

## CURRENT AFFAIRS: 08.06.2026

### US Proposes 12.5% Tariff on India Over Forced Labour Concerns

The **United States Trade Representative (USTR)** proposed an additional **12.5% tariff on imports from India** and 53 other economies. This action follows an investigation under **Section 301 of the US Trade Act of 1974**, citing the failure of these nations to effectively enforce regulations prohibiting the **import of goods produced using 'forced labour.'**

- **Section 301 of the US Trade Act of 1974:** Under this US investigates and imposes trade sanctions on foreign countries whose trade practices are deemed "**unjustifiable,**" "**unreasonable,**" or **discriminatory,** and which burden US commerce.
  - It allows the US President and the USTR to unilaterally impose tariffs or trade restrictions, often bypassing the **multilateral dispute settlement mechanism of the World Trade Organization (WTO).**
- **India's Stance:** India stringently prohibits forced labour domestically under **Article 23 of the Constitution (Right against Exploitation)** and the **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976.**
  - India maintains that the allegations primarily **stem from global supply chain linkages rather than domestic practices.**
  - India has formally stated that it remains engaged with the US on this matter. The proposed tariffs are not yet final.
- **Reduced Export Competitiveness:** A 12.5% additional duty could make Indian exports more expensive in the US market, particularly affecting **labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, garments, carpets, leather products, and brassware,** as well as **automobiles, electronics, and engineering goods,** due to higher tariff burdens.
- **Supply Chain Disruptions:** Indian firms may need to reduce dependence on Chinese inputs to avoid tariffs, leading to higher sourcing and production costs in the short term.

### Article 23 of Indian Constitution

Article 23 of Indian Constitution clearly declares that trafficking in human beings, begar, and other similar kinds of forced labour are strictly prohibited. Any violation of this mandate is treated as a punishable offence under law. The Article also permits the State to impose compulsory service for public purposes, but only without discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, or class. It applies against both State authorities and private individuals, ensuring that exploitation in any form is constitutionally forbidden.

#### Article 23 of Indian Constitution Provisions

**Article 23 of Indian Constitution contains two clauses defining prohibition and a limited exception with safeguards against discrimination.**

#### Article 23 (1) - Prohibition:

Traffic in human beings, begar, and similar forced labour are banned, and violation becomes a punishable offence under law.

**Traffic:** It includes buying and selling men, women, and children as commodities, immoral trafficking, prostitution rackets, devadasi practice, and slavery like systems.

**Begar:** Begar refers to compulsory unpaid work historically imposed by landlords or rulers without any remuneration to labourers.

**Forced Labour:** It covers physical force, legal pressure, and economic compulsion forcing a person to work against his or her will.

**Minimum Wage:** Paying less than minimum wages has been treated judicially as a form of forced labour under this Article.

**Applicability:** Protection is available to citizens and non citizens alike and operates against both government authorities and private persons.

### Article 23 (2)- Exception:

The State may impose compulsory service for public purposes such as military or social service.

**Non Discrimination:** While imposing compulsory service, discrimination solely on religion, race, caste, or class is constitutionally prohibited.

**Age:** The text of Article 23 does not specify any age limit within its wording.

**Legislative Support:** Laws such as the Bonded Labour System Abolition Act 1976 and Immoral Traffic Prevention Act 1956 were enacted to implement its mandate.

## Article 23 of Indian Constitution Case Laws

Judiciary has interpreted Article 23 of Indian Constitution broadly to expand protection against exploitation.

**People's Union for Democratic Rights v. Union of India:** Supreme Court held that force includes economic compulsion, and paying below minimum wages amounts to forced labour.

**Sanjit Roy v. State of Rajasthan:** Court ruled that exemption from Minimum Wages Act in famine relief works was unconstitutional under Article 23.

**Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India:** Supreme Court directed states to identify, release, and rehabilitate bonded labourers systematically.

**Deena v. Union of India:** Forced prison labour without remuneration was held violative of Article 23 protections.

**Chandra v. State of Rajasthan:** Rajasthan High Court invalidated compulsory unpaid village service ordered by a Sarpanch.

**Dulal Samanta v. D.M. Howrah:** Court upheld compulsory police service as valid public purpose, not begar or trafficking.

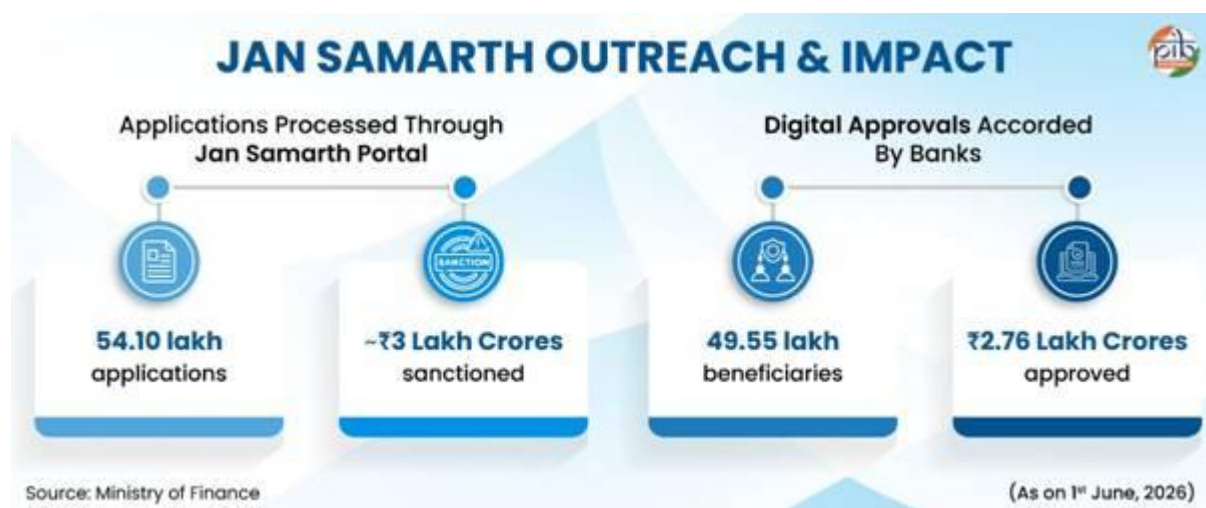
**Devendra Nath Gupta v. State of Madhya Pradesh:** Educational survey and election duties without extra pay were treated as valid public service.

**Vishal Jeet v. Union of India:** Court emphasized protection of victims of trafficking and recognised wage denial as forced labour

## 4 years of Jan Samarth Portal

Launched in June 2022, the **Jan Samarth Portal** has completed 4 years as a **single-window digital platform** for credit-linked government schemes, enabling easier access to institutional credit.

- **Objective:** The portal was created to **expand the reach of government-sponsored credit schemes** and streamline the loan delivery process through a simplified, technology-driven system.
- **Target Beneficiaries:** The platform supports **aspiring entrepreneurs, women-led enterprises, agri-entrepreneurs, and small businesses**, especially from **Tier-2, Tier-3 towns and rural India**.
- **Languages and Accessibility:** The portal is available in **8 languages**—English, Hindi, Gujarati, Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, Bengali, and Kannada, to improve access for diverse users.
- **Schemes Covered:** It provides a unified gateway for **16 credit-linked Central Government schemes** across agriculture, agri-infrastructure, housing, renewable energy, business activity and livelihood loans.
- **Member Lending Institutions:** The portal has onboarded 269 Member Lending Institutions, including **public sector banks, private banks, NBFCs, regional rural banks, small finance banks, cooperative banks and one all-India financial institution**.
- **Integration with Databases:** The portal is integrated with **UDYAM, UIDAI, AgriStack, Startup Portal of DPIIT, CBDT, GST, and CGTMSE** for faster verification and processing.
- **Significance:** Jan Samarth ensures **financial inclusion, ease of access to institutional credit, digital empowerment of citizens, and growth of rural entrepreneurship**, aligning with the government's objectives of inclusive economic development.



### Misuse of Ordinance-Making Power

- **Context (TH | IE):** The promulgation of Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026 has once again brought the issue of Ordinance-making power misuse into public debate.

### What is an Ordinance?

- An Ordinance is a **temporary law** promulgated by the **President** under **Article 123** when Parliament is not in session and immediate action is necessary. Similar powers exist for **Governor** under **Article 213**.
- **Validity:** An Ordinance **ceases** to operate **six weeks after Parliament reassembles**, or earlier if disapproved by both Houses, or if the President withdraws it.
- **Objective:** The power was intended as an exceptional constitutional mechanism rather than a routine legislative practice.

### Concerns Associated with Ordinance

- **Bypassing Parliamentary Deliberation:** Frequent use of the ordinance route weakens Parliament's role as the central institution of democratic debate and **erodes the culture of legislative discussion**.
- **Executive Overreach:** Frequent use of Ordinances increases executive dominance and reduces legislative scrutiny in governance.
- **Decline of Parliamentary Democracy:** Frequent Ordinances reduce reduces Parliament to a reactive body that merely **rubber-stamps executive choices**. This compromises legislative scrutiny, institutional accountability, and broader democratic engagement.
- **Re-promulgation of Ordinances:** This effectively allows the executive to continue governing without parliamentary approval. Such practices **undermine constitutional morality**.
- **Threat to Separation of Powers:** Excessive executive influence may disturb the constitutional balance among Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary.

### Supreme Court (SC) Judgements

**D.C. Wadhwa vs State of Bihar (1986):** SC held that governance by re-promulgated ordinances is a "fraud on the Constitution."

**Krishna Kumar Singh vs State of Bihar (2017):** A seven-judge bench ruled that ordinance-making power cannot be used as a parallel source of legislation.

**A.K. Roy vs Union of India (1982):** It clarified that any Ordinance issued in bad faith or for an ulterior motive remains open to judicial review.

**1. With reference to the Lipulekh dispute, consider the following statements:**

1. Nepal's claim over Lipulekh is based on the Sugauli Treaty of 1816.
2. The core dispute arises from differing interpretations regarding the source of the Mahakali River.
3. India supports resolving the dispute through a trilateral mechanism involving China.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (A) 1 and 2 only  
 (B) 2 and 3 only  
 (C) 1 and 3 only  
 (D) 1, 2 and 3

**2. Which of the following anti-colonial uprisings involved the publication of the Tiruchirappalli Proclamation (1801) calling for unified resistance against the British?**

- (A) Velu Thampi's Revolt  
 (B) Paika Rebellion  
 (C) Poligar Wars  
 (D) Chuar Uprising

**3. Consider the following pairs:**

| Revolt               | Leader            |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Kol Mutiny        | Buddho Bhagat     |
| 2. Santhal Rebellion | Sidhu and Kanhu   |
| 3. Khondo Uprisings  | Bakshi Jagabandhu |
| 4. Chuar Uprising    | Durjan Singh      |

How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (A) Only one  
 (B) Only two  
 (C) Only three  
 (D) All four

**4. The Kundara Proclamation, often regarded as an early call against British rule, was associated with:**

- (A) Bakshi Jagabandhu  
 (B) Velu Thampi  
 (C) Karam Shah  
 (D) Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareilly

**5. Which one of the following movements united Muslim peasantry against East India Company land policies?**

- (A) Wahabi Movement
- (B) Pagal Panthis
- (C) Faraizi Revolt
- (D) Kuka Movement

**6. Consider the following statements regarding Mission Drishti:**

1. It is India's largest privately developed Earth Observation Satellite.
2. It can generate optical-like images using AI from SAR data when cloud cover obstructs visibility.
3. It is the world's first satellite to simultaneously capture optical and SAR images of the same location.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (A) 1 and 2 only
- (B) 2 and 3 only
- (C) 1 and 3 only
- (D) 1, 2 and 3

**7. Which among the following is NOT correctly matched?**

- (A) Vellore Mutiny – Military dress regulations
- (B) Barrackpore Mutiny – Refusal to cross the sea for Myanmar campaign
- (C) Mutiny of 34th NI – Withdrawal of Bhatta allowance
- (D) Paika Rebellion – Subsidiary Alliance burden in Travancore

**8. Consider the following statements regarding Hantavirus:**

1. It is primarily transmitted through mosquitoes.
2. There is currently no approved vaccine for the disease.
3. Andes virus has shown rare cases of human-to-human transmission.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (A) 2 only
- (B) 2 and 3 only
- (C) 1 and 2 only
- (D) 1, 2 and 3

**9. Which of the following uprisings resulted in the creation of the Santhal Pargana as a separate district?**

- (A) Kol Mutiny
- (B) Paika Rebellion
- (C) Santhal Rebellion
- (D) Chuar Uprising

**10. With reference to the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, consider the following statements:**

1. Mount Kailash is located in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China.
2. Mount Kailash is higher than Mount Everest.
3. The Kora around Mount Kailash passes through Dolma La Pass.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (A) 1 and 3 only  
(B) 2 and 3 only  
(C) 1 and 2 only  
(D) 1, 2 and 3

**Answer Key**

1. A
2. C
3. C
4. B
5. C
6. D
7. D
8. B
9. C
10. A