



# DR. RAJKUMAR ACADEMY BENGALURU

AN INITIATIVE BY DR. RAJKUMAR FAMILY

## WEEKLY NEWS COMPILATION

A CRISP AND COMPREHENSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS CAPSULE

### AUGUST WEEK 4

25-08-2025 TO 30-08-2025

ISRO HOLDS AIR-  
DROP TEST FOR  
GAGANYAAN

SC RETURNS TO  
FULL STRENGTH

ONLINE GAMING  
BILL, 2025

GDP GROWTH  
QUICKENS TO  
FIVE-QUARTER  
HIGH OF 7.8%

❖ **DRDO tests multi-layered air defence system successfully**

**Context:** The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted the maiden flight tests of the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) off the coast of Odisha.

- The IADWS is a **multi-layered air defence system comprising indigenous Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missiles (QRSAM), Advanced Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) missiles, and a high-power laser-based Directed Energy Weapon (DEW).**
- Three different targets, including **two high-speed fixed wing unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) targets and a multi-copter drone, were simultaneously engaged and destroyed completely by the QRSAM, VSHORADS and high-energy laser weapon system at different ranges and altitudes.**
- All the weapon system components, including missile systems, drone detection and destruction system, weapon system command and control along with communication and radars, performed flawlessly, which was confirmed by range instruments deployed by the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur.



The Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) being deployed, off the coast of Odisha, on Saturday. ANI

❖ **To reach 10% women in force, CISF set to add 2,400 personnel**

**Context:** The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is all set to induct 2,400 women personnel in 2026 to achieve the target of 10% representation of women.

- At present, the CISF has 12,491 women personnel in its ranks, and in the coming years, recruitment will be so structured to ensure that women consistently make up at least 10% of the force.
- The CISF is also inducting the first-ever all-woman commando team for core operations such as deployment at airports and other vital installations.
- “Training of women commandos has already begun at the Regional Training Centre (RTC) in Barwaha, Madhya Pradesh. The eight-week advanced commando course will prepare women personnel for Quick Reaction Teams and Special Task Force duties at high-security establishments and plants.”
- The programme includes physical fitness and weapons training, live-fire drills under stress, endurance-building exercises such as running, obstacle courses, rappelling, survival training in forests, and a 48-hour confidence-building exercise designed to test decision-making and teamwork under adverse conditions.
- The first batch of 30 women — currently deployed across various airports — are undergoing training, followed by a second batch that will train from October 6 to November 29.
- In the initial phase, at least 100 women from different Aviation Security Groups (ASGs) and sensitive CISF units will complete the programme.

## ❖ Former CRPF D-G Anish Dayal Singh appointed Deputy NSA

**Context:** Former CRPF and ITBP Director-General Anish Dayal Singh has been appointed the new Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA), with a mandate to handle internal affairs, official sources said. Mr. Singh, a 1988-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the Manipur cadre, retired from service in December 2024.

- He brings extensive experience to the role, having served for nearly 30 years in the Intelligence Bureau (IB) before heading the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and most recently, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
- According to officials, Mr. Singh will be in charge of internal affairs of the country, including Jammu and Kashmir, and Naxal and northeastern insurgency, as the Deputy NSA.

## ❖ ISRO holds air-drop test for Gaganyaan mission

**Context:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Sunday successfully carried out its first Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-1), a critical milestone in preparations for the country's maiden human spaceflight programme, Gaganyaan.

- “ISRO successfully accomplishes first Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-01) for end-to-end demonstration of parachute-based deceleration system for Gaganyaan missions,” the ISRO wrote on X.
- The IADT is a **specialised trial to ensure the parachute system designed for the Gaganyaan crew module performs reliably in real-world conditions.**
- During the test, a dummy crew capsule weighing around five tonnes was lifted up through the air before being dropped by a Chinook helicopter. As it descended through a few km, its main parachutes had to open in a specific sequence to decelerate the capsule to a safe splashdown speed.
- During an actual flight with astronauts, the main parachutes will have to deploy after the capsule has re-entered the atmosphere and has been slowed first by the heat shields and drogue parachutes. The ascent, descent, and post-splashdown phases of the Gaganyaan mission are expected to be the most risky for the astronauts.
- According to the ISRO, the effort brought together multiple national agencies — the Air Force, the Defence Research and Development Organisation, the Navy, and the Coast Guard — in what officials described as a coordinated step towards human-rating India's launch and recovery systems.
- Earlier this week, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh told the Lok Sabha that major preparatory work for Gaganyaan had already been completed. “The propulsion systems for the crew module and service module have been developed and tested. Environmental control and life support system engineering model realised. Crew escape system (CES): five types of motors developed and static tested,” Mr. Singh said in a written reply.
- He said infrastructure had been established for “orbital module preparation facility, Gaganyaan Control Centre, Gaganyaan control facility, crew training facility, [and] second launch pad modifications”. A series of precursor missions, including test vehicle flights, were currently under way, he added.

## ❖ PM to launch over ₹1,400 cr. worth railway projects

**Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate railway projects worth over ₹1,400 crore during his visit to Gujarat on August 25 and 26.

- These include doubling of the 65-km Mahesana- Palanpur rail line worth ₹537 crore and gauge conversion of the 37-km Kalol-Kadi-Katosan Road rail line at ₹347 crore and 40-km Bechraji-Ranujr rail line at a cost of ₹520 crore.

- “With the addition of broad-gauge capacity, these projects will ensure safer and seamless connectivity in the region, especially for Mahesana, Banaskantha and Patan districts,” a railway official said.
- The new Katosan Road and Sabarmati service line is likely to improve access to religious destinations.

### ❖ Is India underestimating the cost of dealing with invasive species?

**Context:** Damage from non-native plants and animals expanding into new ecosystems has cost society more than \$2.2 trillion worldwide, a new study by an international team of researchers has said.

- Published in Nature Ecology & Evolution, the study used numbers from InvaCost, a public database that records the economic costs of biological invasions by country, and modelling exercises to analyse data from 1960. It concluded that costs may have been underestimated by 16x over previous estimates.
- In India, a nation grappling with numerous environmental and economic challenges, the findings underscore an oft-overlooked financial drain.

A global discrepancy

- Europe was found to have the highest potential impact in absolute terms at \$1.5 trillion (71.45% of global cost), followed by North America (\$226 billion), Asia (\$182 billion), Africa (\$127 billion), and Australia and Oceania (\$27 billion).
- Brian Leung, one of the lead researchers and the UNESCO Chair for Dialogues on Sustainability, said, “The cost of invasions might just be higher because of the cost of things in Europe. There’s more to damage, the cost of the agricultural products, and the cost of management might be higher.”
- **The study did not estimate a total economic damage figure for India in absolute terms but emphasised the magnitude of underreported management costs. In fact, among all the countries assessed, the study found India had the highest percentage discrepancy of management expenditure: 1.16 billion percent.**
- As Per the study, this exceptionally high disparity suggests a significant amount of management spending in India has likely been unrecorded or underreported in the existing data, leading to a substantial “hidden” cost. The researchers were careful to note that India’s limited resources could have contributed as much to this gap as a recording bias in the InvaCost database, which may be overlooking reports in languages predominant in Africa and Asia.

Who are the invaders?

- Plants emerged as the most economically impactful invasive species worldwide as well as the costliest group vis-à-vis the cost of management, demanding \$926.38 billion in 1960-2022. Next in line were the arthropods (\$830.29 billion) and mammals (\$263.35 billion).
- The researchers speculated that these species spread to new ecosystems — where they could thrive at the cost of its incumbents — primarily through trade and travel, helped along by globalisation and bilateral deals. They singled out Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) and common lantana (*Lantana camara*) to be among the costliest to manage per square kilometre.
- Leung, however, cautioned that simply eradicating all invasive species would make the problem worse. “A lot of the agricultural products that dominate our system now are not native,” he said.
- “Invasive species transport is a byproduct of trade and importation of living organisms because we want them, and sometimes these are the driving forces behind invasions,” Mr. Leung added. “Europe has been doing that for a long time.”
- This presents a two-faceted challenge: on one hand, there is an imperative to mitigate economic losses; on the other, there is the desire to foster further globalisation. Thus, according to Mr. Leung, efforts must simultaneously be made to curtail the spread of invasive species and address global warming by

increasing vegetation. Given these complex, intersecting objectives, reconciling these disparate goals in studying invasive species becomes a significant challenge, he added.

#### Control measure

- The study also acknowledged that several international policies to deal with invasive species are in place, which scientists at large believe have had a positive effect on reducing the rate of biological invasions. Key among them is a regulation concerning shipping traffic and trade practice: the **International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (a.k.a. Ballast Water Management Convention)**, which is designed to prevent the spread of harmful aquatic organisms from one region to another via ships' ballast water.
- Likewise, regulations under the **Convention on Biological Diversity** call on parties (including India) to "prevent the introduction of, control, or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats, or species."
- These international agreements underscore a global recognition of the threat posed by invasive species and efforts to mitigate their spread through various control points.
- As for management costs, Mr. Leung said response strategies can range from preventing new invasions aiming for complete eradication of established populations or controlling their spread to minimise impact.
- The large discrepancies in reported costs also underscore the need for improved data collection, comprehensive tracking of expenditures, and robust reporting mechanisms.
- "For example, even though the cost estimates in Africa are really quite limited, it doesn't mean the damages are limited," he explained.
- While the study does not say anything about the state of invasive species, it may be a call to action. Its specific analysis and the database were based on the measured economic costs, according to Mr. Leung, "because it's often easier to measure and people often understand money better."

#### ❖ Cloudburst: when the balloon pops

**Context:** A cloudburst is a sudden and intense rainfall event that can transform weather conditions within minutes. Unlike the steady and large-scale downpour typical of monsoon rains, a cloudburst is localised, often drenching a small area with an extraordinary amount of water.

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) **defines a cloudburst as rainfall of more than 100 mm in one hour over an area of about 2030 sq. km.** This threshold is used in India to identify events that can lead to flash floods and landslides, especially in mountainous areas.
- The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) **defines cloudbursts differently, however: as rain pouring down at a rate of 100 mm per hour or more.** The WMO definition also makes reference to the Swedish term 'skyfall', which is described as 1 mm per minute, or 60 mm per hour for short bursts and 50 mm per hour when sustained for longer periods.
- Other references describe the phenomenon by its physical process rather than by rainfall numbers.



Cloudbursts occur when strong updrafts in thunderstorms hold large amounts of water high in the atmosphere. Representative image. RIC MATKOWSKI/UNSPLASH

- Cloudbursts often occur when strong updrafts in thunderstorms hold large amounts of water high in the atmosphere. When the updraft collapses, this water is released suddenly, resulting in an intense downpour.
- Scientific papers have also highlighted the role of orographic lifting, where moist air is forced upwards by mountains, leading to rapid condensation and heavy rain.
- This said, all definitions agree that a **cloudburst is short-lived and very intense, and is capable of causing severe damage. The area of effect could be larger, however, depending on where the water flows.**

### ❖ What is the new Bill to remove PM, CM and Ministers?

**Context:** The Union government has introduced the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill, under which a Minister will be removed from office if they are arrested and detained for 30 days in relation to a criminal offence.

What does the Bill say?

- The Bill seeks to amend Articles 75 and 164 of the Constitution that deal with the Council of Ministers at the Union and State level.
- It provides that a Minister, who has been arrested and detained for 30 consecutive days in relation to an allegation of committing an offence, which is punishable with imprisonment of at least five years, shall be removed from his/her office.
- They would be removed on the advice tendered by the Prime Minister/Chief Minister (PM/CM). If the PM/CM does not tender such advice, the Minister concerned shall automatically cease to hold office from the 31st day.
- If the PM/CM is arrested and taken into custody for 30 consecutive days, he/she shall tender his/her resignation on the 31st day.
- However, the PM, CM, or Minister can be subsequently appointed on being released from custody.
- It also seeks to amend Article 239AA with similar provisions for the National Capital Territory of Delhi.
- These amendments to the Constitution would require a two-thirds majority in both houses of Parliament for its passage. Similar amendments have been proposed to parliamentary laws that govern the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Puducherry.
- These Bills have been referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for scrutiny.

What are the existing laws?

- The Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RP Act) provides that any person who is convicted in a criminal case and sentenced to not less than two years in jail, shall be disqualified from being a member of Parliament or State legislature for the period of their sentence and six years thereafter.
- Section 8(4) of the RP Act provided that with respect to a sitting member of Parliament or State legislature, such disqualification shall not take effect if an appeal is filed against such conviction.
- However, the Supreme Court in Lily Thomas (2013) struck down this clause as unconstitutional. It must be noted that the existing law only provides for disqualification for being a member of Parliament or State Legislature and not for being a minister.
- In 2016, the Election Commission had recommended that the RP Act be amended to provide that persons against whom charges are framed by a competent court for an offence that is punishable with imprisonment of at least five years be barred from contesting elections.

What are the issues?

- Firstly, it will result in elected representatives losing their position by mere police action even before the start of a trial. Secondly, it undermines the principles of parliamentary democracy where the elected PM, CM enjoys the power to choose their cabinet. Finally, it gives the Centre disproportionate power to initiate vindictive action against ministers in opposition-ruled States.

What should be done?

- Criminalisation of politics is a malaise plaguing our democratic system. However, the issues surrounding the Bill need careful consideration.
- Moreover, the Bill seems to try to address the effect than the cause. Reports by the Association of Democratic Reforms states that 46% of MPs and 45% of MLAs have criminal cases against them.
- It added that the chances of winning for a candidate with a criminal background was 15.4% as against just 4.4% for a candidate with a clean background.
- An appropriate step then would be to not field candidates who have criminal records. Parties should instil this self-discipline rather than provide tickets to tainted candidates on the ground of ‘winnability’.

### ❖ SC asks govt. to form guidelines to regulate conduct on social media

**Context:** The Supreme Court said social media influencers commercialise free speech, and their comments had the capacity to hurt sentiments in a diverse society, which includes persons with disabilities, women, children, senior citizens, and minorities.

- A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi asked **the Union government to work on guidelines to regulate conduct on social media, including online shows such as podcasts, in consultation with the National Broadcasters and Digital Association**, represented by advocate Nisha Bhambhani, in a bid to balance free speech with the equally important right of varied communities to live in society with dignity.
- The court was hearing a case against comedians, including Samay Raina, for “abusing freedom of speech and expression” by making insensitive jokes about persons with disabilities. “When you are commercialising free speech, you should also bear in mind not to hurt the sentiments of certain sections of society,” Justice Bagchi observed.
- Justice Kant said that by making insensitive jokes about persons with disabilities, the constitutional objective of bringing them into the mainstream was “completely smashed”.



‘Varied communities’

- Justice Bagchi acknowledged that humour was an irreplaceable part of life, but levity must not breach sensibilities. “We are a country of varied communities,” he said.
- Justice Kant said guidelines must be framed in a way that violation would inevitably lead to specific consequences. “Unless effective consequences are framed, people can zig-zag their way out of liability. Consequences must be proportionate to the harm done. They cannot be an empty formality,” he said.
- He clarified that the court was not for a moment trying to curtail free speech, but was expecting the proposed guidelines to draw a line between free speech and hurtful speech.
- Attorney-General R. Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre, responded that the primary objective of the proposed guidelines would be sensitisation of social media users.

- “But if somebody violates, they will have to take responsibility... Many of these media blogs are like feeding your own ego,” Mr. Venkataramani submitted.
- Justice Bagchi pointed out that the top court had divided speech into free speech, commercial speech, and prohibited speech. “What we see here is an overlap of commercial and prohibited speech,” the judge remarked.
- “Today, we have an unfortunate incident of disabled persons, tomorrow it can be about women, children and senior citizens. Anybody can start making fun... where is all this going to end?” Justice Kant asked.
- Senior advocate Aparajita Singh, who represents M/s SMA Cure Foundation, which had moved against the comedians’ remarks about persons with disabilities, submitted that “what influencers say matters. It influences an entire generation”.
- Ms. Singh said they could act as ambassadors to spread awareness and sensitivity on social media. “That will be the best apology they could make,” Ms. Singh suggested.
- The court directed the comedians to communicate their unconditional apology through their shows. It listed the case in November.

### ❖ Govt. finalises four names for nomination to Legislative Council

**Context:** After months of delay, the Congress government is learnt to have finalised four persons to be nominated for vacant seats in the Legislative Council.

- Ramesh Babu, a former MLC from Janata Dal (Secular), K. Shivakumar, journalist, Arati Krishna, chairperson of KPCC NRI Cell, and F.H. Jakkappanavar, Dalit activist, are learnt to have been finalised by the Congress.
- Earlier, a list by the KPCC is learnt to have been rejected by Central leaders. The seats in the 75-member Upper House had fallen vacant owing to the completion of the term of Congress members U.B. Venkatesh and Prakash Rathod in October 2024 and Janata Dal (S) member K.A. Thippeewamy in February 2025.
- One seat had fallen vacant as C.P. Yogeshwar, the then BJP member resigned to contest on a Congress ticket from Channapatna in the Assembly bypolls, which he eventually won.
- Mr. Babu is currently the party spokesperson. Ms. Arathi is the daughter of former Minister Begane Ramaiah, who passed away recently. Mr. Jakkappanavar is a tradeunionleader. Mr. Shivakumar is a journalist from Mysuru.
- In the Council, BJP has 33 seats, JD(S) 7, and the Congress 29. The House also has an Independent besides the Chairman. After the above nominations, the strength of the Congress will increase to 33.

### ❖ Collegium recommends elevation of Chief Justices of Bombay, Patna HCs to SC

**Context:** The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai recommended the elevation of the Chief Justices of the Bombay and Patna High Courts, Justices Alok Aradhe and Vipul Manubhai Pancholi, respectively, as top court judges.

- Justice Aradhe is ranked third in the list of High Court Chief Justices and Justice Pancholi is 19. Justice Aradhe’s parent High Court is Madhya Pradesh and that of Justice Pancholi is Gujarat.
- Justice Aradhe, born in April 1964, was appointed an Additional Judge of Madhya Pradesh in December 2009 and made a Permanent Judge of the High Court in February 2011.
- He was transferred to the Jammu and Kashmir High Court in 2016 and functioned as its Acting Chief Justice for nearly three months from May to August 2018.

## Acting Chief Justice

- Justice Aradhe was transferred to the Karnataka High Court as judge and took over as its Acting Chief Justice from July to October 2022. He was appointed as the Telangana Chief Justice in July 2023 and later transferred to the Bombay High Court as its Chief Justice on January 21, 2025.
- Justice Pancholi was born on May 28, 1968 at Ahmedabad and was confirmed as a Permanent Judge of the Gujarat High Court in June 2016.
- He was transferred to Patna High Court in July 2023 and appointed its Chief Justice on July 21, 2025.

## ❖ India, Fiji call for open Indo-Pacific region, agree to deepen defence ties

**Context:** India will provide training and equipment to upgrade Fiji's maritime security, Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

- Welcoming visiting Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, Mr. Modi said India and Fiji “strongly support a free, open” Indo-Pacific region as both sides declared that **India would work to build capacity for the armed forces of Fiji.**
- “In our cooperation with the Pacific island nations, we see Fiji as a hub. Both our countries strongly support a free, open, inclusive, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. We warmly welcome India’s Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative,” Mr. Modi said, announcing the collaboration between India and the Fijian military forces.
- A joint statement issued at the end of consultation said the two sides emphasised the importance of their “shared interests in advancing regional peace, stability, and prosperity”.
- “Prime Minister Modi reaffirmed India’s commitment to advancing the priority areas of cooperation outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding [MoU] on Defence Cooperation signed in 2017, and to supporting Fiji’s strategic priorities in these areas,” the joint statement said.
- The two sides agreed to work together on **UN peacekeeping operations, military medicine, the White Shipping Information Exchange, and capacity-building for Fijian military forces.**
- Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Rabuka emphasised the need to protect **Fiji’s Exclusive Economic Zone, and welcomed India’s assurance to assist with Fiji’s security needs.** “Prime Minister Rabuka welcomed the planned port call by an Indian naval ship to Fiji which will enhance maritime cooperation and interoperability,” the statement said.
- During the talks at Hyderabad House here, India and Fiji signed seven MoUs that included an agreement on building a super-specialty hospital in Fiji, and one on migration and mobility. Both the leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation against terrorism, and reiterated condemnation for the terror attack in Pahalgam. Mr. Modi announced the gifting of two ambulances to Fiji’s military forces, and the opening of the defence wing in the High Commission of India in Fijian capital Suva. The countries also agreed to enhance cooperation in cyber security, and welcomed the setting up of a cyber-security training cell in Fiji. Both sides agreed to collaborate on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- Mr. Rabuka had in July opposed China’s reported plans to establish a naval base in the Pacific islands. As a signal to the Chinese side, the statement also called for a “free, open Indo-Pacific region”.

## ❖ Stealth frigates Udaygiri, Himgiri to join Navy today

**Context:** The Indian Navy is set to commission the state-of-the-art Project 17A stealth frigates Udaygiri and Himgiri at the Naval Base in Visakhapatnam.

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will preside over the event, which will mark the first-ever simultaneous commissioning of two frontline warships built at different shipyards.

Enhanced capability

- Mr. Singh said that both vessels were **follow-on variants of the Shivalik-class frigates**.
- They featured **enhanced stealth capabilities, advanced weaponry, and modern sensor systems designed to execute the full spectrum of maritime operations in blue-water conditions**.
- **Udaygiri, built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. in Mumbai, and Himgiri, constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) in Kolkata, showcase India's growing shipbuilding expertise and inter-yard collaboration**.
- Notably, Udaygiri was the fastest of her class to be delivered after launch, owing to the adoption of modular construction techniques.
- **Designed in-house by the Navy's Warship Design Bureau (WDB), Udaygiri is the 100th vessel to be designed, marking a milestone in five decades of indigenous warship design**.
- Both frigates are fitted with combined diesel or gas (CODOG) propulsion, an integrated platform management system, and advanced Indian-made weapons and sensors.
- **With nearly 75% indigenous content — supported by several MSMEs — the ships embody the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat**, the Ministry added.
- Reviving the heritage of earlier warships that bore these names, the new frigates will now join the Eastern Fleet, substantially enhancing the Navy's reach in the Indian Ocean.



## ❖ Centre allows one-time switch from UPS to NPS

**Context:** The Finance Ministry on Monday introduced a one-time, one-way switch facility from the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) to the National Pension System (NPS).

- From April 1, the government has introduced the UPS as an option under the NPS for Central government employees. UPS will provide assured payouts to the employees.
- Around 31,555 Central government employees have opted for UPS till July 20, and the last date to enroll is September 30.
- In an office memorandum, the Ministry said the facility will be available to employees who have opted for UPS. "This switch facility may be exercised by UPS optees any time not later than one year prior to the date of superannuation or three months prior to the date of retirement in case of voluntary retirement, as applicable," it added.

## ❖ Air-drop test success a big step in Gaganyaan mission: ISRO scientist

**Context:** The first Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-01) conducted successfully at Sriharikota on Sunday marks an important step for Gaganyaan, India's keenly watched programme for sending humans to space, A. Rajarajan, senior scientist with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Director, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC).

- The ISRO will follow up IADT-01 with the second Test Vehicle Mission (TV-D2) and the uncrewed Gaganyaan-1 (G1) flight — two of the critical trials lined up before the actual mission carrying astronauts — soon, Mr. Rajarajan.
- He described the upcoming TV-D2 as a “complex mission” that will put to test the crew escape system (CES) under critical conditions. The ISRO had successfully accomplished the Gaganyaan TV-D1 mission in October 2023. Such tests are vital as safety is of paramount importance in manned missions, he said.
- For the uncrewed G1 mission, the spacecraft will be launched aboard a human-rated LVM3 rocket. The mission will also have on board Vyommitra, the humanoid robot developed by the ISRO.

‘VSSC plays major role’

- On the success of IADT-01, Mr. Rajarajan said that as VSSC Director, he was happy that the test went as expected. The VSSC had a major role in IADT-01, being responsible for “90%” of the activities alongside the Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) and SDSC-SHAR and other agencies, including the Indian Air Force, he said.
- IADT-01 successfully demonstrated the parachute-based crew module deceleration system for Gaganyaan. The VSSC had carried out the end-to-end modelling for this test, Mr. Rajarajan said.

## ❖ India to tap e-com sites' data in inflation gauge revamp

**Context:** India will start sourcing price data directly from e-commerce giants including Amazon and Flipkart to overhaul its benchmark inflation gauge, aiming to capture shifting consumption habits and address concerns that current data is outdated, Saurabh Garg, secretary of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said.

- India had about 270 million online shoppers in 2024, a figure projected to grow 22% annually, a private study showed.

## ❖ RBI offers to back tariff-hit sectors

**Context:** Should the tariffs imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump kick in, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as in the past, would step in and provide financial support to worst impacted sectors to tide over the crisis period, Governor Sanjay Malhotra.

- It may be recalled that during the pandemic, the RBI had provided moratorium on term loans and eased access to credit for MSMEs and virtually supported the economy through monetary policy.
- “The 50% tariff is yet to kick in. Negotiations are on and we hope there will be minimal impact.
- As you know 45% [of exported items] are outside the tax net and of the remaining 55% there will be some potential impact on some of the sectors like gem and jewellery, textiles, auto parts, shrimps and MSMEs,” the RBI Governor said, while answering a question at the FIBAC annual conference organised by FICCI and Indian Banks' Association (IBA).
- “The government is looking into it. We, in the part of RBI, have been on an easing cycle. We had cut repo rate by 100 bps to provide ample liquidity to the economy.

- Whatever support is required from us for the growth of the economy and including those of the sectors which are impacted more, if it so happens, we would not be found wanting in our job,” Mr. Malhotra said.
- To a question on internationalisation of the rupee, Mr. Malhotra said, “It’s an important area on which the RBI has been working for many years and it is important for the country to develop trade in local currency. It cushions us from the volatility of foreign exchange.”
- Stating that India currently has agreements with four countries including Maldives, Mauritius, Indonesia and UAE, he said, “Healthy trade is happening in local currency. On how it would pan out, he said, “it’s a slow process and would take years and decades to evolve to have trade in local currencies.”
- Mr. Malhotra stressed the need to further strengthen the banking correspondents (BCs) network to achieve financial inclusion goals.
- On the use of technology in the banking sector he said it has become the core engine for improving decision making and customer service, moving far beyond its traditional role of driving efficiency. Regulated entities need to accelerate its adoption as they strive to enhance credit and reduce costs, he pointed out.

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## ❖ Fitch retains 'BBB-' for India, flags U.S. tariffs

**Context:** Fitch Ratings retained India's BBB- rating with a 'stable' outlook on "robust growth and solid external finances".

- However, the ratings agency also said private investment is expected to stay subdued, and Trump tariffs would not only dampen business sentiment, but also hurt India's competitiveness in comparison to other Asian countries.
- "India's ratings are supported by its robust growth and solid external finances," Fitch said.

A few constraints

- However, it also said that India's fiscal metrics such as high deficits and debt at the general government level, and "lagging" structural metrics, including governance indicators and GDP per capita, constrain the country's rating.
- "U.S. tariffs are a moderate downside risk to forecast but are subject to a high degree of uncertainty," Fitch said. "The direct impact on GDP will be modest as exports to the U.S. account for 2% of GDP, but tariff uncertainty will dampen business sentiment and investment."

## ❖ ChatGPT maker to push AI in India education, hires Coursera's Gupta

**Context:** ChatGPT maker OpenAI announced a Learning Accelerator programme for India, aiming to "bring advanced AI to India's educators and millions of learners via AI research, training and deployment".

- "India has the largest population of student ChatGPT users worldwide," said Leah Belsky, VP for education during the announcement.
- The firm announced a \$5,00,000 grant to IIT Madras, which will work on OpenAI's efforts to evaluate the progress of its attempts to introduce AI "one-on-one tutors" in the classroom.
- OpenAI hired its second full-time India employee, Raghav Gupta, who, until March led online learning firm Coursera's India operations. Mr. Gupta will lead OpenAI's education projects in India.

One-on-one tutoring

- The firm will be assigning five lakh ChatGPT Plus licences to schoolteachers in India by working through the Ministry of Education, it said.
- Some licences will also be provided to higher education institutions through the All India Council for Technical Education.
- "By working closely with universities, schools, government bodies and educators, we have an opportunity to transform education through AI," Mr. Gupta said.
- Ms. Belsky hoped unlike past efforts to use technology in education, generative AI would work for the simple reason students were already using it themselves. In India, she said, over half of ChatGPT users were younger than 24.

## ❖ 'Children are dying from starvation in Gaza'

**Context:** The food security situation in Gaza is desperate and difficult, said Carl Skau, Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP).

- Mr. Skau said there is international pressure on Israel to allow trucks carrying food to enter Gaza and the WFP is in constant touch with the Israeli Government.

- Mr. Skau, who visited the region recently, said **malnutrition rates among children are spiking, and children and mothers are dying in clinics from starvation.**
- “Right now, the situation is worse than we have ever seen it,” he said, adding that the **WFP has enough food on the borders to assist the entire population for over two months.**
- “We have the capacity, the systems, the know-how to roll it out,” he said, pointing that a ceasefire is the only way to turn the disaster around.
- “We are in daily engagement with the Israeli authorities. At this point, approximately 60 to 100 trucks per day are entering, but that’s a drop in the ocean. We are talking about 2.1 million people.
- This is not a normal humanitarian situation. To reach 2.1 million people, you need at least 600-700 trucks per day and you need commercial sector to be able to bring in fruit and vegetables to broaden the intake of food to really be able to turn this trajectory of famine around,” he said.
- The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, the institute that monitors hunger worldwide, **officially declared famine in northern Gaza last week.**

#### Trade war effects

- Mr. Skau said the current trade war between the U.S. and its partners is a big concern as it is driving up prices, also for the WFP’s supply chain activities. “We have seen a three-fold increase in the number of acutely food insecure over the past five years.
- This year, we estimate around 320 million acutely food insecure, and at the same time, the funding is coming down. During the start of the Ukraine war and the pandemic, there were generous contributions to deal with the international ramifications.
- But right now, the resources available for any international work are coming down. For us at the WFP, it’s around 40% less this year than last year,” he said.
- He added that **Sudan is the largest hunger crisis that the WFP has seen in decades, since the end of the 1980s in Ethiopia.** “About 25 million people who are acutely food insecure, almost 10 million of those in the high category where you’re basically not eating every day. And we have 10 pockets of Sudan now where famine has been confirmed. That is dramatic,” he said.
- Mr. Skau said in the **situation in Myanmar is deteriorating and the WFP is estimating that around 10 million people are acutely food insecure.**
- He was confident that India has the capacities necessary to deal with the issue of low ranking in global hunger index and the problem of nutritional insecurity. “The government has a plan and a vision to do so. I think it is also inspiring as I said to see the trajectory of India having gone from a country where we were assisting basically with food to a country now which has its surplus and we are discussing on how India can help other countries. But there are still gaps and challenges that need to be addressed,” Mr. Skau added.

#### ❖ Like other relics, India’s fossils are at high risk of being sold abroad

**Context:** In Western India, some of the country’s richest fossil beds lie inside open coal mines. It is gruelling work for palaeontologists with long days under a haze of dust, the deafening hammering of tools, and nights in small-town hotels with basic comforts.

- In 2024, palaeontologist Sunil Bajpai reported that at one such dig, he and his team uncovered the fossilised vertebrae of Vasuki indicus. This ancient giant snake may have stretched as long as a tour bus. But without a national repository or a secure, catalogued fossil locker like those abroad, the stony remains of this 47-million-year-old serpent face an uncertain future.

- “I worry about what will happen to these fossils after I retire in two years,” said 63-year-old Mr. Bajpai, chair professor of vertebrate palaeontology at IIT-Roorkee. “Will they be preserved or fall victim to theft or vandalism?”
- **Around the world, fossils once bound for labs are now advertised in storefronts and auction houses. Ammonites, extinct sea creatures with coiled shells, once crowded ancient oceans. Today, their fossilised remains are sold on the streets of Paris. Larger, rarer specimens fetch staggering sums at auctions from private collectors.**
- In July 2024, Sotheby’s auction house in New York sold a near-complete stegosaurus, a plant-eating dinosaur with spikes, for \$44.6 million. It was the most expensive fossil ever auctioned. In California, luxury homes trumpet dinosaur skeletons as living-room showpieces.
- Thomas Carr is a palaeontologist at the Carthage Institute of Palaeontology in Wisconsin in the U.S. He studies fossils of Tyrannosaurus rex, one of the largest meat-eating dinosaurs in history. In a study published this April titled ‘Tyrannosaurus rex: An Endangered Species’, Mr. Carr reported that 71 scientifically important T.rex specimens are in private hands. Just 61 of these finds are held by public institutions.
- “Commercial collectors have gathered more T. rex material than scientists have since the first specimen was discovered,” Mr. Carr said over a phone call. “The rate of collection by commercial interests was the most surprising and the most alarming.”

#### Heritage at risk

- Over decades, India’s cultural treasures have often vanished into private hands. In 1898, a British landowner unearthed hundreds of gems from a Buddhist shrine in Uttar Pradesh. The relics stayed in his family for generations before part of the collection was slated for auction at Sotheby’s in Hong Kong in 2025. The Indian government blocked the sale. Scientists caution that fossils could be the next heritage lost to the auction block.
- “The palaeontological record of India, especially the Mesozoic age, is incredibly important to our understanding of the evolution of dinosaurs and other organisms,” Mr. Carr said, referring to the ‘age of reptiles’ when dinosaurs ruled the earth. “We can’t afford to lose it.”
- **India’s fossil record includes some of the earliest plant life, dinosaurs and even a skull of ancient humans. That wealth of fossils is due to the subcontinent’s prolonged isolation after splitting from the southern supercontinent Gondwanaland around 150 million years ago. After India collided with Asia 50 to 60 million years ago, ancestral horses and whales emerged along its coasts.**
- **“As of now there are no laws governing fossils and there are huge concerns about vandalism and local sales taking place,”** Mr. Bajpai said. “If we don’t move fast, we’re going to lose a part of earth’s history that you can never get back. Once a fossil is gone, it’s gone forever.”

#### Unsung custodians

- Fossils can vanish without trace: misplaced in storerooms, crumbling from heat and rain or hidden away in private collections. One large cache of Indian fossils today lies with the Ranga Rao-Obergfell Trust. It is a collection built by the late Indian palaeontologist M.S. Ranga Rao and his late wife, the German palaeontologist Friedlinde Obergfell.
- The couple unearthed truckloads of fossils, including bones of a small, hooved, land-dwelling herbivore called Indohyus. Dutch-American palaeontologist Hans Thewissen examined the specimen in 2005 and spotted features that signaled that Indohyus was one of the earliest known whale ancestors. The private collection is now kept in a Dehradun home. Some fossils even lie exposed in the garden, according to Mr. Bajpai. The collection, built over decades, remains largely unsorted and unstudied.

- With no formal safeguards, some enthusiasts have turned custodians of India's deep history. Vishal Verma, a schoolteacher in Madhya Pradesh, spends weekends rescuing dinosaur bones and shells from riverbeds. **The limestone and basalt hills in his neighbourhood, formed 146-65 million years ago, cradle fossilised dinosaur nests and eggs. Ammonites coiled like snakes, slabs of fossil wood and shards of reptile teeth fill every corner of Mr. Verma's home.**
- "We have to recognise the importance of these finds — they tell the story of our past, the story of earth," said Mr. Verma, speaking in Hindi. "There must be strict measures against misuse and vandalism. Fossils should be accessible to people, but they must also be protected."
- **In 2006, Mr. Verma stumbled upon hundreds of dinosaur eggs. He borrowed money to rent a truck and move some to a government museum in Mandav. But that wasn't enough to protect them. In 2013, some of the eggs were stolen and the rest were locked away from public view.**
- "One day they were on the shelf and the other day they weren't," said Ashok Sahni, a veteran Indian palaeontologist of the theft. "Well, when money comes into the picture, it's very difficult in a country like ours to safeguard anything because you can put guards and you can put wire and you can do everything. They did that at the Mandav museum and still, they lost some of the dinosaur eggs kept there and nobody knows how."

#### Fossils for sale

- Fossils aren't just prey for vandals or roadside sellers anymore. A simple Google search can lead you to sites openly selling fossilised dinosaur eggs. They've also become trophies for the rich.
- The stegosaurus fossil that sold for a record \$44.6 million at Sotheby's last year went to hedge fund trader Kenneth Griffin. The fossil frenzy has even drawn Hollywood celebrities like Nicolas Cage and Leonardo DiCaprio, who once had a bidding war over a dinosaur skull. Sotheby's has further stoked the appetite, carving out a new department in 2021 selling fossils alongside space and cinema memorabilia.
- A few years ago, a draft plan for a national fossil repository in India raised hopes. But that plan has barely progressed. Experts warn that in its absence, India's prehistoric treasures remain vulnerable to auctions abroad.
- "With no law to prohibit their extraction or sale, it's entirely possible that dinosaur eggs from India have found their way into overseas markets," Mr. Bajpai said.
- For now, the 27 fossilised vertebrae Mr. Bajpai found of the Vasuki indicus rest in a box at IIT-Roorkee. At an estimated 49 feet, the giant python-like snake would have been longer than the T. rex that palaeontologist Mr. Carr found to be drifting into private hands. Only time will tell if this fossil will be safeguarded as a national treasure, safe from any auction block.

#### ❖ What does the new online gaming Act outline?

**Context:** On August 20, the Lok Sabha passed the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025 after seven minutes of discussion. The Rajya Sabha passed it the next day and the Bill became law after receiving Presidential Assent on August 22.

- Government data suggests that Indians are losing ~₹15,000 crore every year due to "Real Money Games" (RMGs).
- **The World Health Organization (WHO) has linked RMGs to compulsive behaviour, psychological distress, financial hardship, and an overall disruption of family life.**
- Reflecting these dangers, 32 cases of suicide attributed to online gaming addiction have been reported in Karnataka in the past 31 months.
- The RMG industry says this ban may threaten more than two lakh jobs across 400+ companies.

What are the three segments of online games?

- **The Act has proposed three categories for online games — e-sports, social gaming and RMGs. While the Act aims to promote e-sports and social gaming segments, it seeks to ban all forms of RMGs and its advertisements.**
- **The Act defines an online money game as an online game played regardless of whether it is based on skill, chance or both, and is played after a fee-payment or with an expectation of winning money or other stakes (can include credits, coins, tokens, virtual money, etc. which can be converted to money).**
- Under such a definition, variants of popular games like **Poker, Rummy, Fantasy Cricket, and Ludo** would be classified as RMGs. Several such platforms are represented by celebrities including Ranbir Kapoor and Aamir Khan (Dream11), M.S. Dhoni (WinZo), Hrithik Roshan (RummyCircle) and Sourav Ganguly (My11Circle).
- **With respect to e-sports, the Act defines them as games which are recognised under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 and are registered with the proposed regulatory authority.**
- It may include the payment of a registration or participation fee alongside performance-based prize money. Examples include games like Grand Theft Auto and Call of Duty.
- While there is **no legal definition of social gaming, it is included in the broader category of online games defined as games played on an electronic or digital device and operated as a software through the Internet. Under Section 4 of this Bill**, the government can facilitate the development and availability of online social games for recreational and educational purposes.

What does it say about regulation?

- Offering online money games or engaging in transaction or authorisation of funds for the same will be punishable with imprisonment of up to three years, a fine of up to ₹1 crore, or both.
- Unlawful advertisement will be punishable with imprisonment of up to two years, a fine of up to ₹50 lakh, or both.
- Under the **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, offences shall be cognisable and non-bailable.**
- The central government stated that the **Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-IN) will be tasked with blocking or disabling apps that continue to provide banned money gaming services in India, and if needed, it may rope in Interpol to bring in offshore operators of money gaming platforms.**
- IT Minister Ashwani Vaishnav clarified in a statement that no penal action for players has been codified.
- **The Act empowers the Central government to notify and constitute a regulatory authority to recognise, categorise, and register online games. In 2023, the IT Ministry amended the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2021, treating online gaming firms like intermediaries. The amended rules envisaged a system of self-regulated bodies with government oversight.**
- **Online gaming firms were required to comply with KYC norms, and uphold measures to safeguard children through measures for parental access control alongside age rating mechanisms based on the nature and type of content.**
- **The new Act makes no provisions to constraint minors from playing online social games or e-sports. It also provides for a budget allocation from the Consolidated Fund of India to promote online social gaming in the country.**

Why has the government brought in the Act?

- Mr. Vaishnaw said the Act was a response to complaints from users who had lost thousands of crores on online money games, and that it was not a knee-jerk reaction. He said that there is irrefutable proof that the algorithms of online gaming firms do not allow for any user to emerge as a net winner in the long run.
- **A Parliamentary Panel Report (2023)** stated that gaming portals have become agents for funding terror activities. A 2022 Financial Intelligence Report reported that online gaming firms had evaded tax of ₹2,000 crore.
- Further, the Defence Ministry's think tank found that the Chinese App, FIEWIN, has defrauded Indian users of ₹400 crore, with an ED investigation finding evidence of use of mule accounts and cryptocurrency wallets. In yet another report, the government said that gaming companies were involved in GST tax evasion of ₹30,000 crore.
- The current Act says that the unchecked expansion of RMGs is linked to financial fraud, money laundering, tax evasion and many other unlawful activities.
- It also states that gaming firms rely on opaque algorithms designed to manipulate user engagement, and that games can also be operated by bots or undisclosed agents undermining fairness and transparency.
- Additionally, the Act says that gaming firms operate from offshore jurisdictions bypassing domestic laws, undermining state level regulations and presenting significant enforcement challenges in terms of extra-territorial jurisdiction and interstate inconsistencies.
- However, while the Act proposes to establish a robust legal framework, the same is not reflected in the contents of the Act. Gaming companies may still bypass restrictions through VPNs, information cash play, or other mechanisms.

What have courts said?

- **Entries 34 and 62 of the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution** places the regulation and taxation of betting and gambling within the jurisdiction of State governments. And various State governments have taken regulatory actions before. **In 2017, Telangana became the first State to ban all forms of online gaming including skill-based games.**
- In 2020, **Andhra Pradesh** banned online gambling, and in 2022, Tamil Nadu banned games such as Rummy and Poker.
- In 2023, the Indian government reclassified GST brackets for online gaming along with casinos and horse racing, putting them in the same bracket as lotteries and betting. In October 2023, it imposed a uniform 28% GST on the entire entry fee/deposit, instead of platform commission. Gaming firms opposed this move, claiming that their platforms were skill based, and termed retrospective taxes as unfair and damaging.
- The **Supreme Court (SC)** this year granted a stay on notices issued to online gaming companies. The top court's decisions on whether fantasy sports, poker and rummy should be treated as games of skills or gambling, and on retrospective tax for RMG firms, are awaited.
- The Central government has requested the SC for one more week to file submissions in the GST dispute on online gaming, with industry players arguing that games of skill cannot be equated with gambling.
- The **SC had earlier said that games like Rummy and Fantasy Sports involved a substantial degree of skill and cannot be equated with gambling.** This Act does not distinguish between games of skills and games of chance, leading critics of the **Act to say that it erases the intelligible difference and is violative of Article 19 (1) (g) of the Constitution, giving a guaranteed Right to Trade and Occupation.** If the matter is challenged, then the SC can step in to shield the gaming industry with interim relief or issue a notice to the government to explain the rationale behind such a law.

## ❖ India braces for impact of 50% U.S. tariffs from today

**Context:** The United States government is getting ready to implement the 25% additional tariffs imposed on India by U.S. President Donald Trump, which come into effect on Wednesday. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) uploaded a notification of the new tariffs to be published in the official register the following day.

- The Indian government is pushing a Swadeshi mantra to reduce the economy's reliance on exports, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling upon Indians to be "vocal for local" and buy Indian goods. Indian exporters, however, are bracing themselves for a sharp fall in business to the U.S., with early estimates predicting that more than \$47 billion worth of goods will face the 50% tariff rate. This includes the 25% tariff that Indian imports have attracted since August 7 plus an additional 25% tariff imposed as a penalty for India's import of oil from Russia.
- This additional tariff will not apply to iron, steel, or aluminium products; passenger vehicles such as sedans, sport utility vehicles, crossover utility vehicles, minivans, cargo vans, and light trucks; semi-finished copper, and intensive copper derivative products, among others.

## Tariff travails

While the Indian government is now pushing a Swadeshi mantra to reduce the economy's reliance on exports, Indian exporters are bracing themselves for a sharp fall in business with the United States of America



**Market loss:**  
55% of Indian exports rendered uncompetitive compared to neighbouring countries, warns FIEO

**Sectors to be hit:**  
Apparel, textiles, gems

and jewellery, shrimp, carpets, and furniture

**Extent of Impact:** Imports from these sectors could plunge 70%

■ India stands by its statement that these tariffs are 'unreasonable'

■ PM Narendra Modi to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping on August 30

- The Ministry of External Affairs did not comment on whether India is planning any counter-measures or counter-tariffs against the United States, though a senior official said that India stands by the MEA's earlier statement calling the sanctions "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable".
- The U.S. DHS notification detailed the implementation of Mr. Trump's executive order.
- "To effectuate the President's Executive Order 14329 of August 6, 2025... which imposed a specified rate of duty on imports of articles that are products of India, the Secretary of Homeland Security has determined that appropriate action is needed to modify the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS) as set out in the Annex to this notice," the notice said.
- "The duties set out in the Annex to this document are effective with respect to products of India that are entered for consumption, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on August 27, 2025," it added.
- The MEA did not comment on whether the additional tariffs will be on the agenda when Prime Minister Modi meets Chinese President Xi Jinping in Tianjin on August 30. Last week, the Chinese Ambassador to India had referred to the U.S. as a "bully", saying the Chinese government opposes the tariffs and "firmly stands with India" on the issue.

### Worried exporters

- Indian exporter bodies and trade experts, however, are projecting a substantial hit to India's exports.
- According to the Federation of Indian Export Organisations president S.C. Ralhan, the development could "severely impact" India's exports to the U.S., "with approximately 55% of India's U.S.-bound

shipments (worth \$47-48 billion) now exposed to pricing disadvantages of 30% to 35%, rendering them uncompetitive in comparison to competitors from China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines, and other Southeast and South Asian countries”.

### ❖ SC asks why judiciary can't review inaction of Governors on Bills

**Context:** If courts can review a Governor's recommendation for President's Rule, why cannot the judiciary examine a Governor for sitting on crucial State Bills for years together, Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, heading a Presidential Reference Bench, asked the Centre and BJP-ruled States.

- “If the discretion exercised by a Governor under Article 356 of the Constitution can be judicially reviewed, why not the discretion under Article 200?” Chief Justice Gavai responded with a question to a submission made by the State of Maharashtra, represented by senior advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul, about the “wide” discretionary powers of Governors.
- **Article 356 of the Constitution covers the circumstances leading to the President's Rule in a State. The President's decision is based on a report given by the Governor about the failure of the constitutional machinery of the State.**
- **Article 200 deals with the Governor's power to deal with State Bills placed before him for assent.**
- The Supreme Court, in its judgment in S.R. Bommai case (1994), had held that the proclamation of President's Rule could be reviewed by courts to ensure it was not motivated by mala fide reasons.
- The Presidential Reference was triggered by an April 8 judgment of a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court in a petition filed by Tamil Nadu against its Governor, who had been sitting on Bills since 2020. The judgment had prescribed three-month deadlines for the President and Governors to decide on State Bills.
- Supporting the Presidential Reference, the Centre and States like Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana and the Union Territory of Puducherry argued that the judiciary cannot limit the President and Governors to deadlines.
- “If there is anything wrong in the conduct of the Governor, the Parliament will take care. It should not be placed before the judiciary,” Mr. Kaul argued.
- “So if the Governor sits on Bills from 2020 to 2025, the court should sit powerless,” the CJI asked. Appearing for Maharashtra, senior advocate Harish Salve argued that the action of giving gubernatorial assent to a Bill was the “culminating step of the legislative procedure”.
- “The functions of the Governor under Article 200 are indisputably legislative in character,” Mr. Salve submitted.
- To this the Chief Justice quoted Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's words that the Centre and States would function within their own respective domains unless there was an internal emergency.

### ❖ Quad talks on agenda when Modi meets Japan PM Ishiba

**Context:** The Quad grouping is an “important platform” on the agenda for talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba at the 15th India-Japan Annual Summit to be held in Tokyo on Friday, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri.

- Mr. Misri's remarks indicated that the grouping still holds relevance despite tension in India-U.S. ties over President Donald Trump's decision to slap 50% tariffs on Indian goods. He did not explicitly confirm whether India will hold the Quad Summit this year when asked whether Mr. Modi would invite Mr. Ishiba for it.
- Meanwhile, officials said they are still “finalising” the joint declaration at the 11-nation SCO Summit, which will include Russian President Vladimir Putin, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. India hopes a strong statement on “cross-border” terrorism will be included, after SCO Defence Ministers failed to reach consensus over references to the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor in June, which were objected to by Pakistan.

- At a briefing on Mr. Modi’s upcoming visit to Japan (August 29-30) and China (August 31-September 1), Mr. Misri said that the visit to Japan was significant as this was Mr. Modi’s first such summit with Mr. Ishiba, who took charge last year, and his first bilateral visit to Japan since 2018.
- “This will also be an opportunity to launch several new initiatives in order to build greater resilience in the relationship, and to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges,” Mr. Misri said, adding that the two leaders would also travel outside Tokyo together.
- The Japanese Foreign Ministry has announced that Mr. Modi and Mr. Ishiba will travel to Miyagi Prefecture on August 30, where they will inspect the Tohoku Shinkansen plant in Sendai, according to Japanese media. They are expected to sign an agreement on the introduction of Japanese E-10 coaches, to be transferred to India in 2030 for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail or “Bullet Train” project.

### ❖ Greater Bengaluru Authority comes into effect; Maheshwar Rao is named Commissioner

**Context:** The State government constituted the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) chaired by the Chief Minister and co-chaired by the Bengaluru Development Minister. The GBA will come into effect immediately, the order said.

- While the city’s civic limits will be divided into five corporations on September 2, the GBA will be the pan city body tasked with coordination between multiple corporations and parastatals.
- The government also issued an order on Tuesday naming M. Maheshwar Rao, at present the Chief Commissioner of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), as Chief Commissioner, GBA.
- The GBA has three officials — Chief Commissioner, who is the member secretary of the GBA, a chief town planner and chief engineer. However, the GBA, which is also tasked with balancing revenue imbalance between multiple corporations, doesn’t have a post in-charge of finance.
- The GBA has all 28 MLAs, four Lok Sabha MPs, 11 MLCs and six Rajya Sabha members with their votes in Bengaluru, including Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, as members. It also has mayors and commissioners of the five corporations in the city, expected to come into effect from September 2, as members.
- For the first time ever, the heads of all parastatals of the city, including planning authorities, power, water, transport utilities including BMTCL, BMRCL, DULT and BMLTA, city police and fire and emergency services, have been brought on one platform. Lack of coordination between various parastatals has been one of the big hurdles for the city’s coordinated development.

#### Many exclusions

- The government order constituting GBA has also excluded some others. For instance, the Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka), spearheading the suburban rail and Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Ltd. (B-SMILE), the special purpose vehicle recently formed to spearhead mega infrastructure projects in the city, are not represented on the GBA. While Bengaluru City Police Commissioner is a member, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Bengaluru is not.
- The draft of the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, 2024, submitted by the Brand Bengaluru Committee, also had Ministers for Home, Energy and Transport departments as members of the GBA. However, the Bill made into law by the State government dropped them as members of GBA, which many civic activists argue will be a hindrance in the days to come.

## ❖ Zelenskyy seeks India's contribution to ending war

**Context:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his warm greetings on Ukraine's Independence Day, and said Kyiv was counting on "India's contribution to ending the war with Russia".

- Mr. Zelenskyy posted a letter he received from Mr. Modi on August 24, which thanked the Ukrainian president for his "kind wishes" on India's Independence Day.
- Mr. Modi said India has always stood on the side of peace and remains committed to "extending all possible support for sincere efforts seeking an early and peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy".
- Mr. Zelenskyy said Ukraine appreciates India's dedication to "peace and dialogue". "Now, as the entire world strives to end this war with dignity and lasting peace, we count on India's contribution," he said. "Every decision that strengthens diplomacy leads to better security not only in Europe, but also in the Indo-Pacific and beyond," he added.

## ❖ Rajnath commissions Navy frigates, says self-reliance a 'ground reality'

**Context:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh commissioned two of the Indian Navy's advanced Project 17A multi-mission stealth frigates, INS Udaygiri and INS Himgiri, at the Eastern Naval Command base.

- Addressing a gathering, he said, "This is a historic moment for us and the success achieved demonstrates the success of the 'Make in India' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiatives of the Government of India."
- The Minister said that the ships were "equipped with next-gen weapons and systems" and would "enhance the Navy's ability to safeguard national interests across full spectrum of maritime missions". He said the frigates would reinforce the Navy's role as the first responder and preferred security partner in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Mr. Singh said self-reliance was "no longer a mere slogan" and was becoming a "ground reality". "Armed forces are being strengthened under a futuristic vision. India does not believe in aggressive expansionism, but we will not bow before those who mean to harm us," he said.
- He expressed confidence that the warships, built with 75% indigenous components, would strengthen the security system, safeguard maritime interests and assist in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions.
- "This is the first time that two major surface combatant ships from two prestigious shipyards in India are being commissioned simultaneously, which underlines India's rapid naval modernisation and its ability to deliver advanced warships from multiple shipyards, thus showcasing India's power to the maritime world," Mr. Singh said.
- Both ships are products of an industrial ecosystem spanning more than 200 MSMEs, supporting approximately 4,000 direct and more than 10,000 indirect jobs. The two frigates, designed in-house by the Navy's Warship Design Bureau, will join the Eastern Fleet.
- Udaygiri and Himgiri are follow-on ships of the Project 17 (Shivalik) class frigates. Both incorporate significant improvements in design, stealth, weapon, and sensor systems.
- The ships feature modern combined diesel or gas propulsion plants, state-of-the-art Integrated Platform Management System and a suite of advanced weapons and sensors developed by Indian manufacturers.

**Context:** The 130th Constitution Amendment Bill, which seeks the removal of the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers and Ministers of the Union and State governments if they face serious criminal charges, has thrown up an unexpected challenge for the government.

- More than a week since the draft law was referred to a Parliamentary Joint Committee, the panel has not been formed amid boycott calls from three Opposition parties — the Samajwadi Party (SP), Trinamool Congress, and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). The Congress, according to sources, is also strongly considering following suit. This apart from the fact that a Constitution amendment requires a higher threshold of support.
- On August 20, the draft law was referred to Parliament's Joint Committee, with the deadline to submit its report by the first week of the Winter Session of Parliament. The Trinamool was the first to declare its decision to boycott the panel, quickly followed by the SP and the AAP. The Congress is yet to make a decision.
- **Article 368 of the Constitution, which details the power of Parliament to amend the Constitution and the procedure thereof, states that the Bill has to be passed in each House "by a majority of the total membership of that House".**
- It additionally requires "by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting". Thus, for the Bill to pass the first roadblock in the Lok Sabha, it will need the support of at least 362 members, if all the members of the Lower House are present and voting.

#### Falling short

- The Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has 293 members, falling short of the required cut-off. The INDIA (Indian National Democratic, Inclusive Alliance) bloc has 236 members in the Lok Sabha. There are also four Independent MPs, and nine others.
- The BJP did not consult or inform its eight allies before bringing in the Bill, sources said. Although all the allies have extended support, it is not unqualified. Both the Janata Dal-United (JD-U) and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) want adequate guardrails in the Bill.
- These legislation was in the right direction, but there were certain "grey areas" which needed to be addressed, TDP's parliamentary party leader Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu said, while expressing the reservation that the law should not be misused.
- The law should be implemented without any bias, JD(U)'s national spokesperson K.C. Tyagi said.

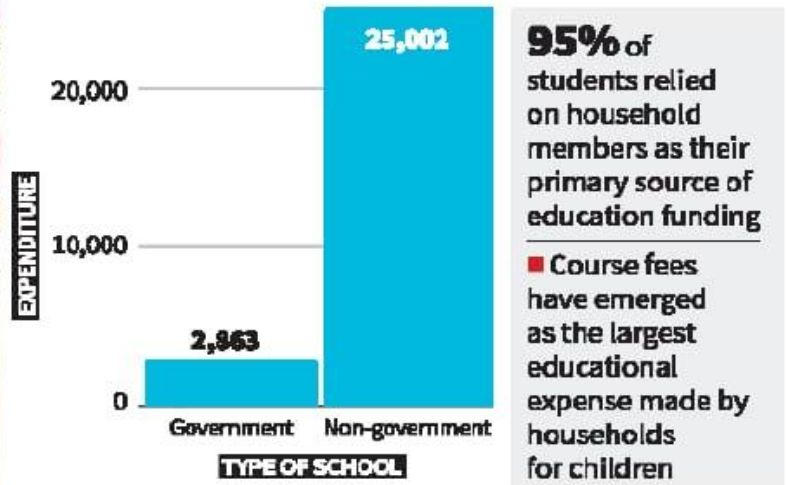
## ❖ Govt. schools account for 55.9% of total enrolments, says survey

**Context:** Students enrolled in private or non-government schools across India end up paying nearly nine times more in school fees than those enrolled in government schools.



### The price of **education**

Households spent an average of ₹2,863 per student in government schools, while the expenditure for non-government schools was ₹25,002, this academic year



- A third of all students across education Boards opt for private coaching in addition to classes in school, data collected by the Comprehensive Modular Survey (Education) for April-June 2025 as part of the 80th round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) revealed.
- The average per-student expenditure made by households on school education during the current academic year (2025-26) in government schools is estimated at ₹2,863, while it was significantly higher at ₹25,002 in non-government schools.
- Nearly a third of all students (27%) were taking or had taken private coaching during the current academic year. This trend was more common in urban areas (30.7%) than in rural areas (25.5%).
- The data focused specifically on household expenditure for currently enrolled students in school education. Data were collected from 52,085 households and 57,742 students across India through computer-assisted personal interviews.
- The survey says government schools play a key role in providing education across India, accounting for 55.9% of total enrolments.
- It is higher in rural areas, where two-thirds (66%) of students are enrolled as against 30.1% in urban areas. Private unaided (recognised) schools account for 31.9% of enrolment nationwide.

#### Education expenses

- Among the students who paid for school education, 95% reported that the first major source of their funding was from other household members. This trend is consistent across both rural (95.3%) and urban (94.4%) areas.
- On the other hand, 1.2% of the students reported that government scholarships were their first major source of funding for school education.
- Course fees have emerged as the largest education expense made by households for children's education.
- Across all types of schools at the all-India level, the highest average expenditure per student during the current academic year was on course fees — ₹7,111 — followed by textbooks and stationery — ₹2,002.

## Rural-urban differences

- Urban households pay significantly more for education and related expenses across all categories.
- Notably, the average expenditure on course fees in urban areas is estimated at ₹15,143, whereas it is ₹3,979 in rural areas.
- “This trend of higher expenditure in urban areas is evident for other types of education-related expenses such as transportation, uniforms, and textbooks,” the survey states.
- Only 26.7% of students enrolled in government schools reported paying course fees, in contrast to 95.7% of students in non-government schools. Among different types of non-government schools, 98% students reported paying course fees in private unaided schools in urban areas. In rural areas, 25.3% of students reported paying course fees in government schools.
- The primary objective of the survey was to generate national-level estimates of average expenditure on school education and private coaching during the current academic year, a press statement released by the Ministry of Statistics said.

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## ❖ Adi Karmayogi initiative to put tribal ‘change leaders’ through their paces at village level

**Context:** Lighting candles, role-play, cognitive group tasks, and “knot-tying” and “fish-bowl” exercises — at the core of efforts to create a “cadre” of 20 lakh “change leaders” for tribal villages under the Adi Karmayogi initiative of the Tribal Affairs Ministry is a training programme that conducts such activities for State, district, and block officials.

- The programme will be extended to the village level in the coming months.
- Government officials told The Hindu that the idea was to adopt a “participatory” approach to problem-solving.
- This involves driving home messages such as “the solution comes from within”, “not dwelling on problems”, “initiating action”, and “creating opportunity from challenges”, according to the Ministry’s concept note for the initiative, which is being run under the Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyaan programme for last-mile scheme delivery.
- The Adi Karmayogi initiative was conceived of earlier this year after a two-day national workshop, where, at a brainstorming session, it was concluded that the reason tribal areas continued to face backwardness was not a lack of schemes for them but a “lack of motivation” in those implementing them.

### ‘Village vision’

- The government, through the training activities mentioned above, intends to create 240 State-level master trainers, 2,750 district-level trainers, and over 15,000 block-level trainers, who will be responsible for taking the training down to 20 lakh village-level officials, volunteers, and community leaders.
- Apart from this, the programme intends to help residents to draw up their own “Village Vision” documents for 2030 for each of the one lakh target villages across over 550 districts, which are to be depicted as “public murals” and will become “aspirational blueprints” for the State machinery to follow.
- Under the programme, the Ministry said it will also set up one lakh Adi Seva Kendras — meant to act as a single-point interface for villagers trying to access the gamut of welfare schemes meant for them so that 100% saturation can be achieved.
- The first phase of the initiative involves holding these training sessions at the village level across 324 districts. Currently, regional training sessions are conducted where State-level master trainers are trained.
- Most of the State-level sessions are also conducted for training district-level trainers, following which block-level and village-level training will take place, according to officials. Once the sessions reach the village level, each session will have 15 volunteers to participate in them.

### Prescribed activities

- At these training sessions, the “prescribed” activities include a “lighting the candle” exercise to encourage participants not to “curse darkness” but “bring the light”.
- A “fish bowl exercise” asks participants to imagine themselves as fish in a bowl and get to know each other.
- The “village scenario role play” exercise involves imagining a village of animal rearers trying to solve water scarcity after the state machinery fails to act and the Deputy Commissioner’s staff is rushed to find a solution.

## ❖ Centre finalises National Designated Authority to kick-start carbon markets

**Context:** The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has announced a National Designated Authority (NDA), a mandatory requirement under the provisions of the 2015 Paris Agreement, to enable a carbon emissions trading regime.

- Within the Paris Agreement, a section called Article 6 defines the contours under which such an emissions trading regime or a market can take shape. A long-standing bone of contention among countries, Article 6 was finally passed at the 29th edition of the climate COP in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2024.
- The creation of an NDA is a mandatory requirement under Article 6.
- A notification from the Environment Ministry on Friday lays out the composition of the NDA, which is a 21-member committee headed by the Secretary of the Environment Ministry. Representatives include officials from the Ministries of External Affairs, Steel, and Renewable Energy, and NITI Aayog.
- The NDA's responsibilities include recommending to the Union government a list of activities that can be considered for the trading of emission reduction units from projects under Article 6, modifying them from time to time in line with national sustainable goals, country-specific criteria and other national priorities; receive projects or activities for evaluation, approval and authorisation; and authorise the use of emission reduction units from projects for use towards achievement of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).
- The NDC refers to commitments by countries to reduce emissions by diverting their energy consumption towards renewable energy sources and taking action to reduce carbon concentrations in the atmosphere.
- India's NDC commits to reducing its GDP's emission intensity by 45% by 2030 from 2005 levels, achieving 50% electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, and creating an additional carbon sink equivalent to 2.5-3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide by 2030 through afforestation.

## ❖ Centre cuts wheat stock limits to 'manage food security'

**Context:** The Union Food Ministry further reduced wheat stock limits for traders, stockists and processors and said the measure was to manage "overall food security and prevent hoarding and unscrupulous speculation." The Centre, however, said there was ample availability of wheat in the country and in 2024-25, wheat output was 1175.07 lakh metric tonne.

- The Government said as part of "continuous efforts to moderate prices of wheat before the upcoming festive season", the wheat stock limit is revised until March 31, 2026. For trader/ wholesaler, the limit has been reduced to 2,000 metric tonne (MT) from the existing limit of 3,000 MT. For retailers, 8 MT is the new limit. Earlier, it was 10 MT. For big-chain retailers too, 8 MT for each retail outlet subject to maximum quantity of (8 multiplied by total no. of outlets) MT is the new limit.
- "This will be the maximum stock that can be held at all their retail outlets and depots put together," the Government said.
- For processors, 60% of Monthly Installed Capacity (MIC) multiplied by the remaining months of 2025-26 is the limit. It was 70% of MIC multiplied by remaining months of 2025-26.
- The Centre asked all wheat stocking entities to declare or update the stock position on every Friday on the wheat stock portal.

## ❖ Transfer of ISRO technologies to private firms

**Context:** The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) has facilitated the transfer of five technologies developed by ISRO to five Indian companies.

- **IN-SPACe which is the single window agency for all space sector activities of private entities**, said that the transfers are aimed at driving commercialisation, strengthening self-reliance, reducing imports, and enabling wider applications of space technologies in sectors such as automotive, biomedical, and industrial manufacturing.



### For biomedical use

- It added that one of the technologies, the **Low Temperature Co-Fired Ceramic (LTCC) Multi-Chip Module**, developed by Space Application Centre (SAC), enables the integration of multiple semiconductor chips into a single compact module.
- This has been acquired by M/s Voltix Semicon Pvt. Ltd., Pune, for biomedical use, particularly in RT-PCR kits requiring high-volume production. Voltix currently depends on imports for this technology; the Transfer of Technology (ToT) will enhance domestic capability and self-reliance.

### For solar panel bonding

- Another, the RTV Silicone Single-Part Adhesive (SILCEM R9), developed by Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), is a room-temperature curable adhesive. It has been acquired by M/s Crest Speciality Resins Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, for solar panel bonding.
- “At present, this adhesive is imported; the ToT will ensure local availability, reduce dependence on imports, and boost indigenisation,” IN-SPACe said.

### For industrial use

- The other three technologies that were transferred to industries are Azista Composites Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad – Film Adhesives EFA 1753 and EFA 1752 developed by VSSC; Ananth Technologies Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad – 30W HMC DC-DC Converter developed by UR Rao Satellite Centre (URSC); and Pushpak Aerospace India Pvt. Ltd., Bengaluru – Anodisation of 3D-printed Al-10Si-Mg alloy developed by URSC.
- “These transfers highlight the growing capability and confidence of Indian industry.
- While some of these technologies will directly substitute imports, others will unlock applications well beyond the space sector. The true impact will be realised when industry scales them up for widespread use. IN-SPACe, together with ISRO and New Space India Limited, will remain a partner in enabling that journey,” Pawan Goenka, chairman, IN-SPACe, said.
- Rajeev Jyoti, director, Technical Directorate, IN-SPACe, said that with the transfer of the five Technology Transfer Agreements (TTAs), the total number of TTAs executed with industries has reached 98.

## ❖ Pre-test for Census 2027 to be conducted in Oct.-Nov.

**Context:** The pre-test exercise for the Population Census, 2027 will be conducted in October and November, the Registrar-General and Census Commissioner (RG & CCI) has informed the Directorates of Census Operations (DCOs) in the States.

- A pre-test is required to test the efficacy of the entire exercise that will be held in two phases — Houselisting and Housing Schedule (HLO) and Population Enumeration — between April 1, 2026 and February 28, 2027.

- This will be **the first digital Census and the first to enumerate caste in Independent India.**
- The test will evaluate the proposed questions, data collection methodologies, training effectiveness, logistics, printing processes, and data quality assessment, and identify potential field issues, Registrar-General of India Mritunjay Kumar Narayan is learnt to have informed the DCOs in the States.
- The DCOs have been told that a **mobile app will be used for the first time to collect data.**
- Other aspects such as self-enumeration, digital mapping tools, and a web-based portal for real-time monitoring and management will also be tried out during the pre-test, the DCOs were informed.
- This is the first Census since 2011 as the exercise that was scheduled for 2021 was delayed, initially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will now be completed in 2027.
- The pre-test for the planned 2021 Census took place in 2019, covering more than 26 lakh people in 76 districts of 36 States and Union Territories.
- Around 6,000 enumerators and 1,100 supervisors from State governments were engaged in 2019.
- That exercise included questions on household amenities from the first phase, and queries for the National Population Register (NPR) and population enumeration from the second phase, tested in succession from August 12 to September 30, 2019.
- Unlike the previous instances, however, this year's pre-test this time will only cover questions about the first phase and not the second population enumeration phase where caste is to be tabulated.
- On July 29, the Union government informed the Lok Sabha that no decision has been taken to update the NPR during the upcoming

#### **Population Census 2027 exercise.**

- The **NPR is the first step for the creation of a National Register of Citizens (NRC), according to the Citizenship Rules, 2003 under the Citizenship Act, 1955. The NPR was first created in 2010 and data was collected simultaneously during the first phase of the 2011 Census.**
- The NPR database, which has the details of 119 crore residents, was updated in 2015-16.
- The RGI had earlier informed the States that the boundaries of administrative units will be frozen by December 31, noting that if any changes are to be made to the limits of tehsils and districts, they should be completed before the end of the year.

#### **❖ India, Canada name envoys, signal end of diplomatic spat**

**Context:** In a move signalling normalisation of diplomatic relations that were scuttled by the spat over the murder of a pro-Khalistan activist in 2023 in British Columbia, Canada and India announced the appointment of High Commissioners.

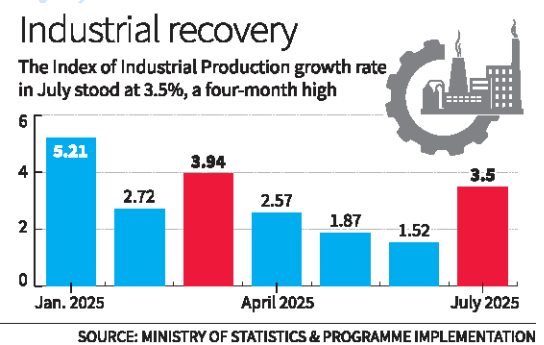
- The move came around two-and-a-half months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met his Canadian counterpart, Mark Carney, on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Kananaskis, Canada, where both leaders agreed to appoint envoys and upgrade ties.
- Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Anita Anand said that Christopher Cooter, a career foreign service officer with 35 years of diplomatic experience, will be the new High Commissioner to India.
- Hours later, the Ministry of External Affairs here announced that Dinesh K. Patnaik of the 1990 Indian Foreign Service cadre will take up charge of the High Commissioner to Canada "shortly". Mr. Patnaik is currently the Indian ambassador to Spain.
- "The appointment of a new High Commissioner reflects Canada's step-by-step approach to deepening diplomatic engagement and advancing bilateral cooperation with India. This appointment is an important development toward restoring services for Canadians while strengthening the bilateral relationship to support Canada's economy," said Ms. Anand.

- India and Canada engaged in a tit-for-tat diplomatic spat after relations deteriorated over Canadian authorities blaming Indian agents for the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, on June 18, 2023. India on October 14, 2024, withdrew its High Commissioner Sanjay Kumar Verma and other senior diplomats stationed in Canada's capital Ottawa. Before that, last September, India had expelled Canada's High Commissioner Cameron MacKay.
- In January 2025, Liberal Party's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who had made dramatic allegations in the Canadian parliament in September 2023, about India's alleged involvement in the killing of Nijjar, resigned in the backdrop of increased political uncertainty at home.
- Despite facing setbacks earlier, the Liberal Party led by Trudeau's successor Mr. Carney won the election in April defeating conservative leader Pierre Poilievre. A beginning towards restoring the relationship was made on May 25 when External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar spoke with Ms. Anand and conveyed his best wishes for a successful tenure ahead. This was followed by Mr. Modi's arrival in Kananaskis on June 16 for the G7 summit.

### ❖ Industrial growth jumps to four-month high of 3.5%

**Context:** Industrial growth jumped to a four-month high of 3.5% in July 2025, driven by a broad-based recovery in the manufacturing, electricity, capital, and consumer goods sectors.

- However, the Index of Industrial Production for July 2025, released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, grew at a slower pace than the 5% growth seen in July 2024.
- The manufacturing sector grew at a six-month high of 5.4% in July 2025, compared to 4.7% in July 2024. The electricity sector saw growth returning in July 2025 after two months of contraction.
- It grew 0.6% in July 2025, compared to 7.9% in July last year.



### Mining contraction

- The mining sector (-7.2%), however, continued to contract in July 2025, its fourth consecutive month of contraction.
- According to Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at the Bank of Baroda, the sector's relatively poor performance can be attributed to the monsoon as well as to subdued demand.
- The capital goods sector grew by 5% in July, on top of an already high base of 11.7% in July 2024. "Overall, the metals and machinery segments have done well, with basic metals, fabricated metals, and electric machinery registering double digit growth," he said.
- "Non-metallic mineral products too registered an impressive growth of 9.5%. This is a positive sign for investment taking place in the economy."
- The consumer durables sector grew at a seven-month high of 7.7% in July, while the consumer non-durables sector grew at an eight-month high of 0.5%.

## ❖ State reported over 80,000 teen pregnancies in last three years

**Context:** While the case of a class 9 student delivering a baby in her school hostel has shocked the State, teenage pregnancies have always been a matter of concern in Karnataka. The State reported 80,813 teenage pregnancies (children aged between 14 and 19) in the last three years.

- While Bengaluru Urban tops the list with 8,891, Belagavi and Vijayapura follow with 8,169 and 6,229, respectively, according to data from the Health Department's Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) portal.

### High and low

- While Udupi and Dakshina Kannada, apart from Kodagu, have been consistently reporting the lowest number of underage pregnancies in the last three years, North Karnataka districts, such as Davangere, Bagalkot, Ballari, Bidar, Chitradurga, Haveri, Raichur, and Kalaburagi are among those regions that have reported nearly 2,000 such pregnancies each in the last three years, according to data tabled in the recently concluded session of the legislature.
- Data on the age-wise teenage pregnancies showed the highest have been reported in the 18-19 age group. While 276 have been reported in children aged between 14 and 15, 786 have been recorded in the 15-16 group since 2023-2024. As many as 2,397 pregnancies have been recorded in the 16-17 group and 11,136 have been reported in the 17-18 group.
- Alarmed by the increasing teenage pregnancies in the State, the Health Department has stepped up measures through stricter enforcement, awareness campaigns and community interventions, said Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao.
- Earlier, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had directed seven key departments, including Health, Education and Women and Child Development, to form a central task force to coordinate interventions. The State has also operationalised committees from the panchayat to district level and strengthened the 24/7 child helpline 1098.

### 'Akka Force'

- Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar, responding to JD(S) member C.B. Suresh Babu in the Assembly, said the government has rolled out the "Akka Force" initiative to address the crisis. This initiative is a special patrol led by women police officers and supported by NCC cadets, to monitor public spaces, prevent child marriages and provide counselling to vulnerable adolescents. The initiative was launched in Mysuru, Belagavi, and Mangaluru and will be expanded across the State, the Minister announced.

### Social media exposure

- Experts attributed the trend to factors such as early exposure to social media without adequate education, child marriages, and a lack of awareness on reproductive health.
- Savitha C., medical superintendent of the State-run Vani Vilas Hospital, said teenage pregnancies are a significant contributor to Karnataka's maternal and infant mortality rates, as adolescent mothers face higher risks of complications such as anaemia, obstructed labour, preterm births, and low birth weight babies.

## ❖ Governor cannot act as 'super CM', Tamil Nadu tells Supreme Court

**Context:** The State of Tamil Nadu countered in the Supreme Court the version of the Centre and BJP-ruled States that gubernatorial discretion is “wide”, saying a Governor cannot act as “super Chief Minister” and there cannot be “two swords in the same scabbard”.

- Appearing before a Presidential Reference Bench headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, senior advocate A.M. Singhvi said the Governor is at best a “lubricator”, a “facilitator”, but not a legislator.
- Tamil Nadu argued that a Chief Minister and his Cabinet must, in the best interest of democracy and the parliamentary form of governance, be responsible for the good governance of a State.
- **“A Governor is a part of the legislative process, but he is not part of the legislation of the State. He is not a legislator. He may have a role in the legislative process, but that too on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers,”** Mr. Singhvi submitted.
- He referred to the submissions raised by the Centre and States supporting the Presidential Reference, which has raised questions about the time limits prescribed by the apex court in an April 8, 2025 judgment in the Tamil Nadu Governor case, noting that many doomsday scenarios were portrayed if the Governor’s discretion under Article 200 (assent to State Bills) was curtailed.
- “Hypothetically anything may happen. The sky may fall on our heads. Constitutional interpretations cannot be done in the backdrop of doomsday predictions... A Governor cannot have a dominating role over the State executive or legislature,” Mr. Singhvi said. Tamil Nadu asked the Bench how a Governor could be interpreted as having the last word on a Bill.
- **“The power to assent, withhold, return Bills by the Governor is only to facilitate law-making in the State... In responsible governments, there is no room for the ‘general’ discretion of the Governor...General discretion to Governor would create chaos,”** Mr. Singhvi contended.
- He said a **Governor’s discretion to return a Bill to the Assembly or refer to the President were both guided by the State Cabinet.**
- “There would be situations in which the government would want a rethink. There could be a change of policy — all these are possibilities for the Governor to return the Bill to the Assembly. There may be cases where the government itself knows the Bill requires
- Presidential assent or the government is in doubt, then Governor may refer it to the President,” Mr. Singhvi explained. Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, made additional submissions on the question whether a State could move the top court under Article 32 complaining of violation of its fundamental rights by the Governor.
- “A State is the bearer of constitutional duties, not the holder of fundamental rights. Therefore, a State cannot maintain a petition under Article 32 on the footing that its own fundamental rights have been infringed. A State cannot use Article 32 to litigate fundamental rights in a representative capacity,” Mr. Mehta argued.
- He also submitted that a Governor enjoyed “complete immunity” under Article 361 for his performance in office.

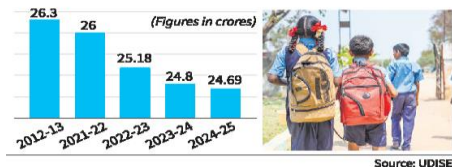
## ❖ School enrolment in 3-11 age group down by 25 lakh: UDISE+

Context: Total enrolment of students aged between three and 11 in schools across India — encompassing anganwadi, pre-school and Classes 1 to 5 — dropped by nearly 25 lakh in 2024-25 compared with the 2023-24 figures, say the latest Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) data released by the Education Ministry.

- The UDISE+ 2023-24 report said that 12.09 crore students enrolled in foundational and preparatory stages, which declined to 11.84 crore students, a dip of 24.93 lakh, in 2024-25.
- The latest data show that the total school enrolment number (from Classes 1 to 12) has fallen by 11 lakh students, from 24.8 crore (2023-24) to 24.69 crore (2024-25), an all-time low since 2018-19.
- These include students in government, government-aided, private and other schools.

### Declining enrolments

The number of students enrolled in Classes 1-12 has fallen to an all-time low of 24.69 crore in 2024-25



### Falling birth rates

- “The decline in the enrolment numbers may largely be attributed to demographic shifts with falling birth rates in primary school-age population. In addition, the decline could also be explained in terms of the presence of the children in pre-primary standalone private institutions,” a senior official in the Ministry told The Hindu.
- Except Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Meghalaya, all States have achieved fertility rates below replacement levels. “Fewer children being born may be leading to lower enrolment,” an official said. India’s total fertility rate (TFR) dropped to 1.91 per woman by 2021, below the replacement level of 2.1, according to the latest National Family Health Survey, 2021.
- Officials said that for calculating parameters such as Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) — the total enrolment in a specific level of education and expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population — the 2011 Census data were used. “Once the 2026 Census data is available, a lot of these projections will be modified,” the official added.
- In the 2012-13 report, the total number of students studying in India from Classes 1 to 12 was reported to be 26.3 crore. In November 2022, when the 2021-22 data were released, the number hovered around 26 crore. The 2022-23 data pegged the enrolment at 25.18 crore, which further fell to 24.8 crore in 2023-24, a drop of 6% or 1.22 crore from the 2021-22 figure.
- Ministry officials have given a disclaimer that the reports of 2022-23 and 2023-24 are not strictly comparable to previous years’ because of a change in the ‘methodology’ of data collection.
- Officials said there was an increase of total enrolment of students by approximately 6 lakh between 2023-24 and 2024-25 in Classes 6 to 8. While 6.31 crore students were accounted for in the 2023-24 report, this increased to 6.36 crore in 2024-25. Total enrolment in Classes 9 to 12 saw an increase of roughly 8 lakh, a spike from 6.39 crore in 2023-24 to 6.48 crore in 2024-25. While the total enrolment has gone down, officials said that GER has improved. At middle level, GER rose from 89.5% in 2023-24 to 90.3% in 2024-25, while at secondary level it increased from 66.5% in 2023-24 to 68.5% in 2024-25.

### Lower dropouts

- Dropout rates have reduced as those joining school are not leaving compared with earlier years. In preparatory stages, dropout rates have reduced from 3.7% to 2.3% between 2023-24 and 2024-25. During the same years in middle school, dropouts reduced from 5.2% to 3.5% and in secondary school from 10.9% to 8.2%.

## ❖ Mumbai and Vizag among safest cities for women: NARI

**Context:** Mumbai, Visakhapatnam, Kohima, Bhubaneswar, Aizawl, Gangtok, and Itanagar have emerged as the safest cities in the country for women, while Patna, Jaipur, Faridabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Srinagar and Ranchi were ranked the lowest, according to the National Annual Report and Index on Women's Safety (NARI) 2025.

- The nationwide index released, based on a survey of 12,770 women across 31 cities, placed the national safety score at 65%. Kohima and other top-ranked cities were associated with stronger gender equity, civic participation, policing and women-friendly infrastructure. Whereas, cities like Patna and Jaipur fared poorly due to weak institutional responsiveness, patriarchal norms and gaps in urban infrastructure, the report said.
- Overall, six in 10 women surveyed felt “safe” in their city, but 40% still considered themselves “not so safe” or “unsafe”. The study revealed sharp drops in perceptions of safety at night, particularly in public transport and recreational spaces.

## ❖ Nearly 60% of MGNREGS budget already spent in first 5 months of financial year

**Context:** Nearly 60% of the budget allocated for the Union government's flagship rural employment programme — Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) — has been exhausted with a month still left to go for the second quarter to end.

- As per the data available with the Ministry of Rural Development, ₹51,521 crore out of ₹86,000 crore earmarked in the Union Budget for 2025-26 has been spent till date.
- The Finance Ministry recently capped spending under the programme at 60% of its annual allocation for the first half of the financial year. The government thus will be left with ₹79 crore under the programme for September. There are 12.15 crore active workers who rely on the scheme to supplement their household's income.
- Nearly 38% of the budget allocated in 2025-26 went into covering the pending liability from the previous financial year of 2024-25.
- In reply to a question in the Lok Sabha posed by Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra on August 5, the Ministry said that as on April 1, an amount of ₹17,259.56 crore was pending as wage liabilities and ₹15,641 crore as material liabilities from 2024-25. The expenditure in the corresponding period of that financial year was ₹61,829 crore, leading to a severe shortfall. No additional funds were allocated to the programme.
- According to sources, top officials of the Ministry of Rural Development have again reached out to the Finance Ministry asking for a revised allocation, but sources said that so far there were no indications from the Finance Ministry on allotting additional funds.

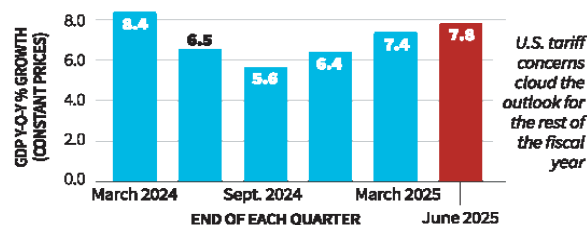
## ❖ GDP growth quickens to five-quarter high of 7.8%

**Context:** India's economic growth rate in the first quarter (April-June) of the current financial year quickened to a five-quarter high of 7.8%, driven by strong performances by sectors such as manufacturing, construction, and services, government data showed.

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, as shown by data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, was previously quicker during January-March 2024. **The 7.8% growth recorded in Q1 of this financial year was higher than the 6.5% predicted by the Reserve Bank of India as recently as August 6.**

### Present perfect, **future tense**

India's economy grew **7.8%** in April-June 2025, the fastest in five quarters, beating expectations



U.S. tariff concerns cloud the outlook for the rest of the fiscal year

- The government also sought to ease worries about growth slowing in the coming quarters as a result of the 50% tariffs imposed by the U.S. on its imports from India.
- The CEA also expressed confidence that the temporary dip in consumer demand in the run-up to the GST Council meeting would reverse itself well before the festival season.
- **Growth in the manufacturing sector** quickened to 7.7% in the April-June 2025 quarter, coming on top of a high base of 7.6% in the same quarter of the previous year. This was also faster than the 4.8% growth the sector saw in the January-March 2025 quarter.
- **The construction sector** grew at 7.6%, on a high base of 10.1% in Q1 of last year.
- **The electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services sector**, however, saw growth slow down sharply to 0.5%, from 10.2% in the same quarter of the previous year.
- The quarter's GDP growth was also propelled by the **services sector**, which on a combined basis grew 9.3%, faster than the 6.8% seen in the same quarter of last year, or the 7.3% growth in the immediately preceding quarter.
- Within this, the **public administration, defence and other services sector** saw the growth accelerating to a three-year high of 9.8%, coming on top of a 9% growth in Q1 of the previous year.
- The **financial, real estate and professional services sector** grew at 9.5%, a two-year high.
- Similarly, the **trade, hotels, transport, and communication services sector** grew at 8.6%, also a two-year high.

## ❖ Rupee crashes to an all-time low of 88.09 against USD

**Context:** Rupee fell to ₹88.09 against the U.S. dollar, responding to the additional tariffs imposed by the U.S. The domestic currency may depreciate further to ₹89.5-₹90 in the coming weeks.

- The Indian rupee fell 0.58% to ₹88.09 against the U.S. dollar responding to the additional tariffs imposed by the United States.
- The domestic currency may depreciate further in the range of ₹89.5-₹90 against the dollar in the coming weeks, analysts said.
- Currency dealers reacted two days after the U.S.'s tariffs on Indian goods kicked in before selling off the rupee. The dealers were waiting to see if the central bank would step in and control the volatility.
- "Once they realised RBI didn't, they started to sell off the rupee." **The rupee depreciates when foreign exchange traders sell and appreciates when they buy.** He added that the RBI may not have intervened because "when there is a trade war, everything is a tool in the war."
- "The **RBI also wants the rupee to weaken so as to offset the impact of the higher tariffs, to make the exports more competitive,**"

- **A depreciating currency would naturally make exports cheaper, as the value of goods that the U.S. would buy for a dollar from India would become cheaper. A further increase in exports over imports may also quicken the pace of depreciation.**

### ❖ **PM vows India will become 3rd largest economy, weeks after Trump's 'dead' swipe**

**Context:** Against the backdrop of trade-related uncertainties with the United States, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a strong case for investing in India, declaring that the Indian economy will “very soon” be the third largest economy in the world.

- Addressing the India-Japan Economic Forum in Tokyo, Mr. Modi said that most Japanese companies find India attractive, adding that India is a “springboard” to access the Global South.
- Welcoming the visiting Indian Prime Minister, **Japan announced a private investment target of ₹10 trillion for India over the next decade.**
- “Japanese companies have invested more than \$40 billion in India. In the last two years alone, there has been private investment of \$13 billion.
- JBIC (Japan Bank of International Cooperation) says India is the most ‘promising’ destination.
- JETRO (Japan External Trade Organisation) says 80% of companies want to expand in India, and 75% are already profitable,” the Prime Minister said. “Which means, in India, capital does not just grow, it multiplies.”
- On July 31, Mr. Trump had criticised India for its high tariffs and cited its purchases of Russian crude as his main reason for imposing the additional penalty tariff. He said: “I don’t care what India does with Russia. They can take their dead economies down together.” India had subsequently described the U.S. penalty tariffs on India as “unreasonable”.
- **They launched an India-Japan AI Initiative as well as an Economic Security Initiative to promote supply chain resilience in sectors like pharmaceuticals, critical minerals, and new and emerging technologies.**
- They launched of the India-Japan Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Forum to strengthen cooperation between SMEs in both nations.
- An action plan was adopted to promote the two-way exchange of five lakh people between India and Japan, including 50,000 skilled and semi-skilled personnel from India to Japan over the next five years.

### ❖ **Eight States propose a cess on sin, luxury goods above GST rate**

**Context:** In the run-up to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council meeting on September 3 and 4, a group of eight States have proposed a cess to be levied on sin and luxury goods over and above the proposed 40% GST rate, in a bid to protect the States’ revenues.

- Without such a cess, the revenue losses from the Centre’s proposed rate rationalisation, which they estimated as at least 15%, would “drastically” hamper their expenditure on development, they warned.
- **The Centre has proposed removing the 12% and 28% tax slabs and moving the vast majority of items in these slabs to 5% and 18%, respectively. It has also proposed a 40% rate for a few sin and luxury items.**
- The Finance Ministers of Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, **Karnataka**, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and West Bengal met in New Delhi and drafted a note, , in which they laid out their concerns and proposals. The note will be submitted to the GST Council when it meets.
- “The revenue implications on States due to the GST rate rationalisation proposals made by the Centre have been discussed in the meeting,” Telangana Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Mallu

Bhatti Vikramarka said, following the meeting. “A consensus has been reached by these States to extend their in-principle support to the proposal of GST rate rationalisation.”

- However, he added that “serious concerns” were expressed in the meeting about the losses that States may incur, which would adversely impact their welfare schemes.

### Revenue dependence

- “States depend heavily on GST as their principal source of revenue whereas the Centre has a far broader revenue base with substantial inflows from direct taxes, large dividends from public institutions, custom and excise duties, cesses and surcharges,” it said.
- Centre also has a larger capacity to raise borrowings which can act as an effective counter-cyclical measure in times of revenue uncertainty.
- It added that GST revenue makes up only 28% of the Centre’s tax revenue, but half of the States’ own tax revenues, underscoring their dependence on this revenue stream.
- The States argued for an “additional levy” that could be imposed on sin and luxury goods, over and above the 40% rate proposed by the Centre.
- “The proceeds of this levy should be fully distributed among the States as a necessary measure to safeguard States’ revenues, discourage the use of sin goods, and promote public health,” they said.

• **Sin goods include items like tobacco, cigarettes, and ghutka, while luxury items are typically high-value cars and other high-end services such as business class and first class flight tickets.**

- States should be compensated on the assumption of a 14% annual growth in their GST revenues.
- If the additional levy fails to ensure this growth, then the Centre should “raise loans secured against the future receipts of the additional levy” to compensate the States, they said.

### ❖ Transfer of public servants at the instance of members of legislature not illegal when there exists complaint: HC

**Context:** Observing that transfer of public servants will not be vitiated merely because it was made at the instance of members of legislature, but depends on the facts and circumstance of transfer of each individual case, the High Court has upheld State government’s decision of transferring a tahsildar at the instance of Bangarpet MLA.

- A Division Bench, comprising Justice S.G. Pandit and Justice K.V. Aravind, passed the order while dismissing a petition filed by S. Venkateshwappa, who was transferred from the post of tahsildar (grade-1), Bangarpet taluk in Kolar district on a letter written by the MLA to the Revenue Minister in December 2024.

### Complaints from public

- The MLA stated in his letter that complaints were received from the local public that the petitioner-tahsildar, who assumed charge in July 2024, was not coming to office in time and he was also not responding to the grievances of the public.
- On the other hand, the petitioner-tahsildar had said that his transfer was not only premature but was vitiated as it was based on recommendations by the MLA with whom he had raised certain differences over some issues in the meeting of the bagair hukum committee held in November 2024.
- It was also claimed that the issue of why he was not in his seat when the Deputy Commissioner visited his officer in August 2024, was closed by accepting his explanation of being on field duty.
- However, the Bench noted that premature transfer was permissible with the approval of the Chief Minister and this procedure was followed in the case of the petitioner.

## Reference to SC verdict

- While citing the apex court's verdict in which it held that "there can be no hard-and-fast rule that every transfer at the instance of an MP or MLA would be vitiated" but depended on facts of individual case as it was the duty of the elected representatives in the legislature to express grievances of the people, the Bench said that in the present case the MLA had brought to the government's notice about the complaints from the public against the petitioner-tahsildar.

## ❖ Promote effective bio-control means of pest management: Chouhan to scientists

**Context:** Expressing concern over the indiscriminate use of pesticides, which is resulting in environmental pollution and affecting soil health, Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chohan, called upon scientists to promote effective bio-control means of pest management.

- The Minister, who visited the National Insect Museum and Live Insect Repository at the NBAIR, promised the scientists of backing them in their efforts to promote biocontrol measures.

### Use of parasitoids

- He suggested to the scientists to use effective **parasitoids (an insect whose larva live as parasites on single hosts and eventually kill their hosts), predators and entomopathogens (microorganisms that can cause disease in insects) for the management of insect pests, to reduce the environmental pollution, and to improve soil health.**
- He expressed concern over the indiscriminate use of pesticides and the management of emerging pests, such as the pink bollworm in Bt cotton.

### Live insect repository

- The Institute also has India's richest live insect repository, maintaining 137 species/strains, supporting biological control labs and academic institutions, he said.

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## ❖ 'India and China must collaborate for stable world economic order'

**Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it was important for India and China to work together to bring stability to the world economic order as he asserted that New Delhi is ready to advance bilateral ties from a strategic and long-term perspective based on mutual respect, interest and sensitivity.

- Prime Minister said, “At the invitation of President Xi Jinping, I will be travelling to Tianjin from here to take part in the **SCO Summit**. Since my meeting with President Xi in Kazan last year, steady and positive progress has been made in our bilateral ties.”
- Mr. Modi said that in the **BRICS alliance**, India was actively engaged in working towards the benefit of the Global South.
- India attaches high importance to its engagement with BRICS, which has emerged as a valuable forum for consultation, and cooperation and has helped promote mutual understanding on a specific set of issues of common interest to emerging economies, he said.

## ❖ Pact with Tokyo to advance low-carbon technology projects

**Context:** With Prime Minister Narendra Modi on a visit to Japan, India's Environment Ministry said that it had signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with Tokyo earlier this month on a first-of-its kind Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM).

- The JCM is a Japanese initiative, whereby the country implements and invests in low-carbon technologies in developing countries and the resulting savings in emissions are credited to Japan's account as carbon credits, which it can use to meet its national emissions-reduction targets.
- “The JCM will encourage the flow of investment, technology assistance, including technology transfer and capacity building support for the implementation of projects involving these low carbon technologies.
- It will also develop domestic ecosystem and partnerships to localise low carbon technologies and associated high technology interventions related to equipment, machinery, products, systems and infrastructure, paving the way for their large-scale deployment,” the Ministry said in a statement.
- The MoC would further facilitate the implementation of projects contributing to greenhouse gas reduction or removal, and sustainable development in India.
- It will also enable the international trading of carbon credits generated from such projects under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement with Japan and other countries on similar lines, “without adversely impacting” India's NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution) commitments, the statement added.
- **India's NDC commits to reducing emission intensity by 45% by 2030 from 2005 levels, achieving 50% cumulative electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, and creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5—3 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent by 2030 through afforestation.**
- **Earlier this week, the Ministry constituted the 'National Designated Authority,' which is the nodal agency to approve such projects, evaluate emission reductions and oversee the functioning of the Indian carbon market.**
- The Ministry said it had also received authorisation from the Cabinet to finalise the rules of implementation and for signing agreements with other countries on similar lines under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement, in consultation with concerned Ministries and the Ministry of External Affairs, the statement added.

## ❖ Russian President set to visit India in December: Kremlin

**Context:** Russian President Vladimir Putin will pay an official visit to India in December, the Kremlin said on Friday, as ties between the countries grow closer after the United States imposed tariffs on New Delhi over its purchases of Russian oil.

- Mr. Putin will also meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a summit in China on Monday, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov told reporters.
- U.S. President Donald Trump has imposed tariffs on Indian goods as ‘punishment’ for New Delhi’s massive purchases of Russian oil, part of a campaign to pressure Moscow into ending its offensive in Ukraine.
- Russia is also one of India’s top arms suppliers, and the warm ties between the two countries date back to the Soviet era.
- Ukraine’s Western allies have sought to cut Russia’s export earnings since Moscow launched its military assault in February 2022.
- But Russia has been able to redirect energy sales away from Europe to countries including India and China, ensuring the multi-billion-dollar flow of funds.
- Mr. Putin has significantly curtailed his foreign travel amid the offensive on Ukraine, for which he was slapped with an International Criminal Court arrest warrant. India is not a party to the ICC and therefore not obligated to detain Mr. Putin.

## ❖ SC returns to full strength of 34 with two new judges

**Context:** Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai swore in Justices Alok Aradhe and Vipul M. Pancholi as judges of the Supreme Court.

- With their appointment, the court returned to its full sanctioned strength of 34 judges, which will continue until the retirement of Chief Justice Gavai on November 23.
- **Justice Pancholi is in line to become Chief Justice of India under the seniority norm from October 3, 2031, till his retirement on May 27, 2033.**
- His appointment process witnessed a rare dissent from one of the Collegium members, Justice B.V. Nagarathna, who noted that Justice Pancholi was ranked 57th in the all-India High Court judges’ seniority list and that several meritorious judges senior to him could be considered for elevation.
- In her dissent, Justice Nagarathna wrote that his appointment would be “counter-productive” to the administration of justice and that the credibility of the Collegium was at stake.
- However, the Collegium, by a 4:1 majority, recommended Justices Pancholi and Aradhe on August 25. Their appointment to the top court was notified within 48 hours, on August 27.
- Justice Pancholi was born on May 28, 1968, in Ahmedabad and was confirmed as a Permanent Judge of the Gujarat High Court in June 2016. He was transferred to the Patna High Court in July 2023 and appointed its Chief Justice on July 21.
- Justice Aradhe, ranked third among High Court Chief Justices, has his parent High Court in Madhya Pradesh, while Justice Pancholi, ranked 19th among High Court Chief Justices, has his parent High Court in Gujarat.
- Justice Aradhe, born in April 1964, was appointed an Additional Judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court in December 2009 and a Permanent Judge in February 2011. He was appointed Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court on January 21 this year.

## ❖ Govt. appoints Urjit Patel as IMF Executive Director

**Context:** The government has approved the appointment of former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Urjit Patel as Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a period of three years.

- He will replace K.V. Subramanian, whose services were terminated by the government six months ahead of his three-year tenure. The termination took effect on April 30.
- The IMF's executive board is composed of 25 directors (Executive Directors or EDs) elected by member countries or groups of countries.
- **India is part of a four-country constituency, along with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan.**

## ❖ Navy reaffirms commitment to security in Indian Ocean

**Context:** The emerging leaders panel discussion under the aegis of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) was conducted at Southern Naval Command in Kochi from August 27 to 28.

- Delegates from 19 member-countries participated, providing an inclusive platform for young naval leaders to exchange ideas and deliberate on the future of maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- The event comprised four sessions. The opening session examined the 'Strategic Importance of the IOR and Challenges from the Perspective of Young Officers', focusing on maritime trade security, climate change, geopolitical dynamics, and innovative solutions for safeguarding IOR. The second session explored the role of AI-enabled systems, cybersecurity, reconnaissance and space-based surveillance in maritime operations.
- Day two featured discussions on the 'Future Role of IONS in Fostering Collaboration Towards Maritime Security', with emphasis on interoperability, joint exercises and professional exchanges. The concluding session, 'Harnessing Training Capabilities Amongst IONS Countries – Future Road Map', addressed pooling of resources, strengthening training linkages and developing common frameworks to enhance preparedness.
- The discussions concluded with consensus on enhancing maritime domain awareness, advancing technological partnerships, and expanding shared training initiatives.

## ❖ Gross FDI at four-year high in June; net FDI fell 50%

**Context:** While the gross Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India grew to a four-year high in June 2025, the net amount contracted more than 50% owing to faster growth in repatriations by foreign companies in India, and outward investments by Indian companies, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

- The data, released as part of the RBI's monthly bulletin, shows that this trend holds true on a quarterly basis as well. Gross investments in the June 2025 quarter grew 10.5%, but were outpaced by the growth in outward FDI by Indian companies, leading to a contraction in net FDI.
- Gross inflows into India, which measures the total amount entering the country, stood at \$9.3 billion in June 2025, up nearly 22% compared with \$7.6 billion in June 2024 and \$7.2 billion in May 2025.
- "Gross inward FDI reached a four-year high in June," the RBI noted in its report. "Even so, net FDI inflows remained muted due to an increase in both repatriation of FDI and outward FDI."
- Repatriation or disinvestment, which is the amount of money foreign companies operating in India are sending outside, increased by 40.7% in June 2025 to \$5.7 billion.

## ❖ Reliance floats AI subsidiary for Deep-Tech, mulls Jio IPO in H12026

**Context:** Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) has floated its AI subsidiary – Reliance Intelligence to focus on AI infrastructure and Deep-Tech.

- “This new company is conceived with four clear missions to house India’s next-generation AI infrastructure. Reliance Intelligence will build gigawatt-scale, AI-ready data centres, powered by green energy and engineered for training and inference at national scale,” RIL CMD Mukesh Ambani said at the company’s AGM.
- “Work has already begun on the gigawatt-scale, AI-ready data centres in Jamnagar. The new company will house global partnerships. Reliance Intelligence will bring the world’s best tech-companies and open-source communities together with Reliance’s deep-domain expertise and execution strength, to deliver performance leadership, resilient supply, and India-first compliance for AI, he said.
- He announced an AI partnership with Google to build world-class assets and execute at India’s scale with Google’s leading cloud and AI technologies.

### AI JV with Meta

- He also announced an India-focused AI joint venture with Meta – for open-source AI adding RIL would foray into humanoid robotics.
- Stating Jio had crossed 500 million subscribers, Mr. Ambani said Jio would unveil an IPO in the first half of 2026.
- Reliance Industries, he said, would set up one of world’s largest single-site solar projects spanning 5,50,000 acre of arid land at Kutch in Gujarat.

## ❖ Ice Age-era dragon fly rediscovered

**Context:** Odonatologists have reconfirmed the presence of the elusive dragonfly species *Crocothemis erythraea* in the high-elevation regions of the southern Western Ghats.

- The species had previously been misidentified or overlooked in this region due to its close resemblance to the more widespread lowland species *Crocothemis servilia*.
- The genus *Crocothemis* in India includes two known species — *C. servilia* and *C. erythraea*. While *C. servilia* is common across lowland areas, *C. erythraea* is known from high-elevation habitats in parts of Europe and Asia, including the Himalayas.
- Photographs of a potential *C. erythraea* specimen were taken from the Munnar high ranges during an annual faunal survey in 2018.
- These records were cited in a 2021 monograph on Kerala’s odonata fauna, but later removed from subsequent checklists following skepticism over the species’ identification by other researchers.
- This prompted multiple field expeditions between 2019 and 2023 in high-altitude sites across the Western Ghats. The study confirmed that the Western Ghats hosts both the species.
- The researchers explain that ***C. erythraea* colonised southern India during the Pleistocene Ice Age, when cooler climatic conditions allowed temperate fauna to extend their range southward.**



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