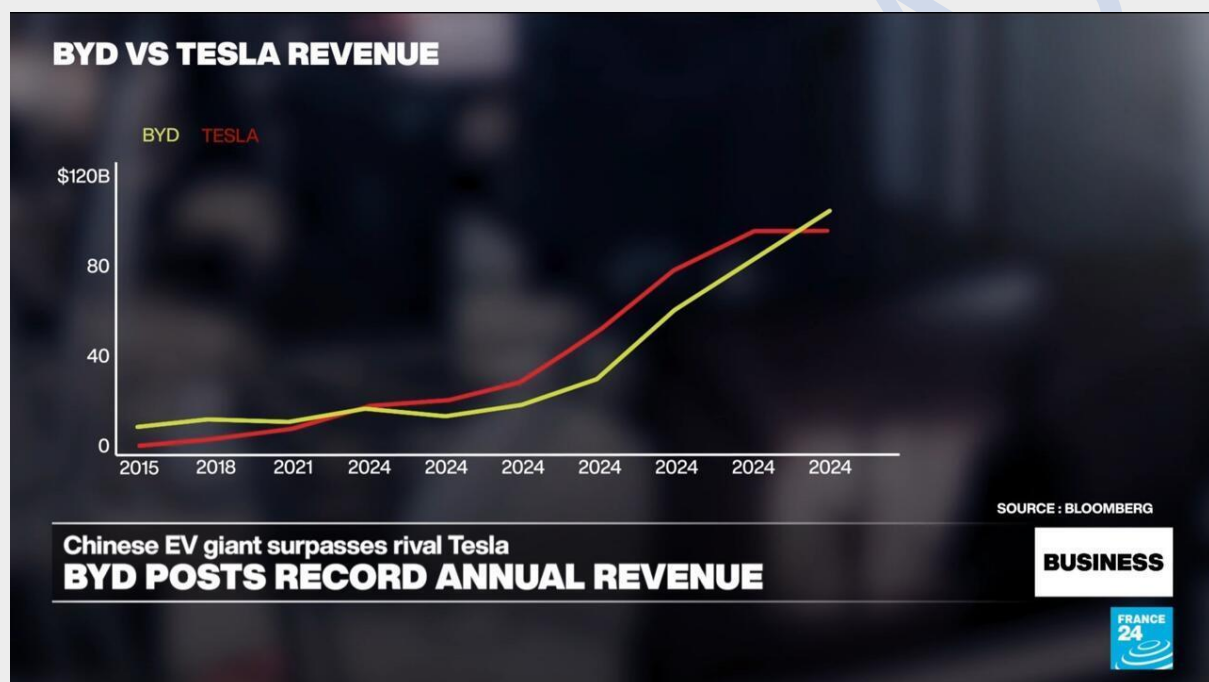


1. Rise of Chinese carmaker BYD

Why in News?

Wang Chuanfu's BYD — literally "Build Your Dream" — has become one of the largest auto companies in the world. The Shenzhen-based carmaker reported revenue of \$107 billion for 2024, beating Tesla's revenue of \$97.7 billion for the year. And by selling 4.3 million electric and hybrid cars, it edged out Honda to become the sixth-largest automaker in the world by vehicle sales. Only Toyota, Volkswagen, Hyundai-Kia, General Motors and Stellantis (the parent-company of brands like Jeep, Chrysler, and Fiat) were ahead.



Started as Battery maker

BYD was established in 1995 by chemist Wang Chuanfu who saw an opportunity to start a rechargeable battery company to challenge Japan's dominance in the industry. Wang founded the firm after taking a \$350,000 loan from his cousin, and the company initially built batteries for mobile phones and power tools.

Its first success came in 2000 when it started to supply batteries to Motorola, one of the biggest mobile phone companies of the time.

Beginning of car manufacturing

It was not until 2003 that BYD decided to manufacture cars as well. That year, it bought a majority stake in a failing state-run car company, Xi'an Qinchuan Auto Co. Although investors of BYD were not happy about the development, Wang — who did not even know how to drive at the time — saw cars as a natural extension of the company's battery business.

The company got a boost after Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway made a \$230 million investment in BYD in 2008.

Today, the company manufactures both full EVs and plug-in hybrids, and does what no other car manufacturer has managed to do yet: sell (relatively) affordable electric cars at a profit. It exports its cars to around 95 countries, including India.

Hurdles

With its increasing dominance in the global market, BYD has already started to face some new hurdles.

The United States and European Union have put protectionist tariffs on the company's cars being exported from China, fearing BYD and other Chinese will severely impact local automakers. While the US has imposed a 100% tariff on Chinese EV imports, the EU has put a 17% tariff. It remains to be seen how BYD tackles these tariffs to expand its market in these regions.

Another issue has been the company's unimpressive sales in India. Last year, BYD had a 3% market share and a 40% increase in sales, reaching 2,818 units.

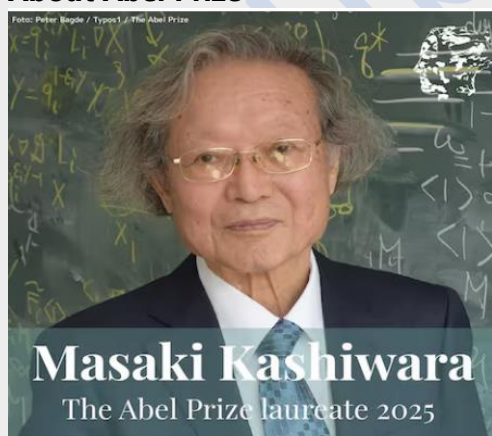
One reason for BYD's underperformance has been the absence of its manufacturing plant in India. As a result, its cars come with a hefty 110% import duty. The government is currently mulling over reducing this duty, but there has been no official announcement about the matter.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Miscellaneous

Source: Indian Express

2. 2025 Abel Prize

About Abel Prize



First awarded in 2003, the Abel prize is often considered to be an equivalent of the Nobel prize, which does not have a category for mathematics. It has been modelled as such.

The prize includes a monetary award of 7.5 million kroner (roughly \$720,000) and a glass plaque designed by Norwegian artist Henrik Haugan.

The Abel Prize "recognises pioneering scientific achievements in mathematics". It is named after Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel (1802-29), who in his short life made pioneering contributions to multiple fields.

Establishment of Prize

The prize was established by the Norwegian Parliament in 2002, on Abel's 200th anniversary. The Abel Prize is awarded and administered by the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters on behalf of the Norwegian government. The recipients are chosen by an expert committee appointed by the Academy under the advice of the International Mathematical Union (IMU) and the European Mathematical Society (EMS).

2025 Abel Prize

Japanese mathematician Masaki Kashiwara was awarded this year's Abel Prize.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Miscellaneous

Source: Indian Express

3. Death sentences to Indian nationals abroad and the role of Indian government in seeking their commutation

Introduction

On March 3, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) informed that the execution of Shahzadi Khan, an Indian national sentenced to death in the UAE for the alleged murder of an infant, was already carried out. The Ministry's confirmation came as a response to a petition filed by her father Shabbir Khan. In less than a week, the Ministry confirmed that two more Indian nationals, convicted in separate cases, were also executed in the UAE.

SHE WAS PRESSURED: DAD; DID OUR BEST: GOVT

➤ MEA said **Shahzadi Khan (pic)**, was handed over to Abu Dhabi police on Feb 10, 2023, and was sentenced to death on July 31, 2023. Since then, she was lodged in Al Wathba jail

➤ **Father's Petition In Court:**



Shahzadi's father Shabbir Khan, a resident of UP's Banda, claimed she was inadequately represented in local courts & that she was pressured into confessing to murder

CENTRE'S RESPONSE

“We did our best. We hired a law firm there to represent her in court. But the laws there treat the death of an infant very severely —**Addl SG**

“Embassy provided all possible legal assistance to her, including sending mercy petitions & pardon requests to UAE —**MEA**

How many are on death row abroad?

As per the data disclosed by the MEA in Rajya Sabha on March 20, a total of 49 Indians are currently on death row. The number of Indians awarded death sentences by foreign courts is the highest in the UAE with 25 Indian nationals awaiting their sentences, followed by 11 in Saudi Arabia.

What has been India's response?

The MEA, in its reply to the Rajya Sabha, mentioned that Indian Missions abroad provide all possible assistance to Indian citizens sentenced by foreign courts.

Explaining the MEA's approach to such cases, Talmiz Ahmad, India's former Ambassador to Oman, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, said, "There are three processes. First is the arrest and the indictment by the police authorities. Second is the prolonged judicial process. There is a third element — pardon by the ruler or the head of the state. When you say someone is on death row, it means the first and second processes have been completed. The judicial process has been completed and the judge has pronounced that sentence. After that, the only thing that is available to the embassy or the person concerned is to appeal to the ruler." The appeal for pardon is made by a family member of the accused and if the family is located in India, they are guided to submit the petition. The Indian embassy then forwards the petition to the foreign office requesting that it be brought to the ruler's attention.

In many Gulf countries, sentences can also be commuted in exchange for blood money. Blood money refers to the compensation paid to the victim's family as an alternative for retribution. But, it has to be accepted by both the state and the aggrieved family. In some cases, the state may refuse to commute the sentence in exchange for blood money based on the nature of the crime.

Can the embassy do more?

Death sentences are given in very exceptional cases such as murder, rape and treason. In countries which have authoritarian systems with nearly non-transparent judicial processes such as Saudi Arabia, the Indian embassy is not informed about the arrest or judicial processes or the pronouncement of the death sentence. The Embassy receives a formal note about the details of the Indian national only after the execution. The embassy's role is further limited when the accused confesses to the crime — circumstances of which often remain unknown. On the other hand, in countries with relatively open judicial systems, the embassy can nominate a lawyer. Whenever required, it also uses welfare funds to provide legal services to those who need it.

Has India intervened successfully in the past?

The government has successfully intervened in several cases. In February last year, eight Indian navy veterans who were sentenced to death by the Qatari government were released following the Indian government's diplomatic efforts and appeals at a higher court. Gurdip Singh, an Indian national arrested on charges of drug trafficking in Indonesia, was sentenced to death in 2005 by the Tangerang court. Singh's appeal was turned down by the High Court of Banten and later the Supreme Court. However, he was spared due to the Indian government's intervention.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Indian Diaspora

Source: The Hindu

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