

POLITY

ECONOMICS

TECHNOLOGY

ECOLOGY

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## CONSUMING DATA

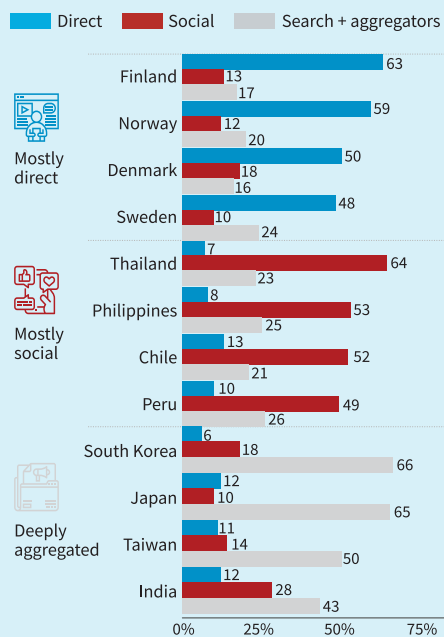
**CONTEXT:** The 2023 Digital News Report by the Reuters Institute indicates a shift among online news consumers in India, who are increasingly turning to search engines and mobile news aggregators as their main source of news, thus moving away from websites of traditional outlets. Majority of India favour watching or listening over reading the news. In countries such as Finland and Portugal, there are higher trust levels, with lower trust levels in countries with higher degrees of political polarisation such as the United States, Argentina, Hungary, and Greece.

In countries with a strong tradition of reading, such as Finland and the United Kingdom, approximately 80 % of respondents still favour reading news online from well-established news brands. Conversely, countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa with politically polarised climate prefer to watch news online in social media, making traditional news outlets increasingly reliant on third-party traffic for audience reach. Additionally, in specific

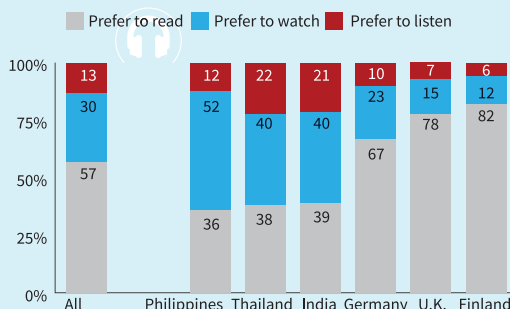
Asia-Pacific markets such as Japan and Korea, local portals such as Naver and Yahoo! remain the dominant channels for news access. Meanwhile, in India and Indonesia, the role of mobile news aggregators as primary news sources is on the rise.

The Digital News Report identified alarming declines in both the consumption and dissemination of news in India. Access to online news sharply fell by 12 % points between 2022 and 2023, while social media platforms saw an 11-point decline. These platforms have traditionally been the primary news sources for a younger demographic. Television, which commands a wide audience experienced a 10-point dip in viewership among our sample group comprising mainly younger and urban individuals. This decline in news engagement can be partially linked to the diminishing influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly since lockdown measures were relaxed in April last year.

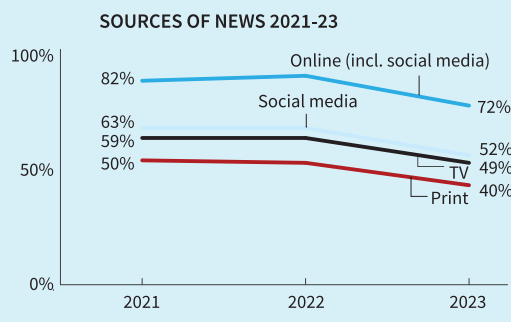
**Chart 1:** Which of these was the main way in which you came across news in the last week: Mostly direct, mostly social, mostly aggregated (in %)



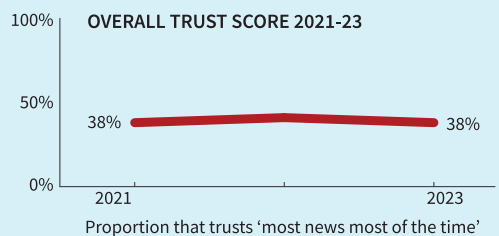
**Chart 2:** In thinking about your online habits around news and current affairs, which of the following statements applies best to you: Prefer to read, prefer to watch, prefer to listen? (in %)



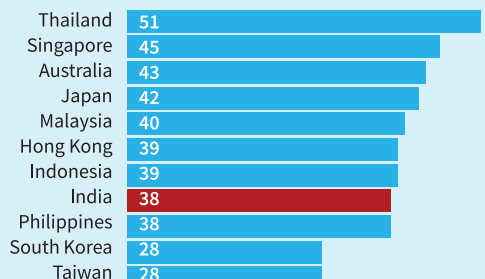
**Chart 3:** The chart shows sources of news for Indian news consumers between 2021 and 2023



**Chart 4:** The chart shows trust in news among Indian consumers between 2021 and 2023



**Chart 5:** The chart plots the share of respondents across nations in the Asia-Pacific who said that they trust 'most news most of the time'



**Chart 2** plots responses for the question, "In thinking about your online habits around news and current affairs, which of the following statements applies best to you: Prefer to read, prefer to watch, prefer to listen?"

**Chart 3** shows sources of news for Indian news consumers between 2021 and 2023. In India, the overall trust in news has remained stagnant at 38% between 2021 and 2023.

**Chart 4** shows the share of respondents in India who said that they trust 'most news most of the time'.

**Chart 5** plots the share of respondents across nations in the Asia-Pacific who said that they trust 'most news most of the time'. With 38%, trust levels in India are among the least in the region.

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**ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT**

**COUNTING UNEMPLOYMENT**

**CONTEXT:** The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines unemployment as being out of a job; being available to take a job; and actively engaged in searching for work. Therefore, an individual who has lost work but does not look for another job is not unemployed.

The labour force is defined as the sum of the employed and the unemployed. Those neither employed nor unemployed — such as students and those engaged in unpaid domestic work — are considered out of the labour force. The unemployment rate is measured as the ratio of the unemployed to the labour force. The unemployment rate could also fall if an economy is not generating enough jobs, or if people decide not to search for work.

**Usual Principal Status:** An individual engaged in any economic activity for 30 days or more during the preceding 365 days is considered to be employed.

**Subsidiary Status:** An individual engaged in any economic activity for 30 days or more during the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey is considered to be employed.

**Current Weekly Status (CWS):** An individual engaged in any economic activity during the last seven days before a survey is considered to be employed.

The lockdown announced in March 2020, a profound disruption to the Indian economy wasn't reflected in the PLFS unemployment rates, which covers a period between July of one year to June of the next. The lockdown would have been covered in the last quarter of the 2019-20 PLFS, its after-effects seen in the 2020-21 PLFS. However, unemployment rates — measured both by the UPSS and CWS standards — fell in 2019-20 and 2020-21.

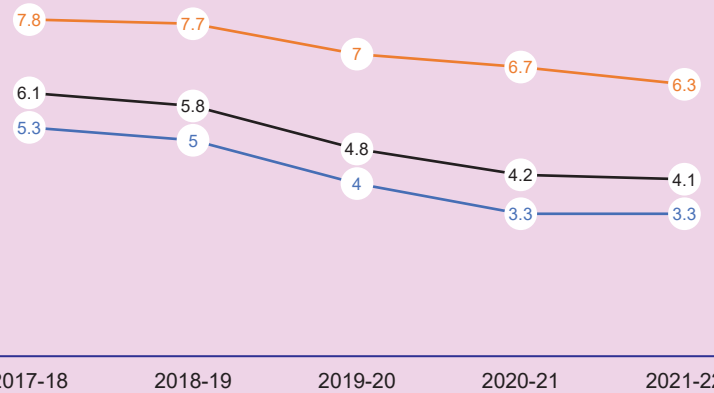


FIGURE: Line chart representation of the unemployment rates based on Usual Principal Status.

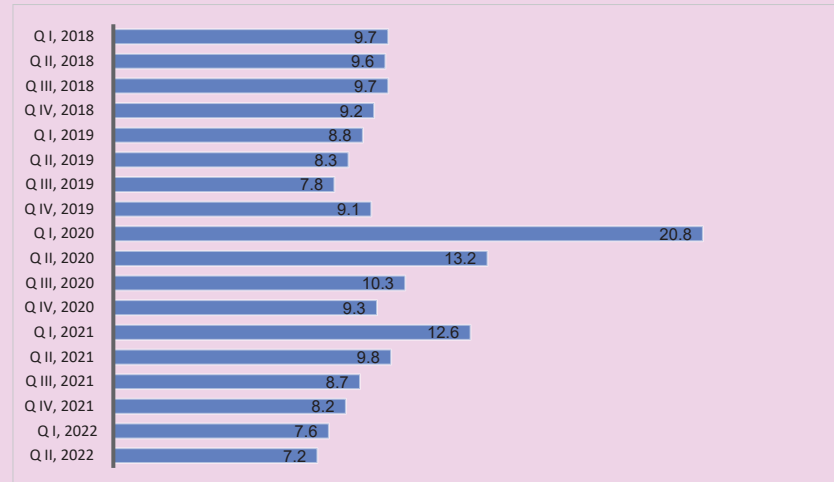


FIGURE: Bar chart representation of the urban CWS unemployment on a quarterly basis.

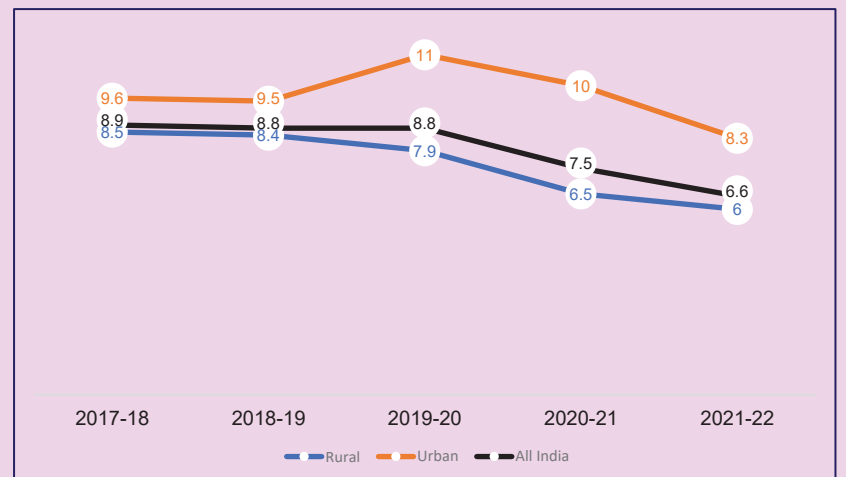


FIGURE: Line chart representation of the unemployment rates based on Current Weekly Status (CWS)

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**AVOID A 'NEW COLD WAR', CHINA TELLS NATIONS AT ASEAN MEET**

**CONTEXT:** China has advised ASEAN nations to Avoid a new cold war. Chinese Premier Li Qiang has urged major powers, indirectly referring to the United States, to control their differences and avoid triggering a new Cold War. Li made these remarks during an ASEAN-plus-three meeting with Japan and South Korea in Jakarta.

**BACKGROUND:** China is concerned about the formation of U.S.-backed blocs in its vicinity and ongoing disputes in the region, notably in the South China Sea. He emphasized the need to oppose taking sides, bloc confrontations, and a new Cold War to manage disagreements arising from misperceptions, divergent interests, or external influences.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The ASEAN summit has provided a platform for major powers to engage with the bloc and navigate their rivalries. Notably, U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris attended in place of President Joe Biden, while Li represented President Xi Jinping.

These comments align with China's previous warnings against NATO-like alliances in the Asia-Pacific region, advocating for inclusive cooperation instead of exclusive cliques.

Interestingly India is represented by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi high lighting the importance of ASEAN to India's Act east Policy.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## ASEAN A KEY PILLAR OF 'ACT EAST' POLICY: MODI

**CONTEXT:** The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is an "important pillar" of India's Act East policy, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He commented this just before he left for the 20th ASEAN – India Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Jakarta.

### THE STORY SO FAR

During the visit, Modi is set to meet with leaders from the 10 ASEAN countries and engage in discussions at the EAS summit, involving leaders from ASEAN nations, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia, and the U.S. He aims to discuss various regional issues, including food and energy security, environment, health, and digital transformation, highlighting the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership formed last year. After the summits, Modi will promptly return to Delhi in preparation for the G-20 Summit.

India thanked Indonesia for accommodating both events in one morning to facilitate Modi's participation. Meanwhile, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Jakarta, discussing East Asia Summit and G20 matters, notably the disagreement over Ukraine in the Leaders' declaration.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Modi is attending both ASEAN summit and East Asia Summit, while both US President and Chinese President are giving a miss to the event. This is important in the context that all the three powers, US, China and India are vying for influence in the Indo – Pacific.

## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

## 'INDIA' AND 'BHARAT' RETAINED TO ALIGN VARIED VIEWS IN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

**CONTEXT:** Debates have erupted across the country after President Draupadi Murmu had used the name Bharat to send invitations to G20 nations.

**BACKGROUND:** Constituent assembly debates highlight that the names India and Bharat were retained to align contrasting voices. The debates happened while discussing article (1) of the Constitution. For some members, the name India, retained a sense of familiarity and continuity, especially among foreign nations.

### Union Of India

B.R. Ambedkar, the head of the committee drafting India's Constitution, opposed an amendment to Article 1(1) that proposed renaming the country as the 'Union of India.' He argued that 'India' had been the country's name historically and during its tenure as a member of the United Nations, and all international agreements had been signed under this name.

However, there were others who believed that adopting the name 'Bharat' would not hinder the country's progress. Member Seth Govind Das clarified that supporting the name 'Bharat' did not signify a backward-looking approach, contrary to the beliefs of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and some other members.

### Befitting our history

During the Constituent Assembly debates, proponents of renaming India as 'Bharat' argued that it would align with the nation's rich history and culture. They believed this change wouldn't hinder progress or scientific advancements and noted that even the Chinese traveler Hiuen-Tsang had referred to the country as 'Bharat' in his writings.

### Varied amendments

In the Constituent Assembly debates, Member Shibban Lal Saxena proposed an amendment to change the name of the Union to 'Bharat' and make Hindi in the Devanagari script the national language of 'Bharat.' The debates concluded with the addition of 'Bharat' to Article 1(1), which now reads 'India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States.' This decision led to a controversy when a G-20 dinner invitation used the name 'President of Bharat.' Some members had also suggested replacing 'States' in Article 1 with 'Pradesh,' but Pandit Nehru opposed this, stating that 'Pradesh' lacked a clear definition and 'State' was a more precise and well-understood term, both domestically and internationally.

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## UKRAINE IS TOP PRIORITY FOR EUROPEAN UNION, SAYS OFFICIAL

**CONTEXT:** G-20 Summit is being hosted by New Delhi. The European Union is bargaining to highlight the issue of the Ukraine war in global forums.

**BACKGROUND:** Ever since the eruption of the Russia Ukraine conflict, the European Union has been trying to highlight Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's participation. Host of G20 meeting India has refused to accept this request.

**STORY SO FAR:** The EU aims to address the Ukraine conflict and expressed a desire for President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's participation in the summit, although they respect the host's decision. The official emphasized the importance of Ukraine's sovereignty and called for an end to the Russian military campaign.

The EU indicated that India's proposed text for negotiating an outcome document was insufficient for the G-7 and the EU.

The summit in Delhi is expected to involve intense negotiations on this issue, given the significant global impact of the Ukraine crisis since Russia's military actions began in February 2022.

Russia has previously expressed reservations about discussing political issues at the G-20. But the EU believes it is the appropriate platform for addressing the Ukraine crisis.

The EU is actively advocating for the African Union's membership in the G-20. This move has garnered support from various stakeholders, including the U.S., Russia, France, and India.

## ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

## INDIA DROPS TARIFFS ON U.S. LENTILS, ALMONDS AHEAD OF BIDEN'S VISIT

**CONTEXT:** India has dropped the retaliatory customs tariffs it had imposed on imports of some American goods such as almonds and lentils, effective September 6.

India raised import duties on 28 products from the U.S. in June 2019, after the latter had increased its customs duties on certain steel and aluminium products. In a notification issued on September 5, the Finance Ministry dropped some of these tariff increases "on being satisfied that it is necessary in the public interest so to do".

During his state visit to the U.S. in June, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Biden administration had agreed to resolve six bilateral trade disputes that were pending at the World Trade Organization and unwind the tariff hikes imposed on some U.S. products, including walnuts, almonds, and apples. The Almond Board of California (ABC) welcomed the move in a statement, noting that the import duties on their almond shipments to India will now go back to ₹35 a kg on in-shell and ₹100 a kg of kernels. India had raised the applied tariff rates on U.S. almonds to ₹41 a kg on in-shell and ₹120 a kg on kernels.

## ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

## VIABILITY GAP FUNDING FOR BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE GETS GOVT. NOD

**CONTEXT:** The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for the development of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

The programme will support battery-energy storage capacity of 4,000 mega-watts hours, to be developed by 2030-31, Information Minister Anurag Thakur said, adding that the government will offer incentives worth up to 40% of capital costs to companies setting up manufacturing units.

**Budgetary support:** The funding for the development of BESS scheme, with an initial outlay of ₹9,400 crore, including a Budgetary support of ₹3,760 crore, signified the government's commitment to sustainable energy solutions. A minimum of 85% of the BESS project capacity would be made available to discoms. The selection of BESS developers for VGF grants would be carried out through a transparent, competitive-bidding process.

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