● POLITY   ● ECONOMICS   ● TECHNOLOGY   ● ECOLOGY

New Pamban bridge an engineering wonder: PM
Polity & Governance

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the new Pamban railway bridge, India's first vertical lift sea bridge, connecting Rameswaram island with Ramanathapuram on the Tamil Nadu mainland. Built by Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. at a cost of ₹531 crore, the 2.08-km bridge features a 72.5-metre lift span that rises 17 metres to allow ship movement. Modi also flagged off new train services between Rameswaram and Tambaram, laid the foundation for a highway project on NH-40, and dedicated three other highway projects in Tamil Nadu. Replacing the old British-era bridge, the new structure enhances connectivity, trade, and tourism, and is built with corrosion-resistant materials to withstand the harsh Palk Strait environment.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that India's economy has doubled in the past decade, attributing the growth to a sixfold increase in infrastructure investment. He highlighted the accelerated implementation of major projects nationwide, including the Chenab rail bridge in the north, Atal Sethu in the west, Bogibeel bridge in the east, and the new Pamban rail bridge in the south. He also mentioned progress on the dedicated freight corridor, the bullet train project, and the introduction of modern trains like Vande Bharat and Namo Bharat, which are enhancing the rail network.

Only 12% of judges in High Courts have declared assets: data
Polity & Governance

Public disclosure

Judges of only six High Courts have declared their assets on the court websites

High Court	Number of judges who declared their assets as on April 5	Current strength of judges
Chhattisgarh	1	16
Himachal Pradesh	11	12
Madras	5	65
Punjab and Haryana	30	53
Delhi	7	38
Kerala	41	44

Source: Websites of respective High Courts

Out of 769 judges in India's 25 High Courts, only 95 (12.35%) have publicly disclosed their assets and liabilities. This issue gained attention after partially burnt currency was allegedly found at Justice Yashwant Varma's residence, prompting concerns about judicial transparency. In response, all 33 Supreme Court judges have agreed to publish their asset declarations. Among High Courts, Kerala leads with 93.18% of judges disclosing assets, followed by Himachal Pradesh at 91.66%. In contrast, disclosure rates are low in Chhattisgarh (1 of 16 judges) and Madras (5 of 65). The Delhi High Court has seen a sharp drop in transparency, with only 7 of 38 judges currently disclosing assets, compared to 29 of 35 in 2018.

As of now, 30 out of 33 Supreme Court judges, including Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, have submitted their asset declarations, which will be made public once technical processes are completed. In a Full Court meeting on April 1, all Supreme Court judges agreed to disclose their assets. A 2023 Parliamentary Standing

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Committee report titled *'Judicial Processes and their Reform'* recommended mandatory annual property declarations for all High Court and Supreme Court judges. The committee argued that, like elected officials, judges holding public office and drawing salaries from the exchequer should be required to disclose their assets.

Shah begins J&K visit, to review security situation
Internal Security

During Union Home Minister Amit Shah's three-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir, two religious leaders, including Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, were placed under house arrest, and many locals were summoned to police stations. The visit follows a rise in militant activity in Jammu, including the killing of four policemen in March, and increased infiltration attempts along the LoC. Shah was received by J&K Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha and Union Minister Jitendra Singh. He will chair two key security review meetings—one with all security agencies and another focused on preparations for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra. Shah is also expected to visit soldiers at forward posts and review the functioning of the Union Territory's administration with BJP's 28 MLAs.

In Srinagar, Union Home Minister Amit Shah will be joined by J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to inaugurate and lay foundation stones for multi-crore development projects. Ahead of the visit, Abdullah stated that while J&K has lost its official statehood, people still mentally consider it a state. Speaking at the third Lok Samvardhan Parv at Kashmir University, attended by Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, he emphasized ending the misuse of Waqf properties and called for empowering local artisans by connecting Kashmir's rich art and culture to national markets.

Security beefed up

As Union Home Minister Amit Shah began his tour of Jammu and Kashmir, security was heightened across the region with extra checkpoints and additional forces deployed. Religious leaders, including Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Shia cleric Aga Syed Mohammad Hadi, were placed under house arrest. Additionally, many local residents, particularly those linked to separatist groups, were summoned to police stations in various parts of Kashmir.

In the past, SC has ruled that 'once a waqf, always a waqf'
Polity & Governance

Petitions in the Supreme Court challenge the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, arguing it violates the long-held legal principle of "once a Waqf, always a Waqf" and seeks to convert historic Waqf lands into private or government property. Organizations like the Samastha Kerala Jamaithul Ulema claim the law aims to assert state control over Waqf assets, undermining religious and property rights. Petitioners cite past Supreme Court rulings, including *Ratilal Panachand Gandhi (1954)* and *Sayyed Ali (1998)*, which affirmed Waqf as a permanent charitable dedication under Islamic law. The petitioners argue the amendment infringes on the sanctity and permanence of Waqf property.

Petitioners, including Congress MP Mohammed Jawed and AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, argue that the 35 amendments in the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 undermine the original purpose of the 1995 Waqf Act, which was to ensure better administration of Waqf properties. They cite the Supreme Court's 1985 ruling in *K. Nagaraj vs. Andhra Pradesh*, which held that amendments negating a law's original objectives can be struck down as unconstitutional. A key concern is the removal of the concept of "Waqf by User"—a form of Waqf recognized by long-standing community use, affirmed in the 2019 *Ramjanmabhoomi* judgment. The new law mandates formal deeds, effectively discarding this established concept.

The Ulema and petitioners argue that many existing Waqf properties in India were established centuries ago without formal deeds and are recognized through "Waqf by User" based on historical religious use. The 2025 amendments restrict the Waqf Tribunal's power to recognize such properties, violating Article 26 of the Constitution, which protects the right of religious communities to manage their own affairs. Congress MP Mohammed Jawed warned that removing "Waqf by User" allows old Waqf properties to be challenged and potentially reclassified as private or government property.

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Modi launches Indian-aided railway projects on last day of Sri Lanka trip

International Relations

Prime Minister Narendra Modi concluded his three-day visit to Sri Lanka by launching two Indian-assisted railway projects in Anuradhapura alongside Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake. The projects include the $91.27 million refurbishment of the 128-km Maho-Omanthai railway line and the $14.89 million construction of an advanced signalling system from Maho to Anuradhapura. Modi also visited the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi temple, highlighting the cultural and spiritual ties between the two countries. He stated that the visit would strengthen bilateral relations and praised the hospitality of the Sri Lankan government and people.

'Strong links'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered prayers at the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi temple in Anuradhapura, calling it a deeply humbling experience at one of Buddhism's most sacred sites. He was accompanied by Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and received blessings from the head monk. The temple houses a sacred Bodhi tree believed to have originated from India's Bodhgaya, brought by Theri Sanghamitta, daughter of Emperor Ashoka. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs highlighted the temple as a symbol of the deep civilisational and spiritual ties between India and Sri Lanka.

Significant agreements

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Colombo on Friday after his visit to Thailand. On Saturday, he held extensive discussions with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, resulting in over 10 key outcomes, including seven agreements to enhance cooperation in areas like defence, energy, and digitalisation. A notable development was the defence pact, marking a strategic shift in India-Sri Lanka ties decades after the IPKF episode. Other agreements included developing Trincomalee as an energy hub with the UAE and establishing power grid connectivity between the two nations.

Aircraft carriers key to winning sea battles: French Navy officer

International Relations

Aircraft carriers remain central to naval dominance, according to Captain George Florentine of France's Charles de Gaulle. Despite debates over their viability, Indo-Pacific nations are expanding carrier fleets. France plans a new carrier by 2038, and India awaits approval for a second Indigenous Aircraft Carrier. Captain Florentine emphasized the importance of passing operational expertise to future generations and fostering communication and procedural alignment during joint exercises like Varuna with India. Rear Admiral Jacques Mallard highlighted the Indo-Pacific's growing maritime cooperation as a response to China's naval expansion, with the Chinese Navy now the world's largest at over 370 platforms.

Rafale sparks interest

The French aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle*, which operates Rafale-M jets, E-2 Hawkeye aircraft, and helicopters, recently conducted joint drills with the Indian Navy, drawing particular interest due to India's plan to acquire 26 Rafale-Ms — a deal expected to be finalized soon. Rear Admiral Jacques Mallard noted Indian interest in carrier operations of the Rafales, especially jet handling, which was demonstrated onboard. Captain Guillaume highlighted the high availability and intense flight operations aboard the carrier. Meanwhile, China's naval expansion continues with two active carriers (*Liaoning* and *Shandong*), a third (*Fujian*) completing sea trials, and a fourth nuclear-powered carrier under construction.

Sri Lanka releases 11 Indian fishermen after PM's pitch for a 'humane approach'
International Relations

Sri Lanka released at least 11 Indian fishermen on Sunday as a goodwill gesture, following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake. During the discussions, Mr. Modi emphasized resolving the long-standing fishermen issue with a "humane approach" and called for the immediate release of detained fishermen and their boats. The issue, a persistent tension point between the two nations, involves frequent clashes in the Palk Strait. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri confirmed the matter was discussed in detail during the bilateral meeting.

Impact on livelihood

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri stated that Prime Minister Modi stressed adopting a humanitarian and constructive approach to the fishermen issue, recognizing its impact on daily livelihoods in the Palk Bay. Modi also suggested reconsidering recent actions affecting fishermen. Both India and Sri Lanka agreed to intensify institutional dialogue and are in contact about holding the next round of fishermen's association talks to address the matter.

Prescribe preventive medicine for a healthy India
Polity & Governance

India stands at the cusp of economic glory, aspiring to become a $5 trillion economy and a global powerhouse. However, there is a "silent epidemic" of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) that threatens our economic and developmental ambitions. Today, NCDs are the leading cause of death in the country, accounting for roughly two-thirds of all deaths. To secure a healthy and prosperous future, India must urgently embrace a preventive health-care mindset — one that can heal before there is a need to heal.

The rising tide of NCDs, their economic toll

Over recent decades, India has experienced a significant epidemiological shift, with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, diabetes, cancers, chronic lung diseases, and stroke now accounting for approximately 60% of all deaths, totalling around 5.87 million annually. Alarmingly, NCDs are increasingly affecting younger populations, with 22% of Indians over 30 at risk of dying from an NCD before the age of 70. This trend poses a significant threat to India's working-age demographic, which is vital for the nation's economic growth. The economic impact is substantial, with NCDs projected to cost India between $3.5 trillion and $4.8 trillion from 2012 to 2030, due to productivity losses and reduced workforce participation. Investing in preventive healthcare is therefore not only a public health necessity but also an economic imperative for sustainable development.

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India is experiencing a significant rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, diabetes, cancers, chronic lung diseases, and stroke, which now surpass communicable diseases as leading causes of mortality. Alarmingly, these NCDs are increasingly affecting younger individuals, with 22% of Indians over 30 at risk of dying from an NCD before age 70. This trend poses a threat to India's working-age population and economic growth, as NCDs are estimated to cost the country approximately 5%–10% of its GDP. Between 2012 and 2030, the economic loss due to NCDs and mental health conditions is projected to reach $4.58 trillion.

Most NCDs are largely preventable. Sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy diets, tobacco and alcohol use, pollution, and genetic predisposition are key contributors. By addressing these factors, about 80% of premature heart disease, stroke, and diabetes cases can be prevented. Therefore, investing in preventive healthcare is not merely an expense but a strategic move toward sustainable development.

India is experiencing a significant shift in its health landscape, with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, diabetes, cancers, chronic lung diseases, and stroke now accounting for approximately 60% of all deaths in the country. Alarmingly, these diseases are increasingly affecting younger populations, including individuals in their 30s and 40s. This trend poses a substantial threat to India's working-age demographic, which is vital for the nation's economic growth. Economically, NCDs are estimated to cost India around 5%–10% of its GDP, translating to a projected loss of $3.5 trillion to $4 trillion between 2012 and 2030. Investing in preventive healthcare is therefore not merely an expenditure but a strategic move towards sustainable development. Most NCDs are largely preventable through lifestyle modifications, including regular physical activity, a balanced diet, tobacco and alcohol cessation, pollution control, and regular health screenings. Implementing these measures can significantly reduce the risk and prevalence of NCDs, thereby alleviating their human and economic burden on India.

Technology can transform prevention

Digital health technologies, including smartphone applications, wearable devices, and big data analytics, are revolutionizing preventive healthcare in India. With over 750 million smartphone users, these tools can deliver personalized health advice, reminders, and risk assessments directly to individuals. Wearable devices enable continuous monitoring of health metrics, promoting proactive health management.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) further enhances preventive care by analyzing extensive datasets to predict individual risks for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular conditions and diabetes. AI algorithms can generate health risk scores, forecasting the likelihood of events like heart attacks or the development of diabetes over a specified period. Additionally, AI aids in early diagnostics; for example, machine learning models can analyze medical imaging to detect early signs of conditions like lung nodules or fatty liver, facilitating timely interventions.

However, it's crucial that AI-augmented preventive medicine remains humane, compassionate, and patient-centric. When used responsibly, digital health technologies and AI can significantly enhance the proactivity, precision, and accessibility of preventive care.

Fostering a 'preventive mindset'

India is experiencing a significant rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, diabetes, cancers, chronic lung diseases, and stroke, which now account for an estimated five to six million deaths annually. Alarmingly, these conditions are increasingly affecting younger individuals, with 22% of Indians over 30 at risk of dying from an NCD before the age of 70. This trend not only poses a substantial human cost but also has severe economic implications, with NCDs potentially costing India around 5%–10% of its GDP. A study by the World Economic Forum and the Harvard School of Public Health projected that between 2012 and 2030, NCDs could result in economic losses of approximately $3.5 trillion to $4 trillion. Given this scenario, investing in preventive healthcare is not merely an expense but a strategic economic necessity.

Most NCDs are largely preventable through lifestyle modifications. Factors such as sedentary habits, unhealthy diets, tobacco and alcohol use, and pollution contribute significantly to NCD risk. By addressing these, it's estimated that about 80% of premature heart disease, stroke, and diabetes cases can be prevented. Encouraging physical activity, promoting healthy eating, and reducing exposure to pollutants are essential steps in this direction. Regular health screenings starting at the age of 40, or earlier for those with a family history, are crucial for early detection and timely intervention.

Digital health technologies, including smartphone apps, wearables, and big data analytics, are revolutionizing preventive care. With over 750 million smartphone users in India, delivering health advice and

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reminders has become more accessible. Wearable devices enable individuals to monitor their health metrics, and artificial intelligence (AI) plays a pivotal role in predictive health modelling. AI algorithms can analyse vast datasets to predict an individual's risk for various NCDs with remarkable accuracy, facilitating early diagnostics and personalized care plans.

Preventive medicine requires a collective mindset where individuals, communities, corporates, and governments prioritize health in every action and policy. Individuals should champion their own health by scheduling regular check-ups and making daily lifestyle changes. Corporates can invest in employee wellness programs, including annual health checks and fitness sessions. Healthcare providers need to shift from a reactive cure model to a preventive care approach. Government initiatives like the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) and the establishment of Health and Wellness Centres focusing on screening and prevention are commendable steps. Public policies should also be health-oriented, incorporating urban planning with green spaces, integrating health and nutrition into education curricula, and regulating the food industry to encourage healthier options.

In my experience, prioritizing preventive care has transformed thousands of lives by enabling early disease detection and risk management. Empowering individuals to make health-conscious choices can collectively enhance the nation's health, happiness, and economic prosperity.

Health and sanitation as the pillars of a healthy India
Polity & Governance

On this World Health Day (April 7), as nations reflect on the foundations of human well-being, India stands tall with a transformative lesson: health and sanitation are not separate pursuits, but are two sides of a coin. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has undertaken a sanitation and water revolution that has not only changed the way we live but also how we thrive.

Rural missions that made a difference

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) Grameen and the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) have significantly transformed rural India by enhancing sanitation and providing clean drinking water, thereby promoting dignity, equity, and health.

Launched in 2014, SBM aimed to eliminate open defecation. By 2019, India declared itself Open Defecation Free (ODF), achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6.2 eleven years ahead of schedule. The World Health Organization estimated that between 2014 and 2019, SBM averted approximately 300,000 deaths due to diarrheal diseases and protein-energy malnutrition. Additionally, a 2017 UNICEF study found that 93% of women felt safer after installing a household toilet, and ODF families saved about ₹50,000 annually in healthcare costs.

Initiated in 2019, JJM aims to provide every rural household with a clean tap water connection by 2024. Research by Nobel Laureate Dr. Michael Kremer indicates that safe water access could reduce under-five child mortality by nearly 30%, potentially saving around 136,000 lives annually. Furthermore, the World Health Organization projects that ensuring safely managed drinking water could prevent nearly 400,000 deaths from diarrheal diseases, saving approximately 14 million Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs). The mission also alleviates the burden on women, saving an estimated 5.5 crore hours daily previously spent fetching water.

The Sujal and Swachh Gaon campaign integrates water, sanitation, and hygiene at the village level, further mobilizing communities towards holistic public health improvements. These initiatives collectively reduce out-of-pocket healthcare expenditures for rural households and reinforce a preventive healthcare model.

On the ground

India's Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) and Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) have significantly advanced rural sanitation and water accessibility, embodying dignity, equity, and health. Launched in 2014, SBM achieved Open Defecation Free (ODF) status nationwide by 2019, contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 6.2 ahead of schedule. This led to improved public health outcomes, including a reduction in diarrheal diseases and enhanced safety for women. Initiated in 2019, JJM has provided tap water connections to approximately 72% of rural households, aiming for universal coverage by 2024. These missions have empowered women through training programs, with over 2.35 million women trained to test water quality, fostering community involvement and

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leadership. The Sujal and Swachh Gaon campaign integrates water, sanitation, and hygiene at the village level, promoting holistic public health improvements. Collectively, these initiatives have transformed rural India's health landscape, underscoring the importance of inter-ministerial collaboration and community engagement.

It is about convergence

India's approach to health underscores the importance of inter-ministerial collaboration, integrating sectors like water, sanitation, nutrition, education, and rural development to achieve holistic health outcomes. This integrated model serves as a global blueprint, particularly for the Global South, showcasing innovations such as community-led initiatives and technological solutions like the GOBARdhan biogas plants and plastic waste management units. Investments in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) yield significant returns in health, productivity, gender equity, and environmental sustainability. Committed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, India emphasizes that good health originates at home through access to clean water, safe sanitation, and collective determination. The nation is dedicated to sharing its experiences and collaborating internationally to foster a cleaner, healthier, and more resilient world.

The missing middle
Polity & Governance

The recent Budget session of India's Parliament was marked by both commendable productivity and notable controversies. Both Houses recorded over 100% productivity, with the Lok Sabha at 118% and the Rajya Sabha at 119%. A significant highlight was the passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2025, which underwent extensive debates extending beyond midnight. The bill, aiming to amend existing Waqf laws, was passed with a 288-232 vote in the Lok Sabha after a nearly 14-hour debate. The Rajya Sabha also engaged in a marathon 17-hour session to deliberate on the bill.

The session also addressed the imposition of President's Rule in Manipur, with discussions held post-midnight in both Houses. Disputes arose over the management of parliamentary debates and the allocation of speaking opportunities, leading to sharp exchanges in business advisory committee meetings. Notably, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla criticized Congress leader Sonia Gandhi for alleging that the Waqf Bill was "bulldozed" through Parliament, a claim he refuted by highlighting the extensive discussions held.

Critics have raised concerns about the government's approach to the Muslim community regarding this legislation, viewing it as indicative of majoritarianism. Notably, apart from a nominated member in the upper house, no Muslim MPs supported the amendments, underscoring the community's apprehensions. Furthermore, the ruling alliance currently lacks an elected Muslim representative in Parliament.

Tragedy of a commons
Polity & Governance

The Delhi High Court ordered the Wikimedia Foundation to undo changes made to ANI's Wikipedia page after a 2024 defamation lawsuit filed by Asian News International (ANI) against the Wikimedia Foundation. The court criticized the credibility of Wikipedia, claiming that people often accept its content as truth. It also demanded the identities of the anonymous volunteer editors, despite the platform's policy to protect them. The court ruled against the Foundation, stating that the content on the ANI page was based on editorial and opinionated sources. The court's order is problematic because Wikipedia follows guidelines that prioritize reputable sources and does not present new information, unlike newspapers or scientific journals.

The issue of truth and opinion being often confused, leading to punitive actions against individuals for repeating controversial claims instead of addressing the original issues. The Delhi High Court's ruling in the ANI defamation case raised concerns about Wikipedia's credibility and its volunteer editors' adherence to guidelines. The Delhi High Court's decision limits the Wikimedia Foundation's ability to maintain its democratic, decentralized model in India, based on public tolerance for certain opinions. The passage argues that such actions threaten the integrity of platforms like Wikipedia and calls for the courts and government to respect these collaborative efforts rather than dismiss them, while urging the public to engage with them responsibly.

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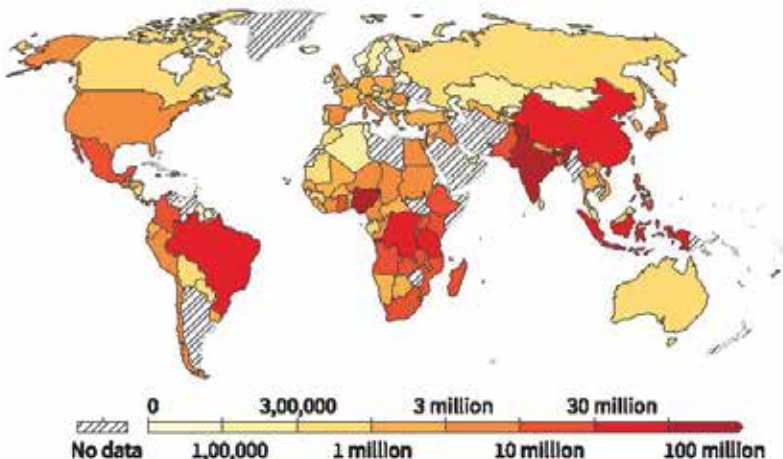# Three billion people cannot afford a healthy diet

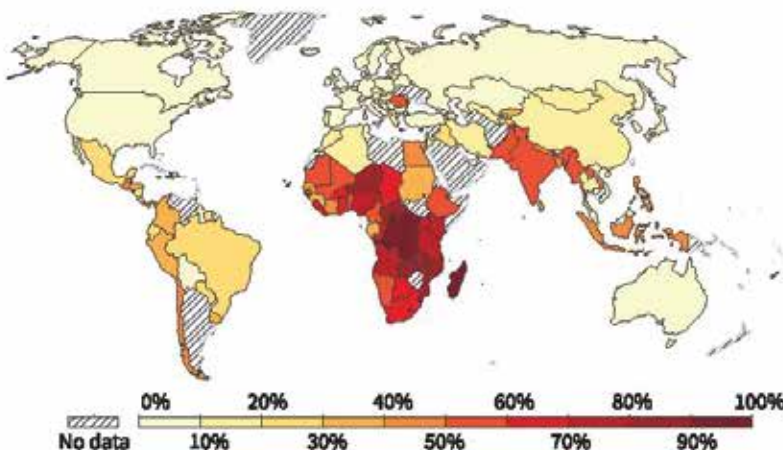**Polity & Governance**

Two square meals

The maps were sourced from Our World in Data. Hannah Ritchie is the Deputy Editor and Pablo Rosado is the Principal Data Scientist at Our World in Data

Map 1: The map shows the number of people who cannot afford a calorie sufficient diet. Data for 2021

| No data | 0 | 1,00,000 | 3,00,000 | 1 million | 3 million | 10 million | 30 million | 100 million |

Map 2: The map shows the share of population that cannot afford a healthy diet. Data for 2022

| No data | 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

A healthy diet is about much more than calories: we need a wide range of nutrient-dense foods to get all the vitamins and minerals that are essential for good health. In this piece, we look at the costs of diets around the world. Healthy diets are expensive — more than four times the cost of a basic, calorie-sufficient one. This is true in every country in the world. As a result, three billion people cannot afford a healthy diet, even if they spend most of their income on food.

Being able to eat a healthy, nutritious diet is one of our most basic human needs. Yet billions of people go without it; they suffer from 'hidden hunger', micronutrient deficiencies such as too little iron, calcium, vitamin A, or iodine.

There are many reasons why someone might not eat a nutritious diet. Often it's because people cannot afford to. First, consider the most basic requirement: getting enough calories. These could come in any form, but the cheapest option in most countries is starchy foods and cereals. Living on this 'energy sufficient' diet would mean eating only maize flour or rice for every meal, a diet that is severely lacking all other important nutrients. In terms of diets in poor countries, people get most of their calories from starchy foods.

A person can eat an energy sufficient diet on less than $1 a day, as per a study for the Food and Agricultural Organization's 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World' report. What does this mean for the affordability of a calorie sufficient diet? A diet is considered "unaffordable" when the diet cost plus expenditures for basic non-food needs are higher than incomes per person. In each country, food prices were measured at retail marketplaces specific to the local context. Non-food expenses in each country are estimated by looking at how much low-income people typically spend on things like housing and transportation.

By comparing the cost of diets with income distributions across the world, researchers estimated that 1.1 billion people could not afford the most basic energy

sufficient diet in 2021 **(Map 1)**. That's 14% of the global population. These are the very worst-off in terms of nutrition.

An important question is how subsistence farmers fit in. They are included in these numbers: the income measure used to calculate the affordability of diets does take the value of subsistence farming (i.e. home production) into account. When the FAO report states that these smallholder farmers cannot afford a calorie-sufficient diet, it means they cannot produce one.

What people really need is a diverse and nutritious diet. Getting enough calories is important, but it is not sufficient to live a healthy and productive life. Eating only cereals and starchy foods will leave you deficient in protein, essential fats, and the wide range of micronutrients that our bodies need to function optimally.

Most countries develop 'food-based dietary guidelines' which provide recommendations on what a 'healthy diet' would look like. This includes guidelines on what balance of foods across the many groups — cereals, fruits, vegetables, legumes, meat and dairy — is considered best for long-term health.

The researchers also looked at the lowest-cost options to meet these national food-based dietary guidelines. Of course, there is no universal 'healthy diet', particularly when we consider the strong cultural differences in what people eat. So, the researchers selected dietary guidelines which were regionally representative: this means that we are not expecting that people in India or Japan will adopt the national dietary guidelines of the U.S., or vice versa.

Unsurprisingly, a diverse, healthy diet is much more expensive than a calorie-sufficient one. The researchers found that the average cost across the world was $3.67 per day.When we put these prices in the context of affordability, we find that almost three billion people cannot afford a healthy diet. In many of the world's poorest countries — particularly across Sub-Saharan Africa — it's unaffordable (or not producible) for most of the population. This is shown in **Map 2** which gives these figures as a percentage of the total population. In many countries, a healthy diet is out-of-reach for more than 80%.

A useful way to bring context to food prices is to compare the cost of a healthy diet with the median income of countries across the world. In the poorest countries, the cost of a healthy diet is higher than the median income. Even if the average person in these countries spent all of their money on food, a healthy diet would be unaffordable. In some countries — India is the largest among them — dietary costs would be roughly equal to the median income. There, people would need to spend all of their income on food to afford a healthy diet.

In rich countries, median incomes are much higher than dietary costs. In these countries the median income earner can afford a healthy diet with a relatively small fraction of their income. The average person in France could spend just 6% of their income on food and in Denmark, just 5%.

What this comparison shows is how far most of the world is from being able to afford a healthy diet. We cannot spend all, or even most, of our income on food. We would have very little to spend on other essentials.

Can the U.S. President serve a third term?
International Relations

On March 30, the 78-year-old U.S. President Donald Trump said he's "not joking" about serving a third term in the White House. He further claimed that a legal loophole could make it possible.

Does the U.S. Constitution allow it?

The 22nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1951, limits a person to two elected terms as President. It was introduced after Franklin D. Roosevelt served four terms, breaking the two-term precedent set by George Washington. The Amendment also states that if someone serves more than two years of another President's term, they can only be elected once more, capping the maximum tenure at 10 years. This rule applies regardless of whether the terms are consecutive. Therefore, Donald Trump, elected in 2016 and 2024, is constitutionally barred from running for a third term.

What is the 'VP loophole'?

Despite the 22nd Amendment clearly barring Donald Trump from a third presidential term, he has floated ideas to bypass it. One suggestion involves running as Vice President in 2028, but the 12th Amendment prohibits anyone ineligible for the presidency from serving as VP, blocking this route. A more theoretical option involves

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Trump becoming Speaker of the House and ascending to the presidency through the line of succession if both the President and VP are unavailable.

Another path—repealing the 22nd Amendment—is extremely unlikely due to the complex and politically improbable constitutional amendment process.

Which world leaders have extended their tenure?

Many global leaders have extended their rule by altering or navigating constitutional limits. Vladimir Putin sidestepped Russia's two-term limit by becoming Prime Minister, later returning as President and resetting term limits through a 2020 amendment. Türkiye's Recep Tayyip Erdogan removed term caps via a 2017 referendum, while China's Xi Jinping abolished the two-term limit in 2018, enabling indefinite rule. In contrast, leaders like Germany's Angela Merkel, and Prime Ministers in Canada and the UK, have maintained long tenures without changing laws, relying instead on sustained parliamentary or party support.

Why doesn't India have term limits?

India's Parliamentary system sets no term limits for the Prime Minister, with tenure based on maintaining Lok Sabha confidence (Article 75(3)). This promotes voter sovereignty and democratic accountability, allowing leaders like PM Modi to potentially serve long terms. However, mechanisms such as no-confidence motions, elections, coalition politics, judicial oversight, and a free press provide essential checks and balances to uphold democratic integrity.