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RESERVE BANK OF INDIA RAISES REPO RATE

- Due to the US–Iran war, crude oil prices have increased, leading to rising inflation and depreciation of the Indian rupee. Against this backdrop, a meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was held in Mumbai under the chairmanship of RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra.
- During the meeting, the committee unanimously decided to increase the repo rate, the interest rate charged on short-term loans provided to banks, from 5.25% to 5.50%. The interest rate was last increased in 2023. Therefore, the repo rate has been increased after approximately three and a half years.
- The decision to raise the repo rate by 0.25 percentage points (25 basis points) was taken amid expectations of a further increase in global inflation. Trade uncertainty continues, and global demand remains weak. The impact of the war could disrupt international trade and supply chains. Nevertheless, the Indian economy remains strong.

HOW WAS THE MYSTERY SOLVED?

- Just like our left and right hands, certain molecules exist in two forms that are mirror images of each other. Although the same atoms are connected in the same way in both forms, their properties differ. This difference is extremely important in biology.
- Amino acids, the building blocks of proteins, are an excellent example. They can exist in two opposite mirror-image forms. However, living organisms predominantly use only one of these forms to produce proteins.
- This raises a fundamental question: How did life select one molecular form over the other? For many years, chemists struggled to find an answer to this question.
- When scientists attempted to produce molecules that could exist in two mirror-image forms, chemical reactions generally produced both forms in approximately equal quantities.
- Henri B. Kagan's Discovery – 1986 : In 1986, Henri B. Kagan made an important breakthrough. His research demonstrated that chemical reactions do not always have to occur in a perfectly balanced manner.
- Kenzo Soai's Discovery – 1995 : Later, in 1995, Kenzo Soai reported a chemical reaction capable of amplifying the predominance of one mirror-image form of a molecule. This reaction involved autocatalysis, a process in which a reaction product acts as a catalyst for the same reaction. Major Breakthrough – 2003 : In 2003, Kenzo Soai demonstrated a chemical reaction that could produce almost exclusively one of the two possible mirror-image molecular forms.
- This was considered a milestone achievement in chemistry. Until then, scientists had not been able to achieve such a high degree of spontaneous chemical selectivity outside biological systems.

NOBEL PRIZE IN CHEMISTRY 2026 AWARDED TO FRENCH AND JAPANESE SCIENTISTS FOR SOLVING A CENTURY- OLD CHEMICAL MYSTERY.

- The 2026 Nobel Prize in Chemistry has been announced jointly for Henri B. Kagan of France and Kenzo Soai of Japan for their discoveries related to nonlinear effects and autocatalysis.
- This year's award is related to fundamental chemistry.
- Certain molecules, such as amino acids, exist in two forms that are mirror images of each other.
- However, biological molecules predominantly contain only one of these mirror-image forms.
- For a long time, chemists have been puzzled by how such chemical asymmetry originated.
- The 2026 Nobel Prize in Chemistry is being awarded to Henri B. Kagan and Kenzo Soai for finding a solution to this century-old mystery.