

## NEWS ROUND UP



## NATIONAL MEDIA

### Climate risks: RBI moots common pool of projects

14/03/2025

Source: **Business Standard**



Climate

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is close to finalising disclosure norms for regulated entities to outline their climate risk management plan, and a guidance note for lenders to analyse climate scenarios and stress test for those risks, Governor Sanjay Malhotra said. Stressing the need for regulated entities to consider creating a common pool of bankable projects for climate-related finance, Malhotra said: “One of the oft-cited constraints to adequate flow of climate-related finance has been the lack of bankable projects... Thus, creation of a common pool of such bankable projects will have multi-fold benefits for the entire ecosystem.”

### US tariff hikes to force pharma firms to shut down or consolidate: Rubix Data

14/03/2025

Source: **FINANCIAL EXPRESS**



Pharmaceutical

The Indian pharma sector is facing the prospects of closures and consolidation given the tariff hikes proposed by the US, said a note from Rubix Data Sciences. The higher tariffs will increase the production costs and render the locally-made drugs less competitive in the US market as compared to alternatives from other countries. The smaller pharma companies operating on tight margins would face considerable pressure. Many low-margin generic drugs may become unprofitable, forcing companies to stop sales or exit certain product segments,” the note said.

## GDP growth to cross 6.5% in FY26, says Moody's



13/03/2025

Source:  **FINANCIAL EXPRESS**

Economy

Moody's ratings said India's economic growth will exceed 6.5% in the next fiscal, up from 6.3% this year, on higher government capex and consumption boost from tax cuts and interest rate reduction. Projecting a stable outlook for the banking sector, Moody's said although the operating environment of Indian banks will remain favourable in the next fiscal, their asset quality will deteriorate moderately after substantial improvements in recent years, with some stress in unsecured retail loans, microfinance loans and small business loans. Banks' profitability will remain adequate as declines in net interest margins (NIMs) are likely to be marginal amid modest rate cuts, it said.

## Shrinking AI: India Inc rushes to smaller-scale models

13/03/2025

Source:  **mint**



Technology

What do four Indian companies—two edtech platforms, a fitness tech startup and a cloud tech company—have in common? The short answer: They are developing smaller-scale artificial intelligence (AI) tools to provide personalized offerings to users. While these and other Indian companies go all in on AI, many are developing and customizing small language models (SLMs) because off-the-shelf AI tools either fall short of their needs or are too wide-ranging for their functions, experts told Mint. Aakash Educational Services Ltd, Physics Wallah, Healthify and Zoho Corp. are among those betting big on such tools, also known as internal foundational AI models.



## US-India spar over e-com business models, policies

13/03/2025

Source: **mint**

E-Commerce

American trade negotiators are pushing for a level playing field for US-based e-commerce companies such as Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart with Indian firms such as Reliance, two people aware of the matter said. The discussions, held during trade talks between the two countries in Washington till 8 March, did not succeed in resolving the differences, the people cited above said on condition of anonymity. However, both sides have agreed to continue the discussion. “The issue of providing more access and a level playing field to US-based e-commerce firms came into discussion during the recent talks for a bilateral trade agreement in Washington,” said the first person.

## Govt weighs nil GST for health & life insurance, industry eyes 12%

13/03/2025

Source: **mint**

GST

There is unanimity on the need to reduce the goods and services tax (GST) on health and life insurance premia from 18%, but consensus eludes on what the final rate should be: nil, 5% or 12%. The central government is open to fully exempting health and life insurance premia from the GST, said two persons aware of the development. But the insurance industry, at a meeting with finance ministry officials last week, proposed 12% as it would allow companies to fully claim credit against GST paid on inputs, the people said, speaking on the condition of anonymity. Some state ministers, however, are batting for 5%, arguing that would cushion the impact on the exchequer.

## India's situation on tariff not same as China, Mexico, Canada, says govt



12/03/2025

Source: [Business Line](#)

### Trade

The government's position on tariff threats by the US is based on multiple factors ranging from the fact that no concrete measure has so far been effected against India, to the US administration's openness to negotiations on the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA), being worked out between the two countries. As explained by Commerce Secretary Sunil Bartwal to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs on Monday evening, the government's position is informed by the fact that the US has so far not imposed any India-specific tariffs. Second, India's situation is not comparable with Canada, Mexico or China on whom specific measures have been announced by the US.

## Retail inflation likely to drop further to around 4% in Feb

12/03/2025

Source: [Business Line](#)



### Economy

As food prices continue to slide, retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is likely to have dropped further to around 4 per cent in February. Retail inflation was 4.3 per cent in January, which was the lowest in five months. If rates fall below 4 per cent, it would be for the first time since August when headline number has fallen below the median of targeted inflation range of 4 per cent. Also, this is a big factor for consideration by the Monetary Policy Committee in deciding on another policy rate cut. In February, for the first time in five years, the Committee lowered the policy rate by 25 basis points.

## To get past US tariffs, India to take FTA route

12/03/2025

Source:

ET



Trade

As India and the US negotiate a trade pact, both sides will focus on increasing market access, reducing import duty and non-tariff barriers apart from enhancing supply chain integration, the government informed Parliament.

“Both countries plan to negotiate a mutually beneficial, multi-sector bilateral trade agreement,” minister of state for commerce and industry Jitin Prasada said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha, adding that as on date, reciprocal tariffs have not been imposed by the US on India.

## At sea on US tariffs, incentives in works to check decline in exports

12/03/2025

Source:

ET



Trade

India is considering incentives for exporters to arrest a decline in outbound shipments and mitigate potential impact of reciprocal tariff plans by the Trump administration from April amid some exporters holding back orders to the US due to the prevailing uncertainty, said an official. These incentives could be part of the Export Promotion Mission announced in the budget and are likely to be notified in a month. India's goods exports fell every month since November. US President Donald Trump has said his administration would impose reciprocal tariffs on trading partners, including India, from April 2. This would raise US import taxes to match tariffs trading partners impose on American goods.

## Goyal may soon be back in US with fresh trade offer



12/03/2025

Source: **Business Standard**

Trade

Union Commerce and Industry visit Washington later this month with a revised list of tariff reductions that India is willing to offer, according to people aware of the matter. The visit would aim to shield India from the impact of reciprocal tariffs — designed to match other countries' tariffs, taxes, and non-tariff barriers - which the Donald Trump administration plans to implement from April 2. The US visit, Goyal's second in less than a month, signals New Delhi's urgency to defer the imposition of reciprocal tariffs. The minister had last week met key Trump administration officials in the US.

## No commitment to US on tariff cuts; deal talks on: Govt

11/03/2025

Source: **Business Standard**

Trade



In its first official response to US president Donald Trump's recent claim that India had agreed to cut its tariffs way down, the Union government told a parliamentary panel that New Delhi had not made any commitment to the US on reducing tariffs. The government conveyed to the panel that negotiations were still on and that India had sought time until September, while clarifying that the Trump administration had not set a deadline of April 2. Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal told the panel members that India could reduce tariffs on some of the items, such as nuts, but would protect its dairy industry. However, any reduction in tariffs will be done bilaterally and not replicated for multilateral agreements.



## GST council may rejig rates on steady growth in domestic mop-up



10/03/2025

Source: [Business Line](#)

### Economy

Consistent good growth in GST collections from domestic sources is likely to nudge the GST Council to effect a rate rejig in its next meeting. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said work on rationalising tax rates and slabs is almost finalised and the matter will be taken up in the Council's next meeting, which is scheduled to take place next month. She said that the revenue neutral rate (RNR) has come down from 15.8% at the time of the launch GST on July 1, 2017, to 1.4% in 2023. 'It will come down even further down,' the minister added. Data from GSTN showed that barring December, collections through domestic sources during the last five months have been in the excess of ₹ 1.40 lakh crore.

## Zero tariff on US imports could boost India electronics market

10/03/2025

Source: [FINANCIAL EXPRESS](#)



### Trade

The US's move to impose reciprocal tariffs is being seen by analysts as a strategic opportunity to attract electronics manufacturers from China to India. However, they said New Delhi can fully capitalise on this only if it reduces import duties on US electronics to zero, matching Washington's near-zero tariff. Currently, India imposes a 16.5% basic customs duty (BCD) on electronics imports from the US, while the US levies a mere 0.4% duty on Indian exports. Lowering tariffs on US imports could make India an even more attractive destination for companies like Apple and Motorola to manufacture and export their products. Since the ongoing tariff war is primarily between the US and China, India could use this as an opportunity to attract manufacturers shifting away from China.



## New drug export rule a bitter pill for sector: Pharma body

10/03/2025

Source:

**Pharmaceutical**

The Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council (Pharmexcil) has sought a review of a new rule for drug exports that requires a product registration certificate from the national regulatory agency of the importing country or approval from the Indian regulator compulsory for issuing a no-objection certificate for shipments. The amendment will significantly strain India's pharmaceutical export sector, potentially diverting trade to other nations with less stringent regulations and may lead to illicit and clandestine dealings, said Raja Bhanu, director-general of Pharmexcil, which works under the ministry of commerce & industry.

## India-EU to start 10th round of FTA talks

10/03/2025

Source: **mint****Trade**

India and the 27-nation European Union (EU) bloc will start the 10th round of negotiations for a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) in Brussels amid Trump tariff threats, according to an official. The talks are expected to focus on resolving remaining issues so that the agreement can be finalized by the end of this year. During the recent visit of EU commissioner for trade and economic security Maros Sefcovic, the two sides discussed ways to accelerate efforts towards a balanced and mutually beneficial trade pact. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen last month agreed to conclude the ambitious India-EU free trade deal by this year amid fears of the Trump administration's threat of higher tariffs.

# INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

## Trump's team pursues economic shock therapy

13/03/2025

Source: **FT**



Economy

Donald Trump and his economic advisers are attempting to radically reshape the US economy from a consumption behemoth with a huge trade deficit to a manufacturing powerhouse. The pivot, focused on aggressive tariffs and cuts to government spending, has sent US equities reeling and stirred concerns about a slowdown in growth in the world's largest economy. But Trump has insisted he will press ahead. "Markets are going to go up and they're going to go down but you know what, we have to rebuild our country," he said. Levies against America's largest trading partners were designed to boost domestic jobs and industrial production.

## Starmer rejects instant US counter-tariffs

12/03/2025

Source: **FT**



Economy

Sir Keir Starmer will not impose immediate counter-tariffs against Washington if Donald Trump hits Britain with his 25% global levy on steel and aluminium imports to the US. Downing Street said the UK premier would take a "cool-headed" approach as he tries to keep Britain out of any wider trade war. "You won't get immediate counter-tariffs," said one UK official. Starmer urged the US president in a phone call not to target British steel and aluminium makers, but was braced for the first Trump tariffs to be imposed on the UK. The prime minister has pinned his hopes on Trump exempting the UK from wider tariffs as part of a possible US-UK economic deal - initially focused on technology - discussed by the two in the White House last month.

## Retaliatory Chinese tariffs on US agriculture products take effect



Trade

11/03/2025

Source: **The Washington Post**

Chinese tariffs on a wide array of US agriculture products took effect Monday as Beijing remains defiant in the face of U.S. pressure - while urging Washington to come to the negotiating table. China's decision to impose tariffs of up to 15% on products including corn, soybeans and beef targets some of the United States' most important exports to the world's second-largest economy. The retaliation against President Donald Trump's move to raise tariffs on all Chinese goods to at least 20% marks another escalation in a mounting trade battle that has no end in sight. Behind the rapid-fire actions and public bravado, however, Beijing is eager to strike a deal and has been scrambling to find out what Trump wants, whom to speak to and whether it can avert serious damage to its slowing economy.

## Wall St plunges after Trump's refusal to rule out recession

11/03/2025

Source: **FT**



Economy

Wall Street stocks tumbled as a sell-off triggered by investor fears over the impact of President Donald Trump's policies on the US economy intensified. The S&P 500 dropped 2.8% by late trading as big US banks ditched their previous bullish forecasts for stocks this year. The index fell 3.1% last week, marking its worst weekly performance in six months. The Nasdaq tech index sank 4.2%, on course for its worst day in two-and-a-half years. It is down more than 13% from its December peak, leaving it in correction territory. The latest falls, which also dragged down markets in Europe and Asia, came after Trump on Sunday declined to rule out a recession or a rise in inflation as he dismissed business concerns over lack of clarity on his tariff plans.



## GOP pushes to unite on funding-cut plan supported by Trump



10/03/2025

Source: **WSJ**

International Affairs

Republicans are charging ahead with a proposal endorsed by President Trump that would keep the government funded into the fall while reducing spending, setting up a clash with Democrats already steaming over sharp cuts to federal jobs and programs. The proposal, if it clears a vote in the House and then the Senate, would avoid a government shutdown this weekend and keep federal agencies funded through Sept. 30. The House measure lowers nondefense discretionary spending by \$13 billion from the 2024 funding level, or 18% less, while increasing defense spending by about \$6 billion.

## Trump reverses course on two key US climate pledges

10/03/2025

Source: **The Washington Post**

Climate



The United States, under President Donald Trump, is withdrawing from a pair of global programs it had once deemed crucial for curtailing fossil fuels and dealing with the consequences of climate change. In a letter obtained by The Washington Post, the United States said it is withdrawing from a board overseeing a fund for vulnerable countries hit by climate disasters. That "loss and damage" fund had stemmed from hard-won diplomatic agreement reached in 2023. Separately, a treasury spokesperson said the United States is pulling out of a global climate finance program - known as the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) — that seeks to help several large developing countries move away from fossil fuels, particularly coal.

## Trump fails to rule out recession and slams businesses urging tariff clarity



10/03/2025

Source: **FT**

International Affairs

Donald Trump has declined to rule out either a recession or higher inflation while dismissing the concerns of business over a lack of clarity on tariffs, after a tumultuous week in which he watered down elements of his aggressive trade agenda. The president insisted industry had "plenty of clarity" and lashed out at companies expressing confusion over his plans. "They always say that — that's like almost a soundbite - they always say that: 'we want clarity,'" Trump said on Fox News. "It sounds good to say, but for years, the globalists, the big globalists, have been ripping off the United States. They've been taking money away from the United States, and all we're doing is getting some of it back."

## Ukrainians to press Washington for resumption of aid in high-stakes talks

10/03/2025

Source: **FT**



Geopolitics

Ukraine will try to persuade the US to resume intelligence and military support in high-stakes bilateral talks this week as Volodymyr Zelenskyy attempts to convince Donald Trump he wants a swift end to the war with Russia. Officials briefed on preparations for the negotiations in Saudi Arabia said Kyiv was set to propose a partial ceasefire with Russia for long-range drone and missile strikes and combat operations in the Black Sea, in the hope that the talks' progress would lead Washington to reverse its decision to freeze intelligence sharing and weaponry supplies. Ukrainian negotiators are travelling to Saudi Arabia after the first days without US support led to the country's troops giving up Russian territory they seized last year in the Kursk region.

## QUOTES OF THE WEEK

- **Chris Wright, US Energy Secretary:** The Trump administration will treat climate change for what it is, a global physical phenomenon that is a side effect of building the modern world. Everything in life involves trade-offs. Everything.
- **Jitin Prasada, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry:** Both countries (India and US) plan to negotiate a mutually beneficial, multi-sector bilateral trade agreement. Both countries would focus on increasing market access, reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers, and enhancing supply chain integration.
- **Stephen Schwarzam, Chairman & CEO, Blackstone:** Unlike some fast-growing economies, India doesn't face severe debt or real estate crises, making its growth more sustainable. Despite market fluctuations and political issues, the long-term trajectory remains positive.
- **Sanjay Malhotra, Governor, RBI:** There are several channels through which climate change risks impact the financial system. All the major types of financial risks - be it credit, market or operational risk - are influenced by climate change.



DATA GRAPHICS

How much inflation did states record in February?

14/03/2025

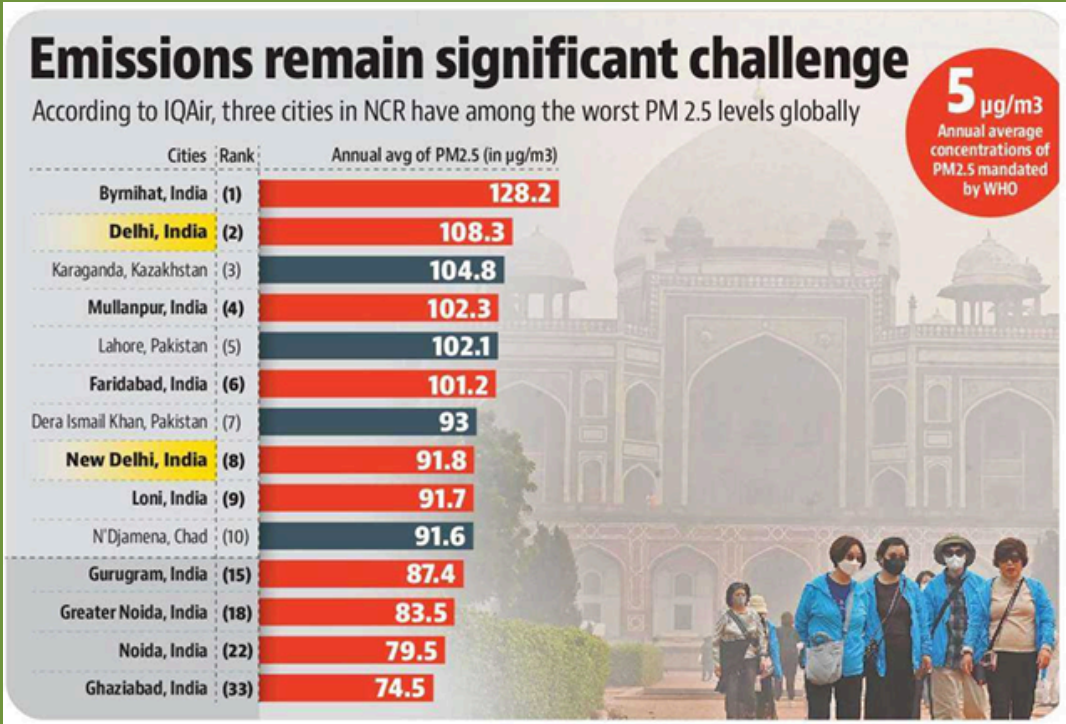
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Emissions remain significant challenge

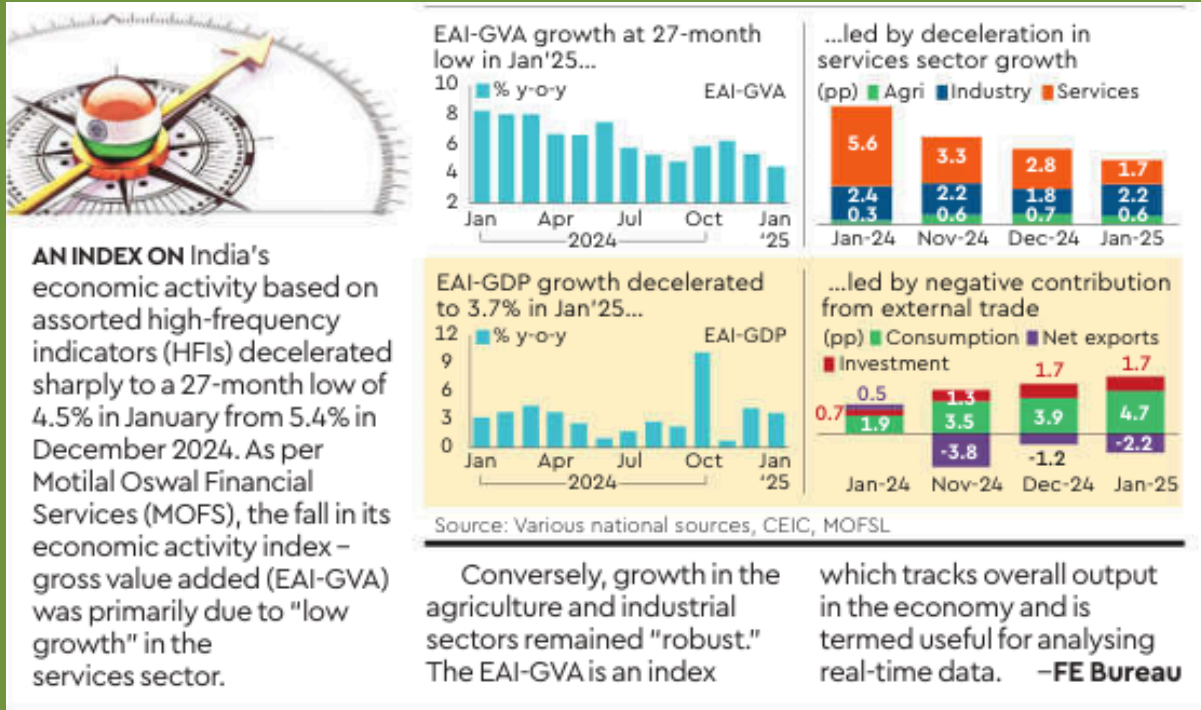
12/03/2025

Source:  Hindustan Times



## Economic activity likely plunged to 27-month low of 4.5% in Jan

12/03/2025

Source:  **FINANCIAL EXPRESS**

## Trump presidency's first 50 days

11/03/2025

Source:  **Hindustan Times**

### Trump Presidency's first 50 days

March 11 marks 50 days back in office for Donald Trump, who has pursued a disruptive policy agenda. From strained alliances to trade tensions and aid cuts, his 'America First' approach is forcing a realignment. Here are the developments that mark significant shifts

#### GEOPOLITICAL UPEHAVAL

- Trump's overtures to Russia, including calls to readmit it to the G8 and lift sanctions, mark a major shift. Meanwhile, tensions are high with European allies over NATO spending and Trump's unpredictable moves.
- Territorial disputes have escalated, with Trump threatening force against Denmark over Greenland and claiming the Panama Canal is Chinese-controlled. His Middle East plans, including clearing Palestinians from Gaza, are equally inflammatory.
- The rift with Ukraine was on stark display in an Oval Office clash between Trump and President Zelenskyy. With the US pursuing unilateral Russia talks, allies fear being sidelined.

#### GLOBAL TRADE TURMOIL

Trump's on-again, off-again tariff threats against key trading partners like China, Canada, Mexico and the EU have spooked markets and stoked trade war fears. Economists warn the uncertainty could hurt consumer confidence, raise prices and chill business investment. India is among countries scrambling to make tweaks to import duties to stave off reciprocal tariffs.

#### DOMESTIC DISRUPTION

Trump's domestic agenda is equally uncompromising. Elon Musk's DOGE agency is aggressively slashing government jobs while facing conflict-of-interest questions over Musk's access and authority. Controversial cabinet picks, like an anti-vaccine HHS head, have sparked outrage. A crackdown on DEI policies across government, including the military, reveals a doubling down on the culture wars.

#### USAID GUTTED

The abrupt dismantling of USAID has slashed over 10,000 jobs and billions in foreign aid, including vital programs for poverty, disease and democracy. Critics call it a devastating blow to US soft power that Musk has branded "criminal." The move raises concerns about global stability and a US retreat from the world stage.

#### WHAT NEXT?

As Trump barrels ahead with his disruptive 'America First' vision, the world is being reshaped in real time. Traditional US allies are scrambling to adapt to a new reality where American leadership and commitment to the global order are in question.

The coming months will be a critical test of whether Trump's geopolitical gambles pay off or unleash further instability. With domestic divisions still raw, it remains to be seen if Trump's base will embrace his transformative agenda or begin to balk as the impact hits home.

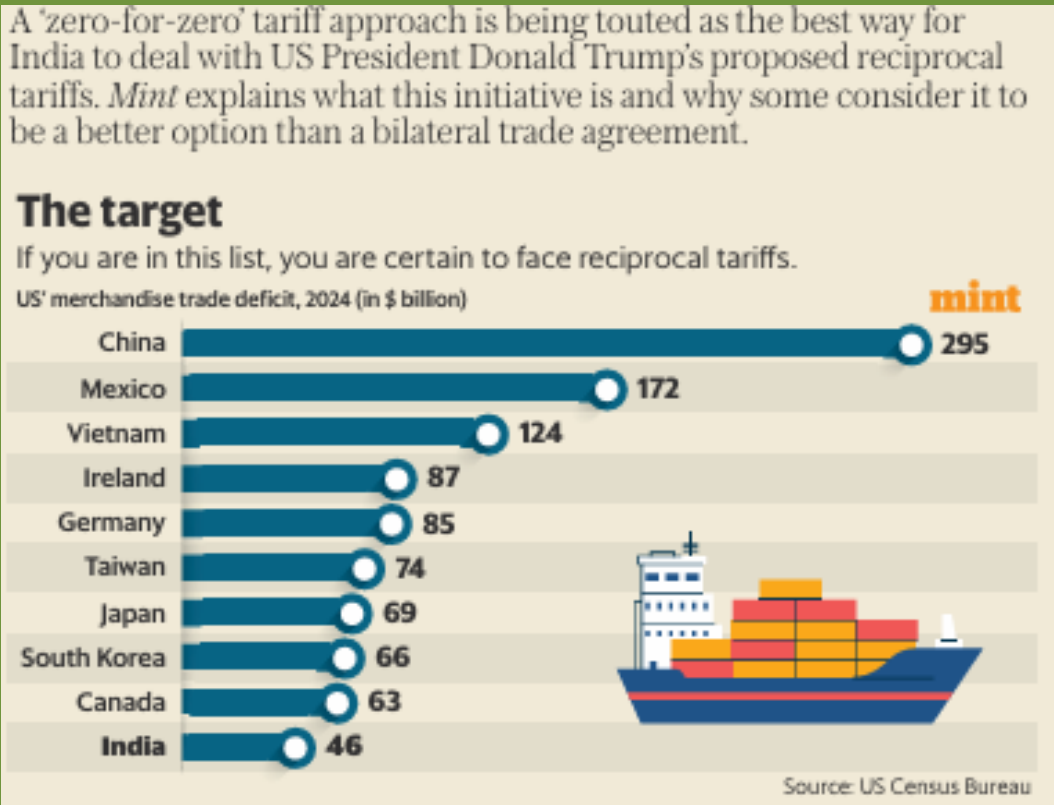
**NO ONE VOTED FOR MUSK!**



Can 'zero-for-zero' approach thwart reciprocal tariffs?

11/03/2025

Source: 



India-EU talks may focus on easing quality control, energy cooperation

10/03/2025

Source: 

