

DAILY PT POINTERS

20 November, 2024



The Hindu-Health(GSII)-Page 10

The dangers of high-altitude sickness

How does high-altitude sickness occur? How will a mandatory registration system for tourists visiting the Himalayas improve measures to tackle the illness? How can the sickness be treated? What are some preventive measures one can take before embarking on scaling the Himalayas?

EXPLAINER

Tikender Singh Panwar
Malay Sarkar

The story so far:

In September, a trekker from Idukki, Kerala, died in Uttarakhand while attempting to scale Garur Peak due to respiratory failure. Every year, numerous tourists like this succumb to the effects of high-altitude sickness in the pristine but challenging inner Himalayas. These regions present hidden dangers due to their extreme altitudes, where thinner air and reduced oxygen can lead to potentially fatal conditions.

What is high-altitude sickness?

High-altitude sickness, or Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), occurs when the body cannot acclimatise to high elevations, typically over 8,000 feet (2,400 metres). As altitude increases, the air pressure and oxygen levels decrease, leading to



travellers ascending above 3,000 metres should take a rest day every 3-4 days and avoid increasing their sleeping elevation by more than 500 metres per day.

For travellers at moderate to high risk of AMS, doctors recommend medications like Acetazolamide, which aids acclimatisation by promoting better oxygenation, or Dexamethasone, a steroid that reduces inflammation in severe cases. Those with a history of HAPE may take Nifedipine as a preventive measure, starting a day before ascent. However, no prophylactic medication guarantees complete immunity, and anyone travelling to high altitudes with pre-existing health conditions should first consult with a doctor familiar with altitude-related risks.

What are the treatment strategies?

When high-altitude sickness does develop, the most effective treatment is immediate descent to lower altitudes. Symptoms usually improve significantly with a descent of 300-1,000 metres.

THE GIST

While the Himalayan States witness a steady stream of tourists, healthcare facilities beyond major towns like Shimla are inadequate to handle cases of high-altitude sickness.

The primary cause of high-altitude sickness is rapid ascent without allowing the body time to acclimatise. Gradual ascent, which allows the body to adapt to lower oxygen levels, is the best way to prevent high-altitude illnesses.

To better manage high-altitude tourism, it is essential to implement a mandatory

- **High-Altitude Sickness (Acute Mountain Sickness - AMS):**
- Occurs at elevations above 8,000 feet (2,400 meters).
- **Symptoms:** Headache, nausea, fatigue, shortness of breath; can escalate to life-threatening conditions like High-Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE) and High-Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE).
- **Infrastructural Issues:** Inadequate healthcare facilities beyond major towns in the Himalayan states.
- Lack of immediate and preventive health measures.
- Need for basic health screenings at entry points to high-altitude areas.
- **Registration System:** Mandatory registration for tourists entering remote mountain areas.
- Allows monitoring of tourist movements and supports research on high-altitude illnesses.
- **Early Intervention:** Gradual ascent to allow acclimatization is crucial. Medications like Acetazolamide and Dexamethasone can aid acclimatization and reduce inflammation.

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Is imposing tariffs on Chinese imports a good idea?

What will be the impact of the move on the U.S. economy as well as the Chinese economy? Will the imposition of such tariffs trigger another global trade war?

B. Bhagwan Das

The story so far:

Donald Trump, the President-elect of the U.S., has promised to impose tariffs of up to 60% on Chinese imports to correct the huge trade deficit the U.S. has with China and also as a punitive measure to make China reduce the subsidisation of its domestic production, which make Chinese goods cheaper and attractive to American consumers as compared to locally produced American goods. He has also threatened to impose 10% import tariffs on imports from European Union.

What will be the impact?

The imposition of tariffs by the U.S. will raise the domestic price of such products in U.S. markets. If the tariffs are across the board and cover a large part of consumer

goods sold in the U.S., then it will increase domestic inflation. However, if it helps to reduce the overall trade deficit of the U.S., it may improve the value of the U.S. dollar and moderate domestic inflation. If the tariffs shift consumption away from Chinese goods and other imported goods, it will boost domestic production and increase domestic supply of consumer goods and help moderate inflation.

However, if China and other countries which are threatened by U.S. tariffs, respond with appropriate tariffs of their own on American goods, triggering another round of global trade wars, the intended policy impact of the action on the trade balance between the U.S. and its major trading partners, may not materialise to the desired extent.

On the contrary, it could have a debilitating impact on global commodity prices, and worsen inflation in most countries.

How will it materially translate?

Consider the following hypothetical example: Assume a shirt costs 724 Chinese yuan in China and is sold in the U.S. market for a \$100, based on the current U.S. dollar-Chinese yuan exchange rate of \$1:CN¥7.24. Let us also assume, that the same shirt can be supplied by U.S. manufacturers domestically for \$105 or 760.2 Chinese yuan. Since they are overpriced, Chinese producers capture the U.S. market and set the domestic price of a shirt in the U.S. at \$100. At this price, U.S. producers are unable to compete with Chinese producers in supplying U.S. markets.

Now if the U.S. imposes a 10% import tariff on imported Chinese shirts, under its America First policy, the price of a shirt in the American market will rise to \$110 or 796.4 Chinese yuan, based on the above-mentioned dollar-yuan exchange rate. At 796.4 yuan per shirt, Chinese

imports are no longer attractive to American buyers. The American producers are happy as they make a profit of \$5 as their cost of producing a shirt is \$105 while the tariff-inclusive price in the U.S. market is \$110. The Chinese exporters will have to bear the 10% import tariff on their exports, which in Chinese currency is equal to 72.4 yuan at the prevailing Dollar-Yuan exchange rate. If the Chinese government decides to support its textile exporters, it can adopt any one of the following policy measures: provide a State subsidy of 72.4 Yuan per shirt; devalue the yuan by 10%; or lower its Central Bank interest rate and increase stimulus spending in the economy, so that the dollar-yuan exchange rate depreciates by 10% to reach \$1 equals 7.964 yuan.

At this exchange rate, the Chinese garment exporters will receive 796.4 Chinese yuan per shirt, pay the U.S. import tax of 72.4 Chinese yuan and retain 724 Chinese yuan per shirt as their export earnings, the amount they got per shirt prior to the 10% import tariff. The risk to the Chinese economy could be in the form of a rise in its domestic rate of inflation due to a devalued or depreciating currency. But if these policy interventions help in boosting domestic production and exports, the risk may be offset by increased GDP growth.

Bhagwan Das is former head and associate professor of economics, Loyola College, Chennai.

THE GIST

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If China and other countries, which are threatened by U.S. tariffs, respond with appropriate tariffs of their own on American goods, it will trigger another round of global trade wars.

- President-elect Donald Trump has promised to impose tariffs of up to 60% on Chinese imports and 10% on imports from the European Union to address the U.S. trade deficit and reduce Chinese subsidies.

Impact of Tariffs:

- Domestic Prices:** Tariffs will raise the prices of imported goods in the U.S., potentially increasing domestic inflation.
- Trade Deficit:** If successful, tariffs could reduce the trade deficit and improve the value of the U.S. dollar.
- Domestic Production:** Higher prices for imports may boost domestic production and supply.

Global Trade Wars:

- Retaliation:** If China and other countries impose retaliatory tariffs, it could lead to global trade wars, affecting commodity prices and worsening inflation worldwide.

Govt. allows self-survey for Phase 2 of PM Awas Yojana

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

For the first time since the beginning of the flagship rural housing scheme – Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin – in 2016, the Union Rural Development Ministry is allowing “self-survey” for beneficiaries. For the second phase of the PMAY-G programme, which has a target of 2 crore houses, the Centre is conducting a survey to identify the beneficiaries. As part of this, training of 2.6 lakh surveyors was

- For the first time since its launch in 2016, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) will allow "self-survey" for beneficiaries.
- As part of the second phase of the program, which aims to build 2 crore houses, the Union Rural Development Ministry has trained 2.6 lakh surveyors. The self-survey is designed to ensure fairness and transparency, preventing bias or exclusion of households.
- The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Rural (PMAY – Rural) was launched on 20th November 2016, aiming to provide housing for the poorest segments of society. Beneficiaries are selected through a rigorous three-stage validation process that includes the Socio-Economic Caste Census (**SECC 2011**) and **Awaas+ (2018)** surveys, Gram Sabha approvals, and geo-tagging. This ensures that aid reaches the most deserving individuals. The scheme has further incorporated IT and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for efficient fund disbursement.

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Daniel Barenboim and Ali Abu Awwad presented Indira Gandhi Peace Prize

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development for 2023 was presented to classical pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim and Palestinian peace activist Ali Abu Awwad on Tuesday.

Mr. Barenboim was selected for his contribution to foster peace through musical and cultural dialogue initiatives and Mr. Awwad for his advocacy for dialogue through his organisation Roots, an outfit that he started after spending time in jail.

Accepting the prize, Mr. Awwad recounted that he was imprisoned in Israel in 1990 when he and his brother were arrested for



The Indira Gandhi Peace Prize was presented to Daniel Barenboim, left, and Ali Abu Awwad on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

He recounted that he was hurt when his brother was shot and killed by Israeli soldiers but he decided not to seek revenge. "Because I was strong enough to let go."

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The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development for 2023 was awarded to classical pianist **Daniel Barenboim** and Palestinian peace activist **Ali Abu Awwad**. Barenboim was recognized for fostering peace through musical and cultural dialogue, while Awwad was honored for his advocacy through his organization Roots. Awwad shared his personal experiences, including a hunger strike in Israeli prison and the loss of his brother, emphasizing the importance of recognizing humanity even in enemies.

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India, U.K. to re-launch trade talks in new year: Starmer

Talks have dragged on with more than 14 rounds of trade talks that have outlasted two U.K. Prime Ministers; New trade deal with India will support jobs and prosperity in the U.K., says Starmer

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

India and the U.K. have decided to re-launch discussions to conclude a 'free trade' deal in the new year, following the election of a new Labour government in the U.K.

The announcement of the imminent resumption of talks, which began in 2022 during the Boris Johnson Conservative government, was announced by U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, following a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Rio de Janeiro, on the fringes of the G20 Summit.

"A new trade deal with India will support jobs and prosperity in the U.K. - and represent a step forward in our mission to deliver growth and opportunity across our country," Mr. Starmer said. Bilateral trade between the two



Trade diplomacy: Britain PM Sir Keir Starmer at a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G20 summit at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. REUTERS

a vital trading partner for the U.K. We believe there is a good deal to be done

ties between the two countries as a basis for further cooperation.

from New Delhi said. The government has been seeking the extradi-

- India and the U.K. have agreed to re-launch discussions for a free trade deal in the new year, following the election of the new Labour government in the U.K. This announcement was made by U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer after a meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro.
Key Points:
Trade Deal: Aims to support jobs and prosperity in the U.K., with bilateral trade valued at £42 billion (\$53.2 billion) as of June 2024.
Previous Talks: Discussions began in 2022 but have faced delays, with over 14 rounds of talks.
Areas of Cooperation: Education, security, technology, and climate change.
New Consulates: India will open consulates in Belfast and Manchester.

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Putin signs revised nuclear doctrine amid Ukraine war

Any massive aerial attack on Russia could trigger a nuclear response, it says; the updated doctrine comes after Biden allowed Ukraine to strike deeper in Russia with longer-range U.S. missiles

Associated Press
MOSCOW

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday signed a revised nuclear doctrine declaring that a conventional attack on Russia by any nation that is supported by a nuclear power will be considered a joint attack on his country.

Mr. Putin's endorsement of the new nuclear deterrent policy comes on the 1,000th day after he sent troops into Ukraine, on February 24, 2022.

It follows U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to let Ukraine strike targets inside Russia with U.S.-supplied longer-range missiles.

The signing of the doc-



New chapter: The endorsement of the new nuclear deterrent policy comes on the 1,000th day of the Ukraine war. REUTERS

dated doctrine was deliberately issued on the heels of Mr. Biden's decision, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the document was published "in a timely manner" and that Mr. Putin instructed the government to update

and other NATO allies that allowing Ukraine to use Western-supplied longer-range weapons to hit Russian territory would mean that Russia and NATO are at war.

'Critical threat'

strike or a conventional attack posing a "critical threat to sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Russia and its ally Belarus, a vague formulation that leaves broad room for interpretation.

It does not specify whether such an attack would necessarily trigger a nuclear response. It mentions the "uncertainty of scale, time and place of possible use of nuclear deterrent" among the key principles of the nuclear deterrence.

The document also notes that an aggression against Russia by a member of a military bloc or coalition is viewed as "an aggression by the entire bloc," a clear reference to NATO.

President Vladimir Putin signed a revised nuclear doctrine, declaring that any conventional attack on Russia supported by a nuclear power will be considered a joint attack. This comes on the 1,000th day of Russia's invasion of Ukraine¹. The doctrine allows for a nuclear response to massive aerial attacks, reflecting Russia's readiness to use its nuclear arsenal to deter Western involvement

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MODI-MELONI MEETING ON G20 SIDELINES

Defence to space, India & Italy announce 5-year action plan

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 19

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi and his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni announced a five-year strategic action plan outlining their vision for collaboration in a range of key sectors, including defence, trade, energy and space.

The two leaders unveiled the Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-29 as they met on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

"Our talks centred around deepening ties in defence, security, trade and technology. We also talked about how to boost cooperation in culture, education and other such areas," Modi wrote on X. "India-Italy friendship can greatly contribute to a better planet".

Monday's meeting was the fifth between the two PMs in the last two years. They last met in June 2024, in Puglia, Italy, during the G7 Summit. "Following up on their discussions in Puglia, the two leaders reiterated their commit-



PM Modi with PM Meloni in Rio de Janeiro. PTI

ment to advancing the India-Italy Strategic Partnership and announced a Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-29 which outlines their vision for the next five years," the Ministry of External Affairs said.

Some of the key points in the Action Plan are:

Defence

- Holding Joint Defence Consultative meetings, Joint Staff Talks on a yearly basis to coordinate exchanges of information, visits and training activities.

- Interactions in the framework of Italy's growing interest

in Indo-Pacific region, aimed at increasing interoperability and cooperation.

- Exploring avenues of enhanced partnerships and dialogue among public and private stakeholders, focusing on technology collaboration.

Economic Cooperation

- Promoting industrial partnerships, technological centres and mutual investment, also in automotive, semiconductors, infrastructure and advanced manufacturing.

Connectivity

- Enhancing collaboration in maritime and land infrastructure also in the framework of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.

Science & Innovation

- Expanding cooperation on critical and emerging technologies, forging technology value chain partnerships in both countries in sectors such as telecom, artificial intelligence, and digitalization of services.

Space

- Expanding cooperation between Italian Space Agency and ISRO to include projects of common interest in Earth observation, heliophysics and space exploration with emphasis on lunar science.

Migration and Mobility

- Promote legal migration channels, as well as fair and transparent labour training and recruitment procedures. A pilot will cover training of health professionals in India and their subsequent employment in Italy.

Energy Transition

- Strengthen the Global Biofuels Alliance and International Solar Alliance.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni unveiled the Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-29 during their meeting at the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The plan outlines collaboration in defence, trade, energy, space, and more. Key points include:
- Defence: Annual Joint Defence Consultative meetings, increased cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, and enhanced public-private sector partnerships in technology.
- Economic Cooperation: Focus on industrial partnerships, technological centers, and mutual investments in sectors like automotive, semiconductors, and infrastructure.
- Connectivity: Strengthening maritime and land infrastructure, including the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.
- Science & Innovation: Cooperation in critical technologies such as AI, telecom, and digital services.
- Space: Expanding collaboration between Italy's Space Agency and ISRO, particularly in Earth observation, space exploration, and lunar science.

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WHAT ARE ATACMS, THE US MISSILES UKRAINE FIRED INTO RUSSIA?



An ATACMS missile being test-fired at the White Sands Missile Range in Nevada, US, on December 14, 2021. A newer version this US-made missile was used by Ukraine on Tuesday to hit ammunition warehouses in Russia. *The NYT*

UKRAINE'S MILITARY used long-range American-made missiles — known as the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) — on Tuesday to strike into Russia for the first time.

The development came just two days after President Joe Biden's administration allowed Ukraine to use these missiles, marking a significant reversal of Washington's policy in the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

What are ATACMS missiles?
There are several variants of ATACMS,

Why did the US authorise their use?
The decision to allow Ukraine to use the weapons to strike deep within Russia comes two months before President-elect Donald Trump takes office on January 20. For months, President Zelenskyy has been asking the US to allow Ukraine military to use American weapons to hit Russian military targets far from its border.

The change comes largely in response to Russia's deployment of North Korean ground troops to supplement its own forces, a development that has caused

- The ATACMS is a conventional surface-to-surface artillery weapon system capable of striking targets well beyond the range of existing Army cannons, rockets and other missiles.”
- Its maximum range is 300km. Notably, this is not the first time that the ATACMS system has been delivered, although the earlier systems had much shorter ranges of around 160 km. For instance, in October 2023, the US provided missiles with cluster munitions. When fired, they would open in the air and release **hundreds of “bomblets”** rather than a single warhead, the *Associated Press* reported at the time
- ATACMS missiles are fired from the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (**HIMARS**) and Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) M270 platforms, which have the US and the United Kingdom earlier provided to Ukraine.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB-Defense(GSIII)



- The Indian Army successfully conducted the Multilateral Annual Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise, 'Sanyukt Vimochan 2024', on November 18-19, 2024, in Ahmedabad and Porbandar, Gujarat. Led by General Upendra Dwivedi, the exercise showcased India's readiness for disaster response. The first day featured a Tabletop Exercise (TTX) on cyclone management in Gujarat's coastal region, attended by officials from NDMA, GSDMA, and other agencies, while the second day included a Multi-Agency Capability Demonstration at Chowpatty Beach, simulating coordinated disaster response efforts.
- This demonstration involved multiple agencies, including the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and others, practicing rescue operations, casualty evacuation, and rehabilitation. The exercise also highlighted India's commitment to self-reliance, with an industrial display showcasing indigenous HADR technologies.