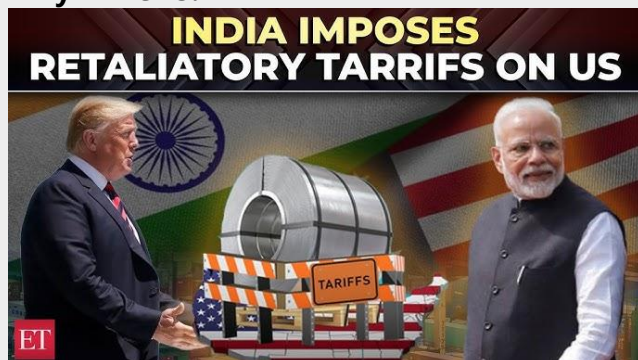


**1. India to Impose Retaliatory Tariffs on U.S. Imports****Why in News?**

India has notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) of its plan to impose tariffs on \$7.6 billion worth of imports from the United States. This move is a direct response to the U.S. decision to raise import duties on steel and aluminium to 25%.

**Background: U.S. Tariff Hike on Metals**

The dispute dates back to 2018 during former U.S. President Donald Trump's first term, when the U.S. imposed tariffs on steel and aluminium imports. In February 2025, Trump, in his second term, increased these tariffs and removed exemptions that were previously granted to many countries.

**India's Stand: Tariffs Violate WTO Rules**

India argues that the U.S. tariffs are essentially safeguard measures — which are meant to protect domestic industries — and must therefore follow WTO rules. India states that the U.S. did not notify these measures to the WTO or hold required consultations.

According to India:

- The U.S. actions violate the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 and the Agreement on Safeguards (AoS).
- The lack of consultations gives India the right to retaliate.
- The tariffs imposed by the U.S. have adversely affected Indian exports.

**India's Response: Tariffs on U.S. Goods**

India plans to suspend trade concessions on selected U.S. products, effectively raising import duties. These retaliatory measures could begin 30 days after the May 9 notification.

**India says:**

- It will target U.S. goods equal to the impact on Indian exports — \$1.91 billion in duties on \$7.6 billion worth of trade.
- It will notify WTO bodies about the next steps.

**Past Retaliation: A Similar Case in 2019**

This is not the first time India has responded with tariffs:

- In June 2019, India imposed higher duties on 28 U.S. products after being removed from the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP).
- These duties were lifted in September 2023, following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: Indian Express

## 2. What has been decided in the Pollachi sexual assault case?

### Introduction



### **All 9 accused found guilty & sentenced to life, a look at infamous 2019 Pollachi sexual assault case**

Six years ago, nine men from Pollachi, Coimbatore, were arrested for blackmailing, sexually assaulting, and videographing young girls and women between 2016 and 2018. The nine men, who have remained behind bars since their arrest, have been prosecuted for multiple offences, including criminal conspiracy, sexual harassment, rape, gang rape, and repeated rape of the same woman. On May 13, the Mahila Court in Coimbatore found all nine accused guilty and sentenced them to life imprisonment. The court also ordered the Tamil Nadu government to pay a compensation of ₹85 lakh to eight survivors of sexual assault.

### **What is the case?**

On February 24, 2019, a college girl lodged a complaint with the Pollachi East police, alleging sexual abuse by four men in a moving car near Pollachi 12 days ago. The 19-year-old was the first survivor to speak up against the group of youngsters, who had allegedly been luring women and sexually assaulting them since 2016. The perpetrators filmed these sexual acts, which they used for further exploitation.

The police took up the investigation and examined the mobile phones and laptops of the accused. The gadgets contained numerous video clips of different women — from students to married women — who had been sexually assaulted at various locations by the accused.

Sensing the gravity of the case, on March 12, 2019, the State government directed the Crime Branch-CID to launch an investigation. Eventually, amid outrage, the then Edappadi K. Palaniswami government transferred the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and the agency took over the probe on April 25, 2019.

### **What did the agency find?**

The central agency arraigned N. Sabarirajan also known as Rishwanth (32), K. Thirunavukkarasu (34), M. Sathish (33), T. Vasanthakumar (30), R. Mani, also known as Manivannan (32), P. Babu (33), T. Haronimus Paul (32), K. Arulanantham (39), and M. Arunkumar as the accused in the case.

It found that Sabarirajan was the key perpetrator who lured the girls and women, including the complainant. The sexual assault of the first complainant, aged 19, took place on February 12, 2019, in a car on Dharapuram Road. They filmed the act and robbed her of a gold chain. The girl informed her family only after the accused demanded sexual favours from her by threatening to leak the video. Numerous videos of sexual assault were found on the laptop of

Sabarirajan and the mobile phone of Thirunavukkarasu. Using these, the police and the CBI identified the other accused and survivors. The case also stirred up a political controversy as Arulanantham had been the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) Pollachi town students' wing secretary. He was expelled from the party after his arrest.

### **Who were the survivors?**

Investigations revealed the accused targeted young girls and women from middle class and lower socio-economic backgrounds. Though the accused are suspected to have sexually exploited numerous women, only eight of them testified. The investigation faced backlash when the then Coimbatore District Superintendent of Police R. Pandiarajan revealed the name of the complainant. It is believed some survivors chose to stay away from the investigation fearing their identities would be made public.

### **How was the trial conducted?**

A special court room facility was created at the Combined Court Complex in Coimbatore for the trial to protect the identities of the survivors. A chamber made of one-way glass prevented others from seeing the survivors during the trial. They were brought to court with extreme care, while the accused were produced through videoconferencing.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Hindu

## **3. Qatar's \$400-million aircraft gift to Trump: Legal, ethical concerns up in the air**

### **Introduction**



In 1839, US President Martin Van Buren was offered two live lions by the Sultan of Morocco. A year later, the Sultan of Oman sent horses, pearls, and other treasures for the President. Van Buren, adhering to the US Constitution, turned to Congress. The lions were sent to a zoo, while the pearls now rest at the Smithsonian.

Almost two centuries later, President Donald Trump is setting the stage to accept a \$400-million gift — a Boeing 747 jet from the royal family of Qatar. The jet, officials say, would serve temporarily as Air Force One and eventually find a home in Trump's presidential library.

The offer has ignited a firestorm, not only because of the staggering value but because it challenges a longstanding tradition of restraint around foreign gifts.

### **All about the luxury jet from Qatar**

The plane in question — the luxury Boeing 747 fitted with three bedrooms, a private lounge, and an executive office — is one of the most extravagant gifts ever offered to a US president. The plane is likely to be re-fitted and used temporarily as Air Force One.

The two Air Force One planes have been in use for almost 40 years, and their revamp has been delayed for various reasons. Trump, who is annoyed by the delays, has called the offer from Qatar "a great gesture" that would be "stupid" to turn down.

Apart from the question of accepting a staggeringly expensive gift, there are two other concerns — the Air Force One is the official vehicle of the US President, and a foreign nation supplying it sits odd with Trump's claims of making the US a manufacturing powerhouse. Then there is the security aspect. The Air Force One is equipped with a variety of defence and communications equipment. Accommodating all of this on a foreign-made, refitted plane would not be easy.

The Trump administration has faced controversies over foreign gifts earlier too. A 2023 House Oversight Committee report found that over 100 items from foreign governments were unaccounted for, including a life-size painting of Trump from El Salvador and golf clubs from Japan valued at over \$250,000. A spokesperson for Trump said the items were received either before or after his presidency.

### **What does the US law say about gifts to the President?**

The US Constitution's Emoluments Clause — Article I, Section 9, Clause 8 — was designed to shield the republic from foreign influence.

The clause reads: "No Title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State."

Besides the clause, there have been a number of laws also by the Congress related to lawmakers accepting foreign gifts, such as the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act of 1966, which means that congressional consent is required for the acceptance of foreign gifts above a certain value.

US law allows federal officials to retain gifts valued under \$480. Anything above that amount is legally considered a gift to the United States, not to the individual. It must be reported and handled through the White House Gift Unit.

If a president desires to keep a gift personally, they can purchase it at fair market value.

### **How have some notable gifts been handled in the past?**

Foreign dignitaries have routinely offered US Presidents numerous gifts — from animals to artwork to antiques. Most of these items are not kept by the president personally, but are instead logged, assessed for value, and often stored in the National Archives or displayed in presidential libraries.

President George W Bush once received 300 pounds of raw lamb from Argentina and a puppy from Bulgaria. Neither remained in the White House. The puppy was rehomed via the National Archives; the lamb, like many food gifts, was reportedly destroyed due to safety concerns.

During Bill Clinton's presidency, the President of Azerbaijan gifted a custom-woven rug featuring portraits of Clinton and his wife Hillary. It now resides in government storage. Barack Obama's gifts ranged from cufflinks to a double-decker bus pencil sharpener, all catalogued and archived.

Even Queen Victoria's gift of the "Resolute Desk" to President Rutherford B Hayes in 1880 — crafted from the timbers of the HMS Resolute — required a diplomatic note and congressional consultation before it took its place in the Oval Office.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: Indian Express

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