scheme:

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme by the Government of India.
- Its objective is to establish over 14,500 PM SHRI Schools, overseen by the Central Government, State/UT Governments, local bodies, as well as Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS).
- These schools aim to create an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere for every student, ensuring their well-being and providing a secure and enriching learning environment.
- The goal is to offer a diverse range of learning experiences and ensure access to good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources for all students.
- The overarching purpose of PM SHRI School is to nurture students in a manner that transforms them into engaged, productive, and contributing citizens.
- This aligns with the vision of the National Education Policy 2020, striving to build a society characterized by equity, inclusivity, and pluralism.

Features of PM SHRI Schools:

- These schools will not only focus on enhancing cognitive development but also creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with key 21st-century skills.
- The pedagogy adopted in these schools will be more experiential, holistic, integrated, play/toy-based (particularly in the foundational years), inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and enjoyable.
- The schools will be upgraded with labs, libraries, and art rooms. They will be developed as green schools with water conservation, waste recycling, energy-efficient infrastructure, and integration of the organic lifestyle as part of the curriculum.
- The focus will be on the learning outcomes of every child in every grade.

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Carney to be next Canadian PM; says will retain tariffs till U.S.

ECONOMY

Former central banker Mark Carney will become Canada's next Prime Minister after the governing Liberal Party elected him its leader on Sunday. He is taking charge at a time when the country deals with U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war and annexation threat, and a federal election looms. Mr. Carney, 59, replaces Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who announced his resignation in January but will remain in the post until his successor is sworn in. Mr. Carney won by a landslide, winning 85.9% of the votes.



Reciprocal Tariffs

- Tariffs are taxes imposed by an importing country on foreign goods, making them more expensive for domestic consumers.
 - For example, if a US citizen orders a Banarasi saree from India, US import tariffs will increase its price, affecting affordability.
- Higher tariffs slow down global trade by raising costs for all parties involved.

The Move Towards Free Trade

- Since World War II, the global economy has shifted toward freer trade, as developed nations agreed that open markets benefit all.
- Agreements like GATT and WTO ensured that developing nations received special and differential treatment to protect their industries

from stronger economies.

- This allowed countries like India to maintain higher tariffs to safeguard local farmers and manufacturers from competition with highly industrialized nations.

Trump's Shift to Reciprocal Tariffs

- Trump's "reciprocal tariffs" policy seeks to eliminate preferential treatment for any country.
- Under this system, the US will impose the same level of tariffs on imports as other nations impose on US exports.
- Trump argues this approach is "fair" and removes the need for complex trade agreements, disregarding historical trade arrangements designed to protect developing economies.

Calculation of Reciprocal Tariffs

- The exact calculation method for reciprocal tariffs is still being finalized, with the US trade department expected to determine the final rates for each country by April.

Beyond Simple Tariff Matching

- Instead of just mirroring tariff rates, the US plans to consider various subsidies and financial assistance provided by other countries to their exporters.
- This means that if a country like India offers subsidies to its industries, the US may factor those into its tariff calculations to create a "level playing field."

Impact on Developing Countries

- If this approach is strictly implemented, developing nations like India, which heavily subsidize exports, will face higher tariffs on their goods in the US market.
 - For instance, between 2022 and 2024, India provided \$1 billion (₹8,700 crore) in subsidies under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to boost handset exports.
 - Since the PLI scheme is essentially a subsidy, it could lead to higher US tariffs on Indian goods.

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All favour removal of Aurangzeb's tomb, says Maharashtra CM

HISTORY

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has said everyone feels Mughal king Aurangzeb's tomb in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar should be removed, but it has to be done under the purview of law as the previous Congress regime put the site under ASI's protection. Mr. Fadnavis was speaking at an event here on Saturday night.



Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb Alamgir ("World Conqueror") ascended the throne in 1658 after eliminating all competitors, including **Dara Shukoh, Shuja, and Murad**, in a war of succession.

- **Two parts:** His reign of fifty years can be divided into two equal parts.
 - During the first twenty-five years, he **resided in the north**, primarily in Delhi, and personally handled the affairs of northern India while delegating control of the **Deccan** to his vice-roys.
 - In around 1681, prompted by the rebellion of his son, **Prince Akbar**, he went to the Deccan. He never returned to Delhi and

died disheartened in **Ahmad Nagar** in 1707.

Aurangzeb's Religious Policy

Aurangzeb's religious policy was characterised by his strong commitment to **orthodox Sunni Islam** and his attempts to enforce **Islamic law** and customs throughout the Mughal Empire.

- **Islamic Orthodoxy:** Aurangzeb was profoundly religious and sought to uphold what he considered a puritanical interpretation of Sunni Islam.
 - He emphasised enforcing Islamic law and promoted religious scholars who supported his conservative views.
 - He was known for his **piety** and observed strict religious practices.
- **Imposition of Jizya:** This tax was **reinstated** during his reign and was considered discriminatory against **Hindus** and other religious minorities.
- **Persecution of Religious Leaders:** He executed **Guru Tegh Bahadur** (the ninth Sikh Guru) when he refused to convert to Islam. This religious persecution contributed to the subsequent **Sikh rebellion** against Mughal rule.

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Parliamentary panel asks govt. to conduct Census at the earliest

POLITY

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs has recommended that the Census be completed at the earliest. The panel observed that the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) may prepare data on the influx of immigrants, including Bangladeshis, Rohingya from Myanmar, and those from other countries. "Rohingyas are entering and settling illegally in various parts of the country," the committee said.

What is a Parliamentary Committee?

A Parliamentary committee is a committee of **Members of Parliament (MPs)** who are elected or appointed from amongst the members of the house or nominated by the Speaker or Chairman. The concept of **Parliamentary committees originated in the British Parliament**. These committees operate under the direction of the Speaker of Lok Sabha or Chairman of Rajya Sabha and present their findings and recommendations to the respective houses.

The Parliamentary committees draw their authority from the constitution.

- **Article 105:** Powers, privileges, etc., of the houses of Parliament and of the members and committees thereof.
- **Article 118:** Each House of Parliament may make rules for regulations, subject to the provisions of this constitution, its procedure and the conduct of its business.

By their nature, Parliamentary Committees in India are of two kinds:

- Standing committees.
- Ad hoc committees.

Standing committees

The Standing committees are **permanent committees** that are constituted by the Parliament to deal with specific areas of public policy or administration. These committees are constituted at the beginning of each session of Parliament and continue until the end of the session.

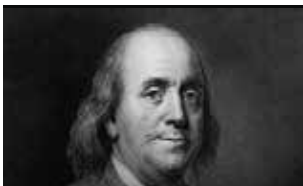
Ad hoc committees

Ad hoc committees are **temporary committees** constituted for a specific purpose and for a limited period of time. These committees are usually constituted to consider and report on a specific bill or to inquire into a particular matter of public importance. These committees are dissolved once they have completed their work.



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"If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it."

—Benjamin Franklin

Indonesia has not decided on buying missiles from BrahMos

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Indonesia has not yet made a decision on buying missiles from BrahMos Aerospace in India, a spokesperson at the country's Defence Ministry said on Monday. Multiple missile systems are being considered by Indonesia, not just those from BrahMos, spokesperson Frega Wenas said after Indonesia's Defence Minister met with his counterpart from Vietnam. BrahMos, a company co-owned by the Indian and Russian governments, had said in 2023 that it was in advanced discussions with Jakarta on a deal worth \$200 million to \$350 million.



About BrahMos Missile

BrahMos is a long-range nuclear-capable **supersonic cruise missile system**. It possesses the capability to be deployed from **several platforms, including air, sea, and land**. It is capable of travelling at speeds of up to Mach 3, and it is one of the world's fastest cruise missiles. It was developed by BrahMos Aerospace and tested for the first time in 2001.

BrahMos is named after the **rivers Brahmaputra and Moskva (Russia)**. BrahMos is the potent offensive missile weapon system already inducted into the Armed Forces.

Working of BrahMos Missile

BrahMos is a cruise missile, which is an **unmanned self-propelled guided vehicle** that flies for the majority of its flight path using aerodynamic lift and whose primary mission is to deliver ordnance or a special payload to a target.

- **Launch Platforms:** Cruise missiles can be launched from a variety of platforms, including **ground, air, sea, and submarine**.
- **Propulsion and Flight:** **Jet engines** are the primary mode of propulsion for cruise missiles. Most cruise missiles are subsonic and use **Turbofan and Turbojet engines**. While less common, **supersonic and hypersonic cruise missiles** utilize **Ramjet and Scramjet engines**.
 - Cruise missiles can fly to their targets at various altitudes as long as they stay within the atmosphere. Most remain close to the **Earth's surface**, skimming just meters above the ground.
 - Their **low flight path** makes it much more difficult for most radar and sensor systems to detect the missile unless the **radar or sensor system** is **airborne** and directed toward the ground.
 - Because **flying at high altitude** saves fuel, it can extend the range of the missile. However, because today's **radars** and **sensors** are typically positioned to detect and track high-altitude threats, the missile becomes more vulnerable to **missile defence systems**.
 - Cruise missiles can also combine high and low-altitude flight paths to reap the benefits of both.
- **Guidance:** Cruise missiles can use a variety of **guidance methods** to precisely place their **ordnance** on the **desired target** while avoiding missile defense systems.



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SEBI may rejig short-selling norms

ECONOMY

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is considering a major revamp of short-selling regulations, potentially allowing it for all stocks excluding those in the trade-to-trade (T2T) segment. The proposal may also scrap short-sale disclosures and penalties currently imposed by stock exchanges, sources familiar with the matter said. Short-selling allows investors to sell a stock without owning the stock at the time — a strategy used to bet on the fall in stock prices. Currently, there is a ban on naked short-selling, with SEBI mandating investors to full their obligation to deliver securities at the time of settlement.

HOW SHORTING A STOCK WORKS



Short Selling:

- Short selling, or shorting, on the other hand, is a trading strategy based on the expectation that the price of the security will fall. While fundamentally it is based on the “buy low, sell high” approach, the sequence of transactions is reversed in short selling — to sell high first and buy low later.
- Investors, who short sell stocks, expect share prices to drop on a future date and aim to capitalize on this prediction.
- Since it depends on speculation and entails infinite risk theoretically, only seasoned investors partake in short selling.
- When prices drop, traders make a profit from the difference between the selling price and the purchasing price.
- Also, in short selling, the trader usually does not own the securities he sells, but merely borrows them.

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