



**DR. RAJKUMAR ACADEMY
BENGALURU**

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WEEKLY NEWS COMPILATION

A CRISP AND COMPREHENSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS CAPSULE

SEPTEMBER WEEK 2

08-09-2025 TO 13-09-2025

**ACCEPT
AADHAAR AS
IDENTITY PROOF**

**GOVT. CAPS
CINEMA TICKET
PRICE**

**CHINA DIGS IN
ON 'RARE EARTH'**

**HAL GETS 3RD
ENGINE FOR
LCA MK1A**

❖ 'Sri Lankan Tamil refugees not eligible for long-term visas'

Context: Undocumented Sri Lankan Tamil refugees who were exempted from penal provisions by a Union Home Ministry order last week are not eligible to apply for long-term visas (LTVs), a senior government.

- The official, however, did not elaborate on the reason for the ineligibility.
- Though the **order removes the tag of an “illegal migrant” from registered Sri Lankan Tamil nationals who entered India before January 9, 2015, it will not immediately help in the grant of Indian citizenship.**
- The **LTVs, a precursor to citizenship, are issued for a period of one to five years.**
- The official said that **Sri Lankan Tamils are not eligible to apply for LTVs but foreigners can apply for Indian citizenship under the Citizenship Act, 1955.**
- On March 17, 2021, the Ministry informed the Rajya Sabha that **“Any foreigner, including a Sri Lankan citizen, may acquire Indian citizenship by registration or naturalisation after fulfilling the eligibility criteria laid down in the Citizenship Act, 1955, and the rules made thereunder.”**
- A 1986 letter by the Ministry to Chief Secretaries asks the **States to not “entertain the applications of Sri Lanka refugees for the grant of Indian citizenship”.** It states that the Government of India received enquiries regarding “national status of these Sri Lanka nationals who came to India as refugees”.
- “After careful consideration, the **GoI have come to the conclusion that no Sri Lanka refugees who came to India in July 1983 or after should be naturalised/registered under the provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955, and Citizenship Rules, 1956,**” it says.
- The directions are still operational. On September 2, the MHA notified the **Immigration and Foreigners (Exemption) Order under the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025 that was passed by the Parliament in April to repeal and replace four laws which governed the entry, stay, and exit of foreigners, and immigration and passport rules, including the Passport Act and Foreigners Act.** The notified order exempted “registered Sri Lankan Tamil nationals who have taken shelter in India upto the 9th January, 2015” from the provisions of sub-sections (1), (2) and (3) of Section 3 (requirement of passport or other travel document or visa) of the 2025 Act.
- The September 2 notification also exempted undocumented members of six minority communities from **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan** from penal provisions and possible deportation if they entered India without passports or visas, or with expired travel documents, before December 31, 2024.
- While the six communities will be able to apply for LTVs, making them eligible to apply for citizenship after at least 11 years of continuous stay in India, Sri Lankan Tamils will not be eligible for the same.
- **Members of six minority communities — Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians — from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, who enter**

India on valid travel documents “seeking permanent settlement in India with a view to acquire Indian citizenship” are eligible for LTVs.

- Antony Arulraj, an activist closely associated with issues faced by Sri Lankan Tamils since 1990, said that the MHA had been lenient in setting January 9, 2015 as the cut-off date, close to six years after the end of civil war in Sri Lanka. “The notification makes India a safe haven for Sri Lankan Tamils who took refuge before 2015. Those who wish to stay back can do so without fear of being branded as illegal immigrants,” he said.
- **According to the MHA’s report of 2023-24, 3,04,269 Sri Lankan refugees entered India in various phases between July 1983 and August 2012.**

❖ **IAA astronomers make breakthrough in understanding how cosmic dust grains line up**

Context: A team of astronomers led by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) and their collaborators have made a breakthrough in understanding how cosmic dust grains line up with the galaxy’s magnetic field.

- **Dust grains, typically a few micrometers in size and composed primarily of silicates and carbonaceous material, are found throughout the interstellar medium in the Milky Way and other galaxies.**
- These tiny particles play a crucial role in a wide range of astrophysical processes, including the formation of stars and planets.
- The Department of Science and Technology said that this breakthrough by the astronomers provides the strongest observational evidence yet for the long-theorised ways in which dust aligns itself with magnetic fields in our Galaxy.
- They focused on the **massive star-forming infrared dark cloud G34.43+0.24, located around 12,000 light-years away in the Milky Way.**
- Using the POL-2 polarimeter on the James Clerk Maxwell Telescope in **Hawaii**, the researchers mapped how dust in this star-forming nursery aligned with magnetic fields.

Observational evidence

- The study found observational evidence for three different alignment mechanisms acting **in a single cosmic cloud namely RAT-A, RAT-D and M-RAT.**

- **RAT-A, implies RAdiative Torque Alignment in which non-spherical grains exposed to anisotropic radiation fields experience RAdiative Torques—RATs, that cause them to spin up and align with the direction of the surrounding magnetic fields.**

Polarisation fraction

- **RAT-D is RAdiative Torque Disruption** in which large dust grains spin so rapidly under strong radiation from the massive and luminous protostars embedded inside the cores that they are disrupted into smaller fragments, reducing the grain alignment efficiency and thereby lowering the polarisation fraction.
- **M-RAT implies Magnetically-enhanced RAdiative Torque** alignment mechanism in which alignment efficiency of grains is enhanced by strong magnetic relaxation strength of grains, resulting in higher polarization percentages.

Environment

- “This shows that the grains respond differently depending on their environment—sometimes aligning perfectly, sometimes shattering under stress, and sometimes becoming super-efficient at tracing magnetic fields,” the department said.
- It added that by proving how these mechanisms play out in real space, astronomers now have stronger tools to map magnetic fields across the galaxy.

❖ As per revised pact, future talks will focus on U.T. with legislature: Kuki-Zo groups

Context: The Kuki-Zo insurgent groups that signed a suspension of operations (SoO) pact with the Manipur government and the Union Home Ministry on September 2 accused the Press Information Bureau (PIB) of putting a spin on the signed official agreement, which has caused confusion among the people.

- It said that following the renewed SoO agreement, future talks between the SoO group and government’s representatives would focus on the demand for Union Territory (UT) with legislature for the Kuki-Zo areas in Manipur.
- The two groups — **Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United Peoples Front (UPF)** — said in a statement that the PIB’s aberration has seriously upset the Kuki-Zo sentiments to a point of affecting the mood over the much-awaited Prime Minister’s visit to Churachandpur on September 13.
- “The recently concluded MHA and SoO extension agreement for one year, effective from the date signed September 4, 2025, at New Delhi clearly states, ‘SoO Agreement shall be followed by tripartite dialogue with KNO and UPF to pave the way for a negotiated political settlement under the Constitution of India in a time bound manner.’
- The PIB has put a spin on the signed official agreement as follows: “Among other provisions, the revised ground rules reiterated: Need for a negotiated solution to bring peace and stability to the State of Manipur.” This twist by the PIB does not figure anywhere in the SoO agreement signed between the Home Ministry and the SoO group, the statement by the groups said.
- The statement said that before May 3, 2023, when ethnic violence erupted in the State, the SoO group’s demand was local autonomy by way of Territorial Council within Manipur. Post-violence, the demand changed to UT with legislature, which was submitted at the SoO meeting on September 1, 2023.

❖ Russia, India, China aware of mutual interests: Lavrov

Context: Russia, India and China are aware of their common interests in several sectors and there is an overt trend of developing mutual partnership, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

- Mr. Lavrov was referring to the recent bonhomie displayed by the leaders of the three countries at the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Tianjin** last week.
- Triple handshake and huddle of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the summit hogged headlines.

- It even prompted U.S. President Donald Trump, in a social media post, to lament the loss of India and Russia to “deepest and darkest” China.
- “It is a demonstration that three great powers, representing three great civilisations, are aware of their common interests in a number of areas,” Mr. Lavrov said.
- According to Mr. Lavrov, the common interests of the three countries lie in developing the economy, solving social problems, and improving the living standards of the population.

❖ India and Bangladesh to hold talks on water sharing

Context: The India-Bangladesh Joint River Commission is set to meet in Delhi on Tuesday, sources said, amid ongoing tensions between the two countries. Dhaka plans to send a 10-member team to raise its concerns about water sharing of 14 cross-border rivers.

- Sources said that Bangladesh plans to use the discussion as a warm-up for talks on the **Ganga Waters Agreement of 1996** that will come up for renewal next year, when Bangladesh will also hold its first election since the overthrow of the Sheikh Hasina government in August 2024.
- The **treaty was signed during Ms. Hasina’s first term in power in 1996, when it was decided that the treaty would be considered for renewal 30 years later.** It is understood that Bangladesh will now demand a longer time frame before the next renewal of the treaty. It is also seeking some changes in the use of the river’s water on the Indian side.
- Diplomatic sources said that Dhaka is expected to ask for a special vehicle to manage the waters of 14 rivers, including the **Muhuri, Khowai, Gomti, Dharla, and Doodhkumar.**
- Bangladesh also wants India’s support to create a joint flood forecasting mechanism, sources said.

❖ Anuparna Roy wins best director award at Venice festival

Context: Filmmaker Anuparna Roy, who made her debut with Songs of Forgotten Trees, has bagged the best director award at the Venice International Film Festival.

- Presented by filmmaker Anurag Kashyap, the film premiered in the festival’s prestigious Orizzonti Competition section, an international competition for films that highlight new trends, with a focus on debut works, young talent, indie features, and less-known cinema, on September 1.
- “This film is a tribute to every woman who’s ever been silenced, overlooked, or underestimated. May this win inspire more voices, more stories, and more power for women in cinema and beyond,” Ms. Roy said in a statement.
- Songs of Forgotten Trees follows the story of Thooya, a migrant and aspiring actor, who survives the city by leveraging beauty and wit, occasionally trading intimacy for opportunity.

Stand by Palestine

- During her acceptance speech, the filmmaker spoke on the ongoing Israel and Palestine conflict. “Every child deserves peace, freedom, liberation, and Palestinians

are no exception... it's a responsibility at the moment to stand by Palestine. I might upset my country but it doesn't matter to me anymore," she said, according to the entertainment news outlet Variety.

- Produced by Bibhanshu Rai, Romil Modi, and Ranjan Singh, the cast includes Bhushan Shimpi, Ravi Maan, Pritam Pilania, and Lovely Singh.
- The **Venice International Film Festival concluded.**

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❖ Accept Aadhaar as identity proof, SC orders poll panel

Context: The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Election Commission to include Aadhaar as the 12th “indicative” document that those seeking inclusion or exclusion of names on the electoral rolls of Bihar could file as proof of identity during the special intensive revision.

- A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi clarified that the **use of Aadhaar would strictly be as proof of identity, and not as evidence of Indian citizenship.**
- The EC officials are entitled to verify the “authenticity and genuineness” of the Aadhaar submitted to them, just the way they would do in the case of the other 11 documents, the court noted in the order.
- “Apart from passport and birth certificate, none of the remaining nine of the 11 documents you [EC] have listed for SIR are conclusive proof of citizenship. The petitioners are also agreeing that Aadhaar is not proof of citizenship. Statutorily also Aadhaar is not proof of citizenship. Then why can’t you add Aadhaar too in the list? This court has asked you several times to consider Aadhaar... Why are you not?” Justice Bagchi asked the EC’s counsel, senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi.
- The court ordered the EC to issue instructions to officials, from Electoral Registration Officers to booth-level officers (BLOs), working on the ground in poll-bound Bihar, to accept Aadhaar from persons filing claims or objections. Approximately 65 lakh voters, out of a total 7.89 crore in the State, were excluded from the draft rolls published on August 1.
- The deadline for filing claims to include names and file objections to exclude names for reasons such as death, permanent shifting, and duplication, was September 1. The EC, on September 2, clarified that these were welcome even beyond the deadline.
- On July 10, the Supreme Court urged the EC to consider accepting Aadhaar as a document of identity during the SIR. Again, on August 14, the court formally directed the use of Aadhaar as a proof of identity and residence.
- Finally, on August 22, in response to complaints that the EC was still not accepting Aadhaar as a valid proof of identity or residence during the claims-and-objections period, the court clarified that voters excluded from the draft electoral roll could attach either Aadhaar card or any of the 11 “indicative” documents.
- Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Bihar’s main Opposition party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, said the BLOs were refusing to accept Aadhaar from claimants despite these back-to-back orders from the top court.
- “Your Lordships had clearly said several times that Aadhaar can be used as an alternative to any of the 11 documents. BLOs are still refusing. The EC is penalising officers for accepting Aadhaar and issued show-cause notices to BLOs who have allowed Aadhaar...Disciplinary proceedings have already started against these officers.
- There are no instructions from EC to officers to accept Aadhaar despite separate orders by this court... I have 24 affidavits from people from various districts who were unsuccessful in giving Aadhaar.

Go-ahead for Aadhaar

The Supreme Court has allowed the use of Aadhaar as proof of identity for special intensive revision of electoral rolls in Bihar

■ The court takes note that despite its repeated directives, booth-level officers were refusing to accept Aadhaar

■ It directs EC to publicise the order to inform voters that they can use Aadhaar

■ Document should be used only as proof of identity or residence, and not as evidence of citizenship



- The EC's conduct amounts to gross contempt of this court's orders... We want Aadhaar to be used as proof of residence or identity, so that a person can vote. We want only 11 documents plus Aadhaar," Mr. Sibal submitted.
- **Mr. Dwivedi countered that Aadhaar could not be accorded the same status as a passport, which was a proof of citizenship.** Besides, he contended that over 99% of the excluded voters had already submitted their claims and objections, disproving the petitioners' argument that people did not have any of the 11 documents. Mr. Dwivedi said none of the political parties had pointed out any errors with the SIR process.
- **Justice Kant said Aadhaar was like any other official document such as ration card, passport, or birth certificate. Both statutes and judicial dictum did not consider Aadhaar as proof of citizenship. "You [EC] can accept Aadhaar and verify their authenticity," Justice Kant observed.**
- Justice Bagchi said Aadhaar was not "alien" to the **Representation of the People Act**. "One of the provisions of the Act, in fact, allows Aadhaar as proof of residence," the judge said.
- The court orally asked Mr. Dwivedi to give "publicity" to the judicial order so that aggrieved voters would come to know and file their claims and objections along with Aadhaar, if need be. He responded that the order would be posted online.

❖ IIMB's global ranking in FT MiM 2025 goes up

Context: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore's two-year full time MBA programme – the Post Graduate Programme in Management (PGP) – has been ranked number one in India and number 28 globally in the Financial Times Masters in Management (FT MiM) 2025 global ranking.

Global top 30

- **The programme was ranked at 41 globally in 2024. With the new ranking, the institute is now the only Indian B-school to feature in the global top 30.**
- The FT MiM ranking evaluates the world's top business schools across 19 criteria, with alumni feedback accounting for 56% of the ranking's weight and school data comprising the remaining 44%.
- It factors in outcomes such as employment, return on investment, diversity, ESG, and internationalisation, the assessment provides a holistic measure of institutional performance.

Career progression

- Outcomes of the IIMB alumni indicate higher career progression, marked rise in weighted salaries, and a notable salary percentage increase of 47% – the highest among the top three Indian B-schools. The institute has also advanced in measures of value for money, improved ESG and Net Zero teaching rank, and has recorded a leap in its carbon footprint rank, moving from 73 to 13.
- The gains in diversity are also notable. The proportion of female faculty rose from 22% to 25%, female students from 33% to 40%, and women on the institute's board from 30% to 40%. The IIMB also recorded an increased intake of international students to its programme this year.

Cultivating diversity

- “The IIMB benchmarks its curriculum and impact through research against the best in the world to ensure that its students play a decisive role in addressing complex global challenges. The FT MiM ranking reaffirms our promise of delivering a transformational experience that leaves a lasting impact on students, practitioners, industries, and society,” said U. Dinesh Kumar, Director in-charge, IIMB.
- Mukta Kulkarni, Dean, Programmes and Chairperson, Office of International Affairs, said that the 2025 FT MiM rankings were aided by the diversity that the institute has cultivated across its faculty, student, and alumni fraternity, as well as its governing body.

❖ Infosys to train journalists in digital media and AI

Context: The Karnataka Media Academy signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Infosys Ltd. to assist journalists in digital education, skill development, and capacity building.

- The training will be taken up under the CSR programme Springboard and is the first in the country, a note from the Chief Minister’s Office said.
- The MoU was signed in the presence of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. “The media academy will get access to digital content on Springboard, and journalists can benefit from the learning content in the areas of soft skills, personality development, and overview to the latest technologies such as the artificial intelligence.
- This programme will help journalists in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities,” said
- Satheesha B. Nanjappa, senior vice-president and head of education, Training and Assessment. The programme aims to train 150 journalists this year and will involve a three-day training that will cover skills for digital media, the use of artificial intelligence, and personality development. One batch will be dedicated to train women journalists under the Gender budget, a note said.

❖ 6.17 acres sanctioned for Quantum City at Hesaraghatta, says Minister Boseraju

Context: The State government has sanctioned a patch of 6.17 acres of land at Hesaraghatta for the establishment of a Quantum City (Q-City), Science and Technology Minister N.S. Boseraju announced.

- “As we assured at the Bengaluru Quantum Summit, our government, under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and at the initiation of Department of Science and Technology, has sanctioned 6.17 acres of land at Hesaraghatta to set up Quantum City,” said the Minister in an X post.
- **According to him, Q-City will be Karnataka’s dedicated hub for state-of-the-art research laboratories, startup incubation, industry-academia collaboration. It will also feature production clusters for quantum hardware and processors and Quantum HPC data centres.**
- “This milestone is the start of our bold vision **to build a \$20 billion Quantum Economy by 2035** to create over 2 lakh direct jobs,” he wrote.

- **Karnataka was aiming to garner a 20% share in the global quantum market**, he stated.
- “This is a historic step for Karnataka. **The Quantum City at Hesaraghatta will attract global talent, investments, and firmly place Bengaluru on the world’s quantum map. Build in Karnataka, but will be scaled across India and eventually to transform the world,**” the Minister added.
- Additionally, he said, 8 acres of land have been sanctioned for ICTS–TIFR (International Centre for Theoretical Sciences) to expand research and academic excellence in theoretical sciences — strengthening Bengaluru’s position as a global hub for advanced science.

❖ **Naga council in Manipur to enforce trade embargo**

Context: An apex body of Manipur Nagas has stuck to its decision to enforce an indefinite ‘trade embargo’ across all Naga-majority areas of the State from September 8 midnight, less than a week after the Centre announced the “reopening” of a crucial national highway.

- The United Naga Council had announced the ‘trade embargo’, expected to affect all forms of trade and transportation of goods, after a meeting between its team and officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs on August 26 was inconclusive.
- The meeting was on the twin issues of the **Centre’s move to scrap the Free Movement Regime, and fence the 1,643-km India-Myanmar border.**
- The **UNC is opposed to the border fencing as Nagas believe the boundary was imposed by the British to divide the Naga homeland straddling Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Nagaland, and Myanmar’s Sagaing Division.**

❖ **Israeli Finance Minister visits India, signs bilateral investment treaty**

Context: Days after Israel intensified its ongoing military operation in Gaza Strip, India hosted Israeli Minister of Finance Bezalel Smotrich, who held talks with his Indian counterpart, Nirmala Sitharaman, and signed a Bilateral Investment Agreement.

- Mr. Smotrich is leading a delegation of Israeli officials that includes the Chief Economist of the Israeli Ministry of Finance, Shmuel Abramzon.
- “The agreement we signed expresses our shared vision for innovative and secure economic development. This is a strategic step that will open new doors for both Israeli and Indian investors, strengthen Israeli exports, and provide businesses on both sides with certainty and tools to develop in the world’s fastest-growing markets. **India is a growing economic powerhouse, and cooperation with it is a tremendous opportunity for the State of Israel,**” said Mr. Smotrich after signing the agreement with Ms. Sitharaman.
- Mr. Smotrich’s arrival in India coincided with the launch of a new phase of Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip as the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) are trying to



evacuate the Gaza City in order to create a sanitised zone, which has million-plus civilians facing serious issues like bombing raids and starvation.

Significant outreach

- **Mr. Smotrich's visit to India is a sign of significant outreach by Israel as he was banned by the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Norway and Canada in June this year.**
- The Ministry of External Affairs is yet to respond to a query about the visit but highly placed Israeli sources said that Israel is in the process of **throwing open new sectors of its economy, especially the construction sector, which will generate investment and employment opportunities for Indians. Israel, which started the current military campaign after the October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas, has hired a large number of Indian blue collar workers in the last two years.**
- Mr. Smotrich also met Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, who in a message said, "Our discussions focused on further strengthening trade and investment ties between our nations."

New model

- "A **new Bilateral Investment Agreement signed by Israel's** Minister of Finance Bezael Smotrich and India's Finance Minister **will facilitate reciprocal investments between investors from both countries. Israel is the first OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] member state with which India has signed this strategic agreement, in accordance with India's new model for investment treaties,**" said the Israeli Ministry of Finance. Mr. Smotrich announced that the Israeli Ministry of Finance is examining the possibility of opening a representation office in India.
- The Israeli Ministry further said that the **new agreement will replace the previous agreement that was signed in 1996.**

❖ **Parliamentary panel to be briefed ahead of EU-India FTA talks**

Context: As European Trade Commissioners head to Delhi later this week to fast-track Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks, the government will brief the parliamentary consultative committee on the discussions, including on contentious issues such as agricultural market access, and non-tariff barriers like the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

- The briefing comes close on the heels of the collapse of trade negotiations with the United States over issues such as opening the market for agricultural commodities, dairy and genetically modified crops, as well as ties with **Russia.**
- Officials from the Ministry of External Affairs and the Commerce Ministry **are expected to help build political consensus over FTA talks with European countries, which could also demand similar concessions from India.**
- According to sources, agreements signed in the past few months will be discussed during the briefing. This includes an **FTA with the United Kingdom, and an agreement signed with Nordic countries last year, expected to go into force on October 1.** However, these deals skirted the issues over agriculture and visas, focusing instead on areas that could be agreed on.

- According to a notice sent out to members of the Shashi Tharoor-led Committee on External Affairs, the briefing by the government on “India and Europe Relationship: Opportunities and Challenges” will take place tomorrow, a day before European Union’s trade commissioner Maros Sefcovic and agriculture commissioner Christophe Hansen arrive in Delhi on September 11 for talks beginning Friday.
- EU trade negotiators are already in Delhi for preparatory meetings, where both sides are expected to agree on an accelerated plan for talks every month, so as to arrive at an FTA deal by the end of the year. In addition, **a 28-member delegation of the Political and Security Committee (PSC) that oversees the EU’s foreign, security and defence policies will travel to Delhi** from September 10-14.
- **“The visit builds on recent key milestones, including the EU College of Commissioners’ visit to India in February, the inaugural EU-India Strategic Dialogue in June, and the upcoming EU-India Summit in early 2026,” the European Union office in India announced.**
- While the visits by the trade negotiators and commissioners will focus on the FTA, the PSC is expected to push for India to play a more proactive role in the Ukraine conflict and reduce its processing of Russian oil that finds its way back to European markets.
- The visits follow the U.S. decision to impose a total 50% tariff on Indian goods, including a 25% penalty tariff for the purchase of Russian oil, with threats of more “secondary sanctions” from the U.S. over the Ukraine conflict. While the EU has not imposed penalty tariffs on India, it has moved to sanction several Indian companies including Gujarat-based Nayara Energy, partially owned by Russian oil major Rosneft. As a result, Nayara Energy’s oil purchases are being refused by shippers and insurers, even as the EU is preparing a 19th package of sanctions that will impose penalties on the European buyers of the refined-Russian products sold by Indian refineries.
- Sources said the **FTA negotiators have cleared about half of the 23-24 chapters in the final EU-India FTA, and they should complete the agreement by the end of 2025, or early next year.**

❖ Online gaming Act cases moved to Supreme Court

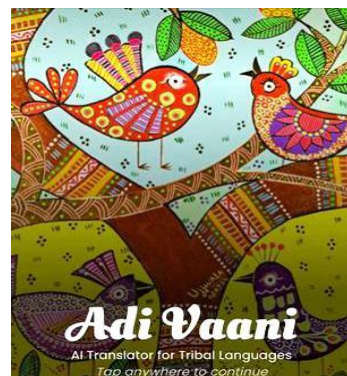
Context: The Supreme Court allowed a petition filed by the Centre seeking transfer of three cases pending in the Delhi, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh High Courts challenging the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025.

- A Bench headed by Justice J.B. Pardiwala transferred the cases to the apex court. The Bench asked the High Courts to transfer the case records to the Supreme Court. Arguing for a transfer, the Union government said multiple proceedings before the various High Courts would add to the confusion, especially if the judgments contradict each other. An authoritative declaration on the constitutionality of the statute would settle the law.

❖ Translated collection of Bhil folk tales to be out soon

Context: The Union government's recent initiative to bring out a translation tool for tribal languages is helping bring out a translated collection of folk tales of the Bhil tribe in Madhya Pradesh.

- The collection, in Hindi, will feature **stories of inter-caste love, caste discrimination, guru puja and the celebration of theatre.**
- In the compilation, titled Anuvad, a recurring theme in several stories appears to be a narrative where casteism is defeated through arguments such as **“caste was never a part of Sanatan Dharma”, or “there is no caste in Manusmriti, it was introduced”, and that caste differences should be set aside because “all Hindus are the same”.**
- The e-booklet will be made available on the Tribal Affairs Ministry's Adi Vaani website and the app. Other stories talk about **farmer distress, faith healers, and worshippers of Lokmata Ahilya Devi, the Narmada, and Sant Singaji.**
- A story about **inter-caste love titled Jaativaad Khatam Karo (end casteism) speaks of Basant and Palasi**, who live in a beautiful village, where the only problem is that of casteism. While Basant's caste location is not revealed in the story, it says Palasi is Dalit and Basant is of a “higher” caste. Basant, an attendance marker at a factory, falls for Palasi, a worker, but the villagers object to this.
- The villagers, led by the Pandit, stop Basant to confront him about the adharm (sacrilege).
- Basant stands his ground, enraging the Pandit, who forces Basant to argue with him in a public square. In this dialogue, the Pandit argues that caste is part of Hindu religious texts, while Basant argues that caste was never part of the Manusmriti but that it was inserted in made-up shloks (verses) later in the form of a “conspiracy”.
- He goes on to argue that inter-caste relations are not wrong “because all Hindus are the same”, positing that “casteism” goes against the “Varna system”, which is based on karma and not on birth.
- The Pandit listens to Basant, changes his mind, and declares him “innocent”, calling him a “protector of faith”.
- **Another story is about a fierce night-long street play competition where a “Vanvasi” audience is won over by the protagonist's theatre group, which starts playing the roles of “Vanvasis” on stage, speaking their language and dancing their dances.**
- These tales have been collected from oral storytelling traditions of the Bhil community in regions of Madhya Pradesh, with some of them referring to the Nimar region of the State.



Vague timeline

- The stories do not mention the year in which they take place, but some of them have vague clues indicating that they are taking place in a modern world, with the mention of cars and roads, and characters who are police officers and district officials.
- Officials told that such folk tales from **Gondi, Santali, and Mundari communities** have also been translated and will be made available soon.

- In a story titled **‘Guru Pujan’, Samandar, a hard-working schoolteacher in a village, is preparing for Guru Purnima**. As preparations are under way, the crowd is stunned into silence by a visibly drunk policeman, who is beating a child. When stopped, he threatens violence and cases against the teachers, children and guests, and vandalises the idol that was supposed to be worshipped. Samandar works up the courage to confront the policeman, stands his ground, and ensures that he runs away. When the students see their teacher defending their lives, they say they will now worship him as their guru. At this point, Samandar posits that they should instead worship “the guru of gurus” — the “bhaagwat flag” — a religious flag, typically yellow or saffron in colour. He says, “This flag represents our culture and civilisation.
- It is a vehicle for our nation. Our Sanatan culture is reflected in this. This is our guru.”

❖ Red sea cable cuts take a toll on Indian networks to Europe

Context: Bharti Airtel Ltd., Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. and Tata Communications Ltd.’s networks are among many dealing with increased latency to traffic between India and Europe, according to telemetry published by the San Francisco-based network intelligence firm Kentic, Inc.

- This follows cuts to the undersea cable systems SEA-ME-WE 4 and IMEWE in the Red Sea, which connect India to West Asia and Europe. Undersea cables are an essential part of the global Internet’s infrastructure, forming the backbone of networks around the world.
- Latency is a measure of how long a data packet takes to make a round trip between two points. While latency between any two points on earth is rarely over one second, differences between domestic and international traffic can be perceptible, such as an inter-continental video call. According to Kentic’s data, latency between Europe and Mumbai (where most subsea cables land in India), went up from roughly 110–150ms to 190–300ms, depending on which cloud service provider was used to test the latency.
- So far, widespread disruptions to networks have not been detected, as India has over a dozen subsea cable systems landing in the country, allowing telcos to reroute traffic over other systems (which are less optimal, but in any case allow for traffic to continue flowing).
- Airtel, Tata Communications and Reliance Jio did not respond to a request for comment. The Department of Telecommunications did not respond to a query.
- **This is the second disruption to subsea cable systems connecting to India, after three subsea cable systems faced cuts in the Red Sea in the middle of last year, also linked to Houthi attacks in the ongoing crisis in the region.**

❖ India, Qatar likely to finalise terms of reference for FTA in early October

Context: India is likely to finalise terms of reference for a free trade agreement (FTA) with Qatar in the first week of October, a government source said. The source added that Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal may visit the Gulf country to finalise the same on October 6.

- The **possibility of a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) with Doha was first announced in February during the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani's visit to India. The two sides sought to double their bilateral trade by 2030.**
- **Doha accounts for 1.22% of India's total trade. In FY 2024-25, India exported goods worth about \$1.68 billion, whilst it imports totaled \$12.47 billion. Qatar's key exports to India include liquefied natural gas (LNG), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), chemicals and petrochemicals and aluminium articles, among other things.**
- Expanding the number of FTA partners has emerged as an imperative for New Delhi in response to U.S. President Donald Trump-induced tariff regime.
- Washington instituted a 50% tariff on Indian products inclusive of a 25% penalty for buying Russian oil. For perspective, trade with the North American country accounted for 11.4% of India's overall trade in FY 2024-25.

Talks progressing well

- Enumerating progress about the trade agreement with the European Union, the source stated that talks were progressing well with a delegation of the European Union already in New Delhi. Mr. Goyal is expected to meet the trade commissioner for EU Maroš Šefčovič as part of the 13th round of talks.

❖ 'India halts grid access for 17 GW of clean energy projects'

Context: India has cancelled grid access for nearly 17 gigawatts (GW) of delayed clean energy projects to prioritise connections for those that are operational or nearing completion, according to a source familiar with the matter and official documents reviewed by Reuters.

- The state-run Central Transmission Utility of India Ltd. (CTUIL) informed companies including Adani Green Energy, ReNew Power, NTPC, Avaada Group, JSW Energy, and ACME Solar about the cancellations, the documents show.
- **The affected projects are located in renewable-rich states such as Rajasthan, western Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh in central India,** according to a document from the federal agency overseeing inter-state transmission access.

Notices served

- The grid access terminations were carried out in the June quarter after prior notices were issued to the companies, said the source, who requested anonymity as the firms are seeking relief from the federal power regulator, the **Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC).**

❖ Radhakrishnan elected Vice-President of India

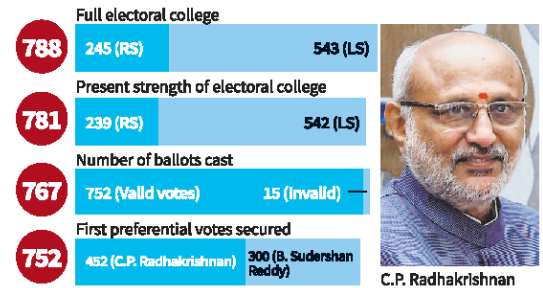
Context: Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan was elected the **15th Vice-President of India** by a margin of 152 votes. The Opposition fell short of its own expected tally, even as 98.2% of the total electorate cast their ballot.

- Mr. Radhakrishnan — the ruling National Democratic Alliance's nominee — **got 452 first preferential** votes against the joint Opposition candidate Justice B. Sudershan Reddy, who got 300 votes. Fifteen votes were found to be invalid and 14 MPs abstained.

- **Including the strength of both Houses, the full electoral college comprises 788 electors. With six vacancies in the Rajya Sabha and one in the Lok Sabha, this tally was reduced to 781 for the election.**

Comfortable victory

Radhakrishnan won by a margin of 152 votes, as 98.2% of the total electorate, comprising both Houses of Parliament, cast their ballot



Cross-voting

- Out of this, 767 electors cast their vote before the polling closed at 5 p.m. Rajya Sabha Secretary-General P.C. Mody, the Returning Officer for the election, announced the results.

❖ Karnataka houses more than 50% of mid-market GCC units in India: Report

Context: Karnataka houses more than 50% of the mid-market GCCs in India, employing over 74,000 professionals, finds a new report released by the Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM), in collaboration with global management consulting firm Zinnov.

- According to the **report titled “Karnataka Mid-Market GCC Report 2025: Lean, Local, and Globally Impactful,”** the State hosts more than 230 of the 480+ mid-market GCCs in the country.
- These centres are not just expanding faster; they are maturing 1.4 times quicker than larger peers, embracing product ownership, CXO-level leadership, and embedding AI-first strategies, the report notes.

- **Mid-market GCCs are Global Capability Centres established by mid-sized enterprises with annual global revenues ranging between \$100 million and \$1 billion.**

- According to the report, these firms scale faster and with greater control in Karnataka, enabled by plug-and-play infrastructure, payroll incentives, and simplicity of the government policies. **Karnataka was the first in the country to roll out a GCC policy in 2024.**

- The report also notes that the State captured a disproportionately high share of new mid-market GCCs over the past two years. Around 65% of all new mid-market GCCs in India since 2023 have been set up in Karnataka.
- “Higher talent quality in the State allows mid-market GCCs to operate with leaner teams – driving more productivity per employee and reducing overall cost of operations,” reads the report.
- While mid-market GCCs in India operate at 40% the size of non-mid-market peers, in Karnataka, the trend is amplified with the mid-market GCCs running at 35% the size of the larger peers. This, according to the report, is a reflection of ‘high-trust and high-quality talent.’
- **The State is currently home to 50% of India’s AI/ML talent and 38% digital workforce, and its capital city, the fourth largest technology and innovation cluster in the world,** it notes.

Katalyst handbook

- The report was launched in the presence of Minister of Electronics, Information Technology & Biotechnology Priyank Kharge and officials from the IT-BT department and KDEM. The event saw the release of the KATALYST GCC Handbook, a comprehensive guide for companies that wish to set up GCCs in Karnataka. **KATALYST is a dedicated Ease of Doing Business cell formed by the Department of Electronics, IT & BT in August to support GCCs in Karnataka.**
- **Noting that 65% of all the new mid-market GCCs in India since 2023 established in their offices in Karnataka,** Mr. Kharge hoped that the release of the handbook would help the ecosystem to ensure that more software is coming to India.
- Addressing the industry representatives gathered at the event, he said, “If the government participates closely with the industry, we will be able to ensure that we deliver faster for you.”

❖ China digs in on ‘rare earth’, commands global market

Context: Last month, China’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology introduced interim measures to tighten controls on ‘rare earth’ mining and processing. The rules are the latest in Beijing’s efforts to centralise oversight of extraction, exports, and refining.

- While China’s trading partners such as India and the U.S. are seeking alternative sources to reduce dependency, data shows that China’s dominance in rare earths stems not only from resource availability but more so from its longstanding strength in mining and research capacity.

- Rare earth elements (REEs), despite the name, are not particularly scarce.

• According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), they comprise 17 metals, typically grouped into light rare earths (LREEs) — including lanthanum, cerium, praseodymium, neodymium, samarium and europium — and heavy rare earths (HREEs) such as gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, holmium, erbium, thulium, ytterbium, lutetium, scandium and yttrium. Promethium is not included in the list as it is radioactive and does not occur in mineable quantities.

- They are critical components in clean energy technologies such as electric vehicles and wind turbines, as well as in defence applications. Rare earths are also essential for high-tech devices including smartphones and hard drives.

- Although rare earth deposits exist in countries such as Brazil, Australia, and India, China holds nearly half of global reserves (Chart 1). It is also the world's largest producer, contributing over 60% of global production in the last five years (Chart 2). Beyond extraction, China dominates the value chain with around 92% of global refining capacity, according to the IEA. Moreover, in the last five years, China has been the largest exporter, supplying close to 30% of global demand (Chart 3).

- Charts 1, 2 and 3 establish China's dominance across reserves, production, and exports.

- In April, amid escalating U.S.-China trade tensions, Beijing imposed export restrictions on seven rare earth elements. The move targeted elements used in neodymium-iron-boron (NdFeB) magnets — essential for clean energy technologies — as well as those critical to ceramics, phosphors, steel, optical glass, fibres, and aerospace applications (Chart 4).

- China's decision to curb rare earth exports, amid tit-for-tat tariffs, dealt a significant blow to the U.S., which remains heavily dependent on Chinese supply. **The U.S. is the second-largest importer of Chinese rare earths, after Japan (Chart 5). India,**



Tightening its grip

The data for the charts were sourced from the U.S. Geological Survey, UN COMTRADE, the International Energy Agency, AP and Reuters

Chart 1: Country-wise share (in %) of global reserves of rare earths (as per U.S. Geological Survey 2025)



Chart 2: Country-wise share of estimated global mine production of rare earths in the last five years



Chart 4: Sector-wise demand for rare earth elements under export controls announced by China in April

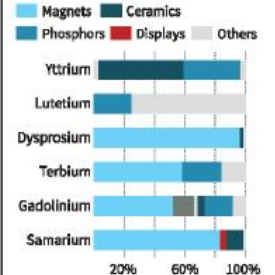


Chart 3: Major exporters of rare earth. Figures in % shows their share in global exports

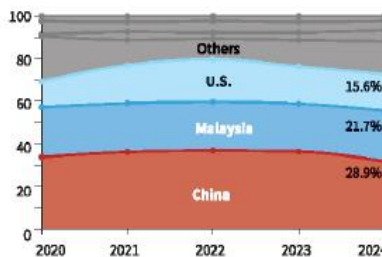
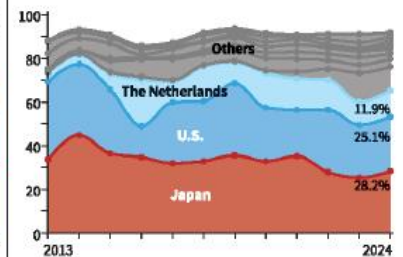


Chart 5: Major importers of China's rare earth. Figures in % shows their share in China's exports



too, is heavily dependent on China for its rare earth imports. Since 2021, more than 75% have come from China.

- Under China's interim measures announced last month, Chinese companies must now operate within government-set quotas for various minerals and obtain approval to trade in rare earths. This is not the first time China has tightened its rare earth trade. It has already prohibited export of tools and methods used to extract and separate rare earths, and in December 2023, it banned the export of processing technology.
- China's monopoly over rare earths is also reinforced by its strong research base. A study found that China leads the field of rare-earth research, contributing nearly 30% of all published papers. The U.S. and Japan followed with shares of 10% or less, while India accounted for about 6%.
- In parallel, China has increased funding for mineral exploration, allocating about \$14 billion annually since 2022, according to the IEA. The agency notes that this marks the highest three-year stretch of investment in the past decade.

❖ **Governors must act as true guides and philosophers to States, says CJI Gavai**

Context: Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, heading a five-judge Presidential Reference Bench, observed that Governors must act as "true guides and philosophers" to State governments. He agreed with the Kerala government that the working relationship between the two constitutional authorities must be "collaborative".

- Senior advocate K.K. Venugopal, representing Kerala, suggested that the Governors of States ruled by non-NDA parties, such as **Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Punjab, Telangana and West Bengal**, learn from their counterparts in States ruled by the BJP and its allies, where Bills are granted assent without delay.
- **"Governors must deal with Bills 'as soon as possible' and not 'as soon as convenient',"** Mr. Venugopal, assisted by advocate C.K. Sasi for the State, submitted.
- In its written submissions, Kerala said that eight Bills presented to its Governor had remained pending for periods between seven and 23 months.
- "There are as many as 28 States and three Union Territories with Legislative Assemblies. Except for five States, i.e. Punjab, Telangana, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, 26 of the State governments or Union Territories had not gone to court complaining about the withholding of assent for long periods. This would mean that the legislatures and the Governors are ad idem [in agreement] in regard to the Bills becoming law. Hence, any approach to the functioning of the Governor cannot be on the basis that the Governor is an adversary of the legislature, but, on the other hand, the example set by the other 26 Governors should be treated as the norm," Mr. Venugopal submitted.

'Will create dyarchy'

- Senior advocate Gopal Subramaniam, for Karnataka, said that **giving Governors expansive powers would create a dyarchy — a government with two independent authorities — in a State. "The repository of real power in a parliamentary democracy is the legislature in its role as the representatives of the people...** Allowing Governors power to exercise his discretion in all his functions would render

national elections a numerical exercise in expensive futility,” Mr. Subramaniam submitted.

- Mr. Venugopal argued that the Governor must not act as an adversary. He is, in an actual sense, intimately a part of the State Legislature. “He is as much interested in the success of State Bills, which are for the welfare of the people,” he submitted.

Specific deadlines

- The Bench is hearing a Presidential Reference on whether timelines to deal with State Bills can be imposed on Governors and the President. The Reference followed the Supreme Court’s judgment in a case against the Tamil Nadu Governor on April 8, which declared three-month deadlines for Governors and the President to decide the fate of the Bills placed before them for assent or consideration, respectively, under Articles 200 and 201.
- Senior advocate Arvind Datar questioned why the court must be content with requesting the Governors to act on Bills within a “reasonable time”.
- “Why should Your Lordships keep the timelines vague by saying ‘do this within a reasonable time’? The Supreme Court must specify — three months, six months. By fixing specific timelines, the court gives complete clarity and certainty,” Mr. Datar submitted.

Wrangling on timelines

- Justice P.S. Narasimha on the Bench referred to instances in the past when the court had specified timelines, especially in medical admission cases, only to end up with more litigation.
- “Time after time, this court has laid down timelines. But such orders only became fodder for more litigation. Take a look at the medical admission cases. We fix timelines for admission every year. The next year, applications are filed to extend the timeline,” Justice Narasimha told Mr. Datar.
- Noting that the Reference Bench was interpreting the Constitution, the senior counsel said that the interpretation must help the Constitution work better.
- **The Governor, State legislature, and the Union government are all components of governance**, he said, warning that if one component acted truant by delaying assent to Bills, the whole system of governance would crumble.
- Mr. Datar said that if the **Supreme Court could weave the principle of substantive due process (protection of fundamental rights from government abuse) into the Constitution, it could very well read timelines into Articles 200 and 201.**
- The State of Telangana, represented by senior advocate S. Niranjan Reddy, submitted that the **advisory jurisdiction of the top court under Article 143 was not restricted by the separation of powers.**
- **“Acting under the advisory jurisdiction, the Supreme Court, which is answering the President’s questions, can give a collective opinion that the**

President/Governor must follow a three-month timeline. Though only an opinion of the Supreme Court under Article 143, it still has great persuasive value,” Mr. Reddy submitted.

❖ **EC directs Bihar CEO to accept Aadhaar for SIR**

Context: The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday directed Bihar’s Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) to issue instructions for accepting Aadhaar as a proof of identity for the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the State. The directive came a day after the Supreme Court ordered the commission to include Aadhaar as a document that voters can submit to include or exclude names on the rolls.

- In its June 24 SIR order, the **EC had given an indicative list of 11 documents to be given as proof of birth and residence along with the enumeration forms.**
- The Supreme Court, during a hearing on a petition filed by the **Association for Democratic Reforms, directed the EC to include Aadhaar as the 12th on the list of “indicative” documents.**
- The EC communique to the Bihar CEO said that Aadhaar should be accepted as a proof of identity and not as a proof of citizenship in terms of Section 9 of the Aadhaar Act, 2016.
- It also noted that under the **Representation of the People Act, 1950, Aadhaar is already one of the documents listed for the purpose of establishing the identity of a person.**
- The draft electoral rolls of Bihar published on August 1 have excluded 65 lakh people who were present on the earlier voter lists, citing deaths, migration and duplication among other reasons.
- After the last SC order on accepting Aadhaar in cases where no other documents were available, the EC had said that all voters challenging the deletion of their names on the draft rolls could file claims along with a copy of their Aadhaar card in the absence of any of the indicative documents.
- The poll body said such applications would get a hearing from the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) who would then take a call on the inclusion or exclusion of the names from the final list.

❖ **Centre grants licences to five firms to manufacture its first indigenous malaria vaccine**

Context: The Union government has given licences to five firms for manufacturing and commercialisation of its first indigenous multi-stage malaria vaccine developed by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and its partners.

- **Indian Immunologicals Ltd., Techinvention Lifecare Private Ltd., Panacea Biotec Ltd., Biological E Ltd., and Zydus Lifesciences** will make the vaccine targeting the parasite before it enters the bloodstream to prevent transmission.
- The council said it was an affordable, stable, and scalable solution. It remains effective for more than nine months at room temperature, it said.

- The ICMR had invited expression of interest from eligible organisations, companies, and manufacturers for transfer of technology for **commercialisation of “a recombinant chimeric multi-stage malaria vaccine (AdFalciVax) against Plasmodium falciparum useful in preventing infection in humans and minimising community transmission”**.
- The **goal is to facilitate the commercialisation of the vaccine to prevent and minimise malaria transmission.**
- “The pre-clinical validation of this technology was conducted in collaboration with ICMR-National Institute of Malaria Research, another constituent institute of ICMR, and National Institute of Immunology (NII), New Delhi, an autonomous research institute of the Department of Biotechnology,” the council said.
- **Malaria remains one of the major public health problems in India. The country carries 1.4% of the global malaria case burden, and accounted for 66% of cases in the Southeast Asia region.**

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❖ Up maintenance paid to parents, suggests HC

Context: The High Court of Karnataka has recommended the Central government to revise the ceiling on the maintenance to be paid to senior citizens by their children or relatives in tune with the present cost of living index.

- The High Court of Karnataka has recommended the Central government to revise the ceiling on the maintenance to be paid to **senior citizens** by their children or relatives, **from the existing ₹10,000 per month fixed 18 years ago under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, in tune with the present cost of living index.**
- “Maintenance cannot remain a mirage shimmering in the desert of inflation, nor an oasis that vanishes on approach. Relief that is illusory is no relief at all. It is, but a rope of sand, incapable of sustaining those for whom it is meant. Therefore, this Court deems it fit to recommend, with earnestness that the **Union government revisit Section 9 of the 2007 Act**, and revise the ceiling in tune with the cost of living index, so that the Act may not be reduced to a hollow promise, but remain a living guarantee of dignity in old age, as the nation’s wealth is not measured by its material progress, but by the welfare of the child and the care of the elderly-old...” said Justice M. Nagaprasanna.
- Though the **Act had undergone several amendments between 2007 and 2023**, the provision that limits ceiling on payment of maintenance to senior citizens has remained same from past 18 years, the court noted while pointing out that ₹10,000 cannot be enough to achieve the real intent of the enactment.
- Citing the graph of **cost inflation index** as found in the website of the Ministry of Finance, the court said: “The numbers tell a tale, more eloquent, than words. **In the year 2007-08 the cost inflation index stood at 129; today, it is 363. Thus, what one could procure for ₹100/- in 2007, requires nearly a ₹1,000/- in 2025.** Prices of food, shelter and medicine have climbed steeply; only the statutory cap of ₹10,000/- has remained petrified, untouched, notwithstanding the march of time.”
- **As the objective of the Act was primarily three-fold – (i) need based maintenance to the parents and senior citizens, (ii) to provide better medical facilities and (iii) suitable mechanism for protection, the court said that the enactment, therefore was to be a need based, and securing the need for a senior citizen cannot be seen to remain the same as it was in 2007.**
- **“Cost of living inflation has increased exponentially.** With the inflation index today, what a senior citizen would have got in 2007 is reduced by 10% today even to the medical facilities. Therefore, the amount of ₹10,000/-, that is now subsisting, cannot be enough to achieve the real intent of the enactment,” the court said.
- The court made these observation while setting aside an order passed passed by a tribunal, which asked the children to pay ₹5 lakh as compensation to their parents as there is no provision in the Act to grant compensation.

❖ City civic groups move NGT against tunnel road project

Context: On May 22, the State Cabinet approved the construction of a 16.74 km twin-tunnel from Esteem Mall in Hebbal to Silk Board

- Bengaluru Praja Vedike and other civic groups in the city have moved the National Green Tribunal (NGT), seeking the cancellation of the proposed **Twin Tunnel Road project, which claims to decongest the city's chronic traffic problem.**
- The petition alleges that the ₹19,000-crore project violates environmental clearances, is riddled with flaws, and contradicts Bengaluru's mobility plans.
- The citizen activists said that during the first hearing held, NGT directed that notices be issued **to the State government, the State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Bangalore Smart Infrastructure Limited (B-SMILE), the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and the project consultants.**
- On May 22, 2025, the State Cabinet approved the construction of a 16.74 km twin tunnel from Esteem Mall in Hebbal to Silk Board under a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model. A Special Purpose Vehicle, B-SMILE, was created to execute the project, with Rodic Consultants preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR) in barely three months.
- The **alignment of the tunnel, the petition points out, cuts through ecologically sensitive and legally protected areas such as the Peninsular Gneiss at Lalbagh, Hebbal Valley's stormwater corridor, and the vicinity of the critically polluted Peenya Industrial Area.**
- These **zones are particularly vulnerable to groundwater depletion, soil instability, and aggravated flooding.**
- Independent studies, including those from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), have warned that the project could encourage a shift from public to private transport, increase exhaust emissions and fossil fuels use, and worsen climate vulnerabilities. Even statutory agencies like the Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT) have noted that the tunnel road contradicts Bengaluru's approved mobility and climate policies and have recommended alternative measures instead, the petitioners said.
- Despite these concerns, the petition alleges that authorities bypassed the **mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), ignored public consultation, and exploited a loophole in the 2006 EIA notification, arguing that 'tunnels' are not explicitly listed to avoid clearance.** This, the petitioners said, mirrors past unlawful practices such as the scrapped 2017 steel flyover project.
- The petition further notes that the tunnel alignment overlaps with a proposed metro corridor, which offers a more inclusive, sustainable, and environmentally sound alternative.
- The petitioners have sought the tribunal's intervention to declare the project unlawful, quash the tender process, and order its cancellation to prevent irreversible ecological damage. They have also urged the NGT to uphold statutory environmental safeguards.

❖ Govt. declares 371-tree cantonment area as Biodiversity Heritage Site

Context: Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar B. Khandre announced that the 8.61-acre Cantonment Railway Colony area, containing 371 trees from 50 different species, has been declared a Biodiversity Heritage Site.

- The announcement came after Mr. Khandre chaired a meeting of the State Biodiversity Board at Vikasa Soudha. “Survey Numbers 1028 and 1047 of the **Cantonment Railway Colony, which are both historically significant and ecologically rich, have been declared a Biodiversity Heritage Site under Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002,**” he said.
- The Minister said the 34,843 sq. ft. stretch, located in the heart of the city, is not only home to diverse species of flora, fauna, and insects, but also **serves as an essential lung space for Bengaluru.**
- “The area also carries **historic significance, as Mahatma Gandhi had interacted with freedom fighters here in 1920.** The trees play a vital role in reducing carbon dioxide levels, curbing air and noise pollution, and preserving the city’s green cover,” he said.
- On April 25, the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike issued a notice announcing that the Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA) had applied to remove 368 trees in the area for commercial activity.
- Following the public notice, the proposal received strong opposition from environmentalists, tree lovers and the general public. In response, Mr. Khandre visited the site on June 20 for inspection. Following the inspection, the government proposed declaring the site a Biodiversity Heritage Site and invited citizens to submit suggestions, objections and feedback.
- In total, more than 15,000 citizens called for the preservation of the 371 trees and the declaration of the site as a Biodiversity Heritage Site. A survey confirmed the existence of 371 trees in the area.
- **“Bengaluru’s air quality has already deteriorated,** and its green cover is shrinking. At a time when the world is confronting climate change and rising global temperatures, conserving these 371 trees is of utmost importance,”.

❖ ₹87,818 crore will be required for UKP phase-III: Siddaramaiah

Context: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said an estimated ₹87,818 crore would be required for implementation of the Upper Krishna Project Phase-III, which would increase the Almatti dam height from 519 metres to 524 metres.

- The initial project cost for implementation of the project was estimated at ₹51,148 crore and it had now been revised to ₹87,818 crore.
- Out of this, ₹17,627 crore was initially estimated for the land acquisition process. The current revised cost was ₹40,557.09 crore.
- The revised cost for civil works of nine sub-projects related to the project was estimated at ₹25,122.53 crore.
- **By raising the dam height, he said, an additional 100 tmc ft of water would be stored, which would provide irrigation facilities to 5.94 lakh hectares.**

❖ Manipur law to regulate issuance of certificates to SC, OBC communities gets Presidential assent

Context: The law to regulate the issuance of caste certificates for the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Other Backward Class (OBC) communities in Manipur, introduced by the erstwhile Manipur government in 2024 amid the ethnic conflict in the State, has received the assent of the President.

- The law was brought by the then Biren Singh government in 2024, and is meant to “prevent fraudulent cases” of people claiming caste status and to bring uniformity in the processes for issuing caste certificates, according to the Bill’s Statement of Objects and Reasons.
- **Manipur has seven communities classified as SC and four communities categorised as OBC. Reservation in public education and employment for SCs is prescribed in the State at 2% and for OBCs at 17%. For Scheduled Tribes (STs), the reservation is 31%.**

Detailed vetting process

- The provisions of the law set out procedures for applying for caste certificates, competent authorities for issuing the certificates, and scrutiny committees to verify them, offences and penalties, among other things. The Bill had added that most other States had already framed such provisions.
- Notably, the law, which received the Presidential assent in July this year, provides for the setting up of one or more Scrutiny Committees, which are meant to verify suspicious caste certificates.
- It also gives these committees the power to verify a caste certificate suo motu, adding that the decision of the panel would be final and can only be challenged in the High Court.
- However, it adds that the certificate of the person will remain valid during the verification process until a final decision is arrived.
- While States like Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh do have specific laws to regulate caste certificates, several others regulate through executive orders and circulars. Maharashtra also has provisions for setting up Scrutiny Committees, but Andhra Pradesh has given this power of suo motu verification to the District Collector.

❖ ‘For Hindu Bengalis, CAA is irrelevant’

- Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said hardly any Hindu Bengalis in the State have taken the Citizenship (Amendment) Act route, as they are certain of their Indianness.
- “No reason to suspect Hindu Bengalis, who came before 1971 as foreigners. The CAA has no relevance for them; they have not applied for citizenship under it,” Mr. Sarma said.

❖ EC holds CEO conference; reviews preparedness for rolling out nationwide SIR

Context: The Election Commission (EC) held a conference of Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) of all States and Union Territories to assess the preparedness for rolling out a nationwide special intensive revision (SIR) of voter lists.

- The commission was planning to roll out the SIR across the country with a single schedule, as of now, sources in the EC said.
- The conference was inaugurated by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar in the presence of Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi. It assessed the preparedness of the offices of the CEOs of all States and Union Territories for the nationwide SIR exercise, an official statement said.
- At the beginning of the conference, Bihar CEO Vinod Singh Gunjyal made a presentation on the strategies, constraints, and best practices adopted in his State, which was the first to roll out the SIR.
- All other CEOs provided detailed presentations on the number of electors and the qualifying date of the previous SIRs and electoral rolls in their respective States or Union Territories, according to the previous completed SIR. They also presented the status of digitisation and uploading of the electoral roll after the previous SIR on the website of the State and Union Territory CEO.
- The officers also provided suggested documents to ensure no eligible citizen was left out of the electoral roll, and no ineligible person was included in it.
- The issue assumes importance in light of the controversy surrounding the list of 11 indicative documents, which the EC had sought as part of the SIR exercise in Bihar. However, the Supreme Court had asked the poll body to add Aadhaar as the 12th document in the Bihar SIR.
- EC sources said that though the SIR order of June 24 holds for the entire country, the list of documents could be made more inclusive when the schedule is announced.
- The CEOs also provided the status of mapping of current electors with the electors as per the previous SIR, the statement said.

❖ SC flags Governors sitting on Bills as Centre terms dispute a 'false alarm'

Context: Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, heading a five-judge Presidential Reference Bench, pointed to Governors sitting on Bills for years together even as the Union government referred to disputes raised by non-BJP-ruled States such as Tamil Nadu and Kerala over inexplicable gubernatorial delay as a "false alarm".

- "How can you say that when Governors are sitting over Bills for four years," Chief Justice Gavai asked the Centre, represented by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta.
- The Reference had followed an April 8 judgment of the court in the Tamil Nadu Governor case, which prescribed a three-month timeline for the President and the Governor to decide Bills.
- Tamil Nadu had approached the court after the Governor sat on 10 Bills for four years, since 2020.
- Mr. Mehta reasoned the **Centre was not justifying Governors delaying assent to Bills "endlessly". He had only meant to say that a State and its Governor must act "collaboratively" to ensure the smooth working of the Constitution.**

- “We are proud of our Constitution, considering what is happening in the neighbouring countries. Like what happened in Nepal yesterday...” Chief Justice Gavai remarked. Justice Vikram Nath mentioned Bangladesh in the same context.
- Mr. Mehta said **“collaboration” was possible only if both parties (State and Governor) had powers. He argued there was no room for collaboration if the Governor was expected to toe the line of the State Cabinet and mechanically sign Bills put before him for assent.**
- “The Governor cannot be reduced to an ornamental head of State. We may have had some aberrations, but for the past 55 years, every Governor has acted in a way expected of them, in a collaborative manner,” Mr. Mehta submitted.
- He objected to the argument by non-BJP-ruled States that instances of Governors delaying Bills had increased after the NDA government came to power in 2014 at the Centre.
- Justice Vikram Nath observed that the Reference Bench was not tracing what happened before or after 2014. The court was answering the questions of law raised by the President in the Reference.
- Justice P.S. Narasimha tested the Centre’s submission that **the moment a Governor withheld assent to a Bill in the first instance under Article 200, the proposed law would fail. The judge asked how a Bill passed by both Houses of the State legislature, after due consultation, could be failed by the solitary action of the Governor withholding assent.**
- **“Should there not be a consultative process by which the Bill is returned to the State legislature for reconsideration. This way, both the State Assembly and the Governor get a role to play,”** Justice Narasimha said.
- **“A Governor cannot act like a constitutional court, adjudicate on the constitutionality of a Bill and unilaterally withhold it... If timelines are not set for gubernatorial assent to Bill, States will be left to wander the corridors of the court,”** he submitted.

‘Sitting ducks’

- Advocate Avani Bansal, appearing for Tiruvallur MLA Sasikanth Senthil, said citizens could not be made “sitting ducks” by a Governor who sits on, for example, a health care Bill for years together.
- **“If the Governor sits indefinitely on a Bill, Article 200 would be made unworkable and superfluous,”** Advocate-General of Meghalaya Amit Kumar submitted.
- The State of Telangana, represented by senior advocate S. Niranjan Reddy, submitted that a **Governor’s action must be judicially reviewed for discrimination if a law assented to in one State ruled by the same party as in the Centre was disapproved by a Governor in a State governed by a party in the Opposition.**

❖ Digital platform to preserve tribal art, culture launched

- The Union Tribal Affairs Ministry launched the beta version of **“Adi Sanskriti”**, a digital platform for “tribal artforms and heritage”. Officials said it had been envisioned to become **the “world’s first Digital University** to preserve and promote the culture and knowledge of tribal communities”.

- The digital platform will have an **online marketplace, opening up a digital market for products made by tribal artisans in India.**
- The platform consists of three components: **Adi Vishwavidyalaya (Digital Tribal Art Academy), Adi Sampada (Socio-Cultural Repository), and Adi Haat (digital marketplace).**

❖ ISRO inks agreement with HAL for transfer of SSLV technology

Context: The Indian Space Research Organisation signed a formal agreement with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. on Wednesday for the transfer of technology for production of small satellite launch vehicles (SSLV), marking a significant step in industry participation in the space sector.

- The agreement, the 100th transfer of technology agreement facilitated by the space sector promoter **INSPACE**, was inked in Bengaluru by the ISRO, **NewSpace India Ltd.**, and **INSPACE with HAL**, which outbid a consortium led by Adani Group-backed Alpha Design Technologies.
- The aim is to complete the entire technology transfer process within 24 months from the date of signing the agreement, a statement from INSPACE said. During this period, the ISRO will provide training and technical support to the HAL for acquiring the know-how of the SSLV, it added.
- ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan said the agreement would allow the HAL to independently build the SSLV for both domestic and international markets.
- “We are honoured to be in this league to scale India’s next big frontiers with the SSLV technology, by partnering with ISRO and NSIL and IN-SPACE to implement it,” D.K. Sunil, Chairman and Managing Director of HAL, said.
- Mr. Sunil said **HAL would build SSLVs so that India could offer regular, cost-competitive small-satellite launches to domestic and global customers.**

❖ India resists full crypto framework, fears systemic risks

Context: India is leaning towards not creating legislation to regulate cryptocurrencies in the country and instead will maintain partial oversight, fearing that bringing the digital assets into its mainstream financial system could raise systemic risks, a government document shows.

- The document, seen by Reuters, cites the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) view that, in practice, containing the **risks of cryptocurrencies** through regulation would be difficult.
- Global acceptance of cryptocurrencies has improved since U.S. President Donald Trump took office and prices of bitcoin have hit record highs.
- The **U.S. has also passed legislation permitting wider use of stablecoins, which are cryptocurrencies backed by fiat currencies making them less vulnerable to wild swings.**
- **China continues to ban cryptocurrencies but is considering a Yuan-backed stablecoin.**

- Although, **Japan and Australia are developing regulatory frameworks for such virtual assets, they maintain a cautious stance without actively promoting the sector.**
- **Regulating cryptocurrencies in India would grant them “legitimacy”, and “may cause the sector to become systemic”, the government document, prepared this month, said.**
- In contrast, while an outright ban can tackle the “alarming” risks from largely speculative crypto assets, it would not be able to tackle peer-to-peer transfers or trades on decentralised exchanges, it added.
- India’s federal finance ministry and the RBI did not immediately respond to Reuters request for comment.

❖ **‘India set to be among top five shipbuilding nations by 2047’**

Context: With less than 1% share in global shipbuilding currently, India is on course to be among the world’s top five countries in this arena by 2047, according to the Centre.

- “The Government of India, through the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and the Directorate General of Shipping, is committed to positioning India as a new hub for shipbuilding,” Minister of State, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India.
- **“The nation has a clear goal of ranking among the top 10 maritime nations by 2030 and among the top 5 by 2047,” he said, speaking at INMEX SMM India 2025, organised by Informa Markets in India.**
- He said shipbuilding and repair would serve as vital growth engines of India’s ‘blue economy’, generating employment, enhancing global competitiveness, and driving sustainability through green shipping initiatives and modernised infrastructure.
- **“While the maritime sector currently contributes 4% to India’s GDP and just 1% of global tonnage, the vision is to raise its share to 12% of national GDP and advance it from the 16th position globally to the fifth by 2047,”** said, Director General of Shipping, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- **“Indian seafarers already represent 12% of the global workforce, with a goal to expand this to around 25%, making shipbuilding and repair central to this transformation,”** he said.
- He said the government was strongly supporting the ambition through initiatives such as the **Shipbuilding Finance Assistance Scheme, the Maritime Development Fund, shipbuilding and repair clusters, a National Shipbuilding Mission, the Shipbreaking Credit Note scheme, and upfront subsidies of up to 30% for non-conventional builds.**
- “Under **Maritime India Vision India** is firmly on course to emerge as a global maritime superpower,” he emphasised.
- Sabyasachi Hajara, Chairman, INMEX SMM India Advisory Board, said, **“The Government of India has taken unprecedented measures to boost the maritime sector, including the establishment of a \$3 billion Maritime Development Fund, with nearly 45% earmarked for shipbuilding and ship repair, and 20% for building Indian tonnage, alongside investments in port infrastructure and coastal shipping.”**

❖ PhonePe partners with SIDBI, MSME Ministry on Udyam

- PhonePe will work with the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and the Small Industries Development Bank of India, **to register more small merchants with the Udyam facility, thereby opening up more avenues for credit and availing government schemes**, the company said.

- **Udyam is a platform to formalise more MSMEs, and SIDBI has already worked on an “assist platform” to make it easier for merchants to register for an Udyam number.**

❖ Rampant development, not climate, pushing Himalayas to the edge

Context: Punjab faced its worst floods since 1988 in August this year. Waters overflowing from the Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi rivers have destroyed several villages in the State. Around the same time, at least 34 people died after intense rainfall lashed India-controlled Kashmir and several parts of Pakistan. Early in August, the village of Dharali in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand disappeared after a deluge triggered a landslide.

- This isn't the **first time the Indian Himalayan region has suffered such catastrophe; the 2013 Kedarnath floods and the 2021 disaster in Chamoli come to mind.** And at least one thread runs through all of these incidents: they were all treated as unprecedented acts of nature.

The invisible hand

- Experts have already said calling every heavy-rain event a **“cloudburst”** risks oversimplifying the disasters.
- “Most of these natural disasters are not really natural at all. They are often a combination of two factors — climate change and development,” Arun B. Shreshta, a senior advisor, **Climate and Environmental Risks, at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)**, said.

- **The Himalayas are the world's youngest mountains and are high-energy environments characterised by instability and variability. Landslides here are often triggered by heavy rainfall, slope undercutting or seismic activity.**

- According to ICIMOD research, the mountains are also particularly susceptible to floods, cloudbursts, glacial lake eruptions, and landslides.

- Chief Justice B.R. Gavai called visuals of tree logs floating in flood waters in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, and Uttarakhand in the first week of September a “very serious issue.”

- “Logs are seen flowing with the flood waters. If this goes on, we will not have any forests left. In Punjab, entire villages are inundated. Development is needed, but not at the cost of the environment and lives,” Justice Gavai observed on September 4.

No blanket plan

- On July 18, the Supreme Court bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan had observed: “If things proceed the way they are as of date, the day is not far when the entire state of Himachal Pradesh may vanish in thin air from the map of India. God forbid this does not happen.”

- The bench also said governments shouldn't build revenue at the cost of ecological sustainability, and blamed human activity for worsening disasters.
- "I think the Supreme Court is very much right about this," Navneet Yadav, lead, Humanitarian Action and Disaster Risk Reduction at Caritas India, an NGO, said.
- He added **that development in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand can't happen according to the same plans drafted for metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai.**
- **"Every aspect of development should go through a lifecycle analysis.** We should start looking at it in a completely different way, where we take into consideration the real impact of climate change," Mr. Shreshta, who also stressed on assessing the carrying capacity of an area before implementing any project, said.
- "Prior to making any major interventions in the mountains, there should be clearly defined steps in terms of an honest and independent social impact assessment in addition to a disaster impact assessment, which should go through a democratic public consultation process," Himanshu Thakkar, coordinator of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers, and People, added.

The disaster potential

- **The Hindu Kush mountains** are currently being encroached on as well as hosting more tourists, infrastructure development projects, and power generation activities. Together with a paucity of proper environmental impact assessments, experts have warned that the mountains are being pushed beyond their ability to cope.
- According to the Directorate of Energy of Himachal Pradesh, there are **1,144 hydropower plants in the state, of which 721 are at various stages of clearance and investigation, 180 have been commissioned, and 53 are under construction.** The Centre has also sanctioned funds to build new bridges and widen roads.
- Similarly, in Uttarakhand, there are 40 operational hydroelectric plants while 87 more are at various stages of planning and construction, all to boost the State's power generation capacity.
- All these construction activities entail the use of heavy equipment to cut through the mountains.
- "Today, we are building highways without any attention to how they can increase disaster potential," Mr. Thakkar said.
- As the Supreme Court bench observed on July 18, the **proliferation of 'development' work is joining hands with climate change to worsen the effects of rain and temperature changes.**
- On September 4, the apex court also issued a notice to the National Highways Authority of India following a petition that claimed 14 tunnels between Chandigarh and Manali turned into "death traps" during heavy rains.
- The average temperature in the Indian Himalaya is already rising faster than the global average, resulting in reduced snowfall and more snow melt. When a glacier melts, the water pools into a new lake. If a rocky barrier adjacent to the lake shifts or breaks, all the water can be released into a nearby river or drain, leading to sudden and massive floods. These events are called glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs).

- According to ICIMOD, there were more than 25,000 classified glacial lakes in five major river basins across the Himalayas by 2018, placing communities and livelihoods downstream at more and more risk.

‘Worst kind of land’

- “Infrastructure changes have to be done keeping in mind such climatic variations — GLOFs, landslides, and even droughts,” Mr. Shreshta said. “The Himalayas are at a tipping point, and we need an urgent course correction that balances economy and energy. We need nature-based solutions with the involvement of the local communities because they know the local landscape and the hazards that come with it.”
- “Building climate literacy amongst the locals to drive local self-governance is important,” Mr. Yadav said. “Not just that, all the critical structures, such as hospitals and schools, must never be built in unsafe locations because they are the immediate places that house those affected by any disaster. But that is unfortunately not the reality. Most government schools are built on the worst kind of land.”
- The rise in tourism has also stoked a demand for land on which to build hotels, homestays, and other facilities, and that in turn has been driving local deforestation. The deodar trees in particular are native to the region and hold the soil in place.
- “When you remove them, the soil is in boulders which will soon erode out. And that erosion will increase the disaster potential of the area in terms of landslides and floods in the downstream villages,” Mr. Thakkar said. He added that it should be possible to ‘develop’ without tearing trees down.

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Context: The Supreme Court will not “sit idle” and powerless if a constitutional authority fails to discharge his duties, no matter how high he may be, Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai has said.

- The CJI voiced the court’s firm resolve on the final day of a Presidential Reference hearing, which has brought into sharp focus the schism between non-BJP-ruled States and their Governors over delay in clearing crucial laws.

‘Separation of powers’

- **“Howsoever high an authority may be, he is not above the law... I am a strong believer in the doctrine of separation of powers. I believe that **judicial activism must not turn into judicial terrorism**. But at the same time, **if one wing of democracy fails in the discharge of his duties, would the court, which is the custodian of the Constitution**, be powerless and forced to sit idle,”** the CJI asked the Union government.
- The Union government has used the hearing to criticise the top court for encroaching on the domains of Governors and the President.
- **The bone of contention which led to the Presidential Reference is an April 8 judgment of the Supreme Court which imposed a three-month deadline on Governors and the President to deal with Bills placed before them for assent or consideration, respectively.**
- The court had, in the judgment, held that **whims and fancies of Governors cannot hold up governance by endlessly sitting on important legislation passed by State legislatures for the welfare of their people.**
- Representing the Union government, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta said the **court’s attempt to compel a “one-size-fits-all” solution by “imposing” a uniform time frame for all Bills would prove “self-destructive”.**

‘Context-based issues’

- “Every Bill has its own context-based issues. Some may require the Governor to have further deliberations and consultations. There are times when a State, while knowing that a Bill may eventually harm the State, is forced to bow to public pressure to pass it. In such cases, the **State may tell the Governor to hold the Bills.**
- Thus, imposing straitjacket time limits may become self-destructive. Each case turns on its own peculiar facts,” the Solicitor General argued. Mr. Mehta said the top court cannot issue a mandamus to Governors to assent to Bills. **Gubernatorial assent was part of legislative process.** Courts cannot interfere in law-making.
- “Yes, we cannot ask a Governor to take a decision in a particular manner, but the court can very well ask the Governor to take a decision. **A mandamus can be issued to the Governor to decide,**” Justice Kant replied pithily.
- Mr. Mehta challenged the narrative that Governors were consistently delaying Bills. He said a **majority of Bills, in the last 50 years, were given assent by Governors in a month’s time.**
- “Even in the case of Tamil Nadu, except for 10 disputed Bills, assent was usually given in a month. The Governor does not sit over Bills endlessly,” Mr. Mehta submitted.

- Chief Justice Gavai said the Constitution’s framers had envisaged an atmosphere of mutual accord while envisaging the role of the Governors in States. “While the Constitution framers were considering the position of the Governors, the expectation was it would be an existence in harmony. **That while appointing Governors, the provincial governments (States now) would be taken on board...**” the Chief Justice remarked.
- Mr. Mehta reacted that State-Governor relationships had seen decades of harmony before the Delhi government, during the Aam Aadmi Party regime, started filing writ petitions under **Article 32 of the Constitution** against the Lieutenant-Governor.
- Attorney-General R. Venkataramani said the **Governor should be given the discretion to either assent or withhold a Bill after testing its constitutionality.**
- **“There is nothing wrong in a Governor deciding to withhold assent to a Bill and sending back a message to the State Assembly about his decision. The question here is whether a Governor can withhold endlessly without sending any message,”** Chief Justice Gavai observed. The Presidential Reference was reserved for judgment.

❖ ‘Project Khushi’ for police personnel

Context: The Bengaluru city police, in association with Happiest Health, launched ‘**Project Khushi,**’ a health and wellness programme designed to help police personnel prevent and manage lifestyle-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and metabolic disorders.

- According to a release, the proposed project includes in-person expert-led classes and digital learning modules with six live sessions over three months led by specialists in **endocrinology, nutrition, ayurveda, yoga, and mindfulness .**
- Weekly digital modules are delivered via web stories, articles, videos and tips and a dedicated WhatsApp support group offering daily nudges, exercise prompts, and nutrition tips.
- It includes comprehensive health assessments at the start and conclusion of the programme, including tests for **glycaemic control, organ function, thyroid health, vitamin levels.**
- Participants will undergo a comprehensive health test at the start and end of the program.

❖ ETM upgrade key to rollout of Shakti scheme smart cards in State

Context: More than two years after the launch of Karnataka’s flagship Shakti Scheme, smart cards promised to women beneficiaries are yet to be distributed. The Transport Department has attributed the delay to the lack of compatible **electronic ticketing machines (ETMs)** across the four State-run road transport corporations.

- While the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (**KSRTC**) has already upgraded its ETMs, the rollout of uniform machines across the other corporations is yet to be completed.

- **The Shakti scheme, introduced on June 11, 2023, as the first of the Congress government's five guarantees, allows women, including transgender persons and students, to travel for free on non-premium State-run buses. The scheme has been immensely popular, recently earning a place in the Golden Book of World Records for ferrying the highest number of women passengers under a free-travel programme. As of July 31, 2025, over 516.95 crore trips were completed under the scheme.**

- Despite this success, the smart card system envisioned to streamline ticketing and data collection remains in the pipeline. Currently, female passengers can show any valid government-issued identity card to avail of a **'zero ticket'** from conductors.

Why the delay

- Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy said that the smart card plan is still on the table, but has been delayed. "The issuance of smart cards has been stalled because not all our ETMs can read and validate them. KSRTC has upgraded its machines, but similar ETMs need to be introduced across all four corporations for uniformity,".
- Earlier, the Transport Department, in collaboration with the Centre for e-Governance (CeG), developed prototypes of the cards. These cards, built on 'tap-and-travel' technology, would allow women passengers to tap their card on a conductor's ETM to validate their journey. The backend system has already been designed to handle registration, data collection, card procurement, and linking to central servers.
- "The technology part is largely ready, including systems for registration, issuing, and linking data. What remains is ensuring that all four RTCs adopt the same ETMs, so that the cards can work seamlessly across the State," Mr. Reddy explained.

Cabinet approval

- To address these issues, the Transport Department conducted a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) meeting with officials from all four RTCs on August 2, 2024. The meeting highlighted the incompatibility of existing ETMs as the primary hurdle.
- "Based on the suggestions at the meeting, KSRTC introduced new ETMs capable of reading smart cards. The procurement process for upgrading ETMs in the other corporations is underway. Once completed, smart cards can be rolled out," Mr. Reddy said.
- The proposal to distribute the cards will soon be placed before the State Cabinet. "After Cabinet approval, the smart cards will be issued without delay," he assured.
- While the scheme currently functions smoothly with the use of identity cards, officials admit that smart cards could improve efficiency. At present, conductors issue tickets after manually verifying ID cards of passengers, which often leads to longer boarding times.

Benefits

- **"Smart cards will save time for both conductors and passengers.** More importantly, they will allow the government to generate accurate data on usage patterns, routes, and beneficiary profiles. This data could also guide policy decisions on public transport planning," a senior Transport Department official said.

- At the time of the scheme's launch, women were asked to register on the official **portal and provide a valid government-issued ID to receive Shakti smart cards.** However, due to the ETM issues, the smart card distribution has not taken place. Instead, the temporary arrangement of showing ID cards continues to this day.
- Meanwhile, a recent study titled 'Beyond Free Rides: A Multi-State Assessment of Women's Bus Fare Subsidy Schemes in Urban India', commissioned by the Sustainable Mobility Network and conducted by Nikore Associates, found that the Shakti Scheme in Karnataka has led to a 23% rise in women's employment in Bengaluru and a 21% increase in Hubballi-Dharwad.

❖ HAL gets 3rd engine for LCA Mk1A

Context: The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) said that it has received the third GE 404 engine from General Electric (GE) Aerospace for Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk1A.

- The Bengaluru-headquartered defence PSU said that while the third GE 404 engine has been received, the fourth will be delivered by the U.S. firm by the end of the month.
- "HAL has received the third GE 404 engine for LCA Mk1A. One more engine is scheduled to be delivered by the end of September. Engine supply chain improvement will pave the way for LCA Mk1A deliveries," HAL said in a statement. **In January 2021, the Cabinet Committee on Security had approved the procurement of 73 LCA Tejas Mk1A fighter aircraft and 10 LCA Tejas Mk1 trainer aircraft at the cost of ₹ 45,696 crore, along with design and development of infrastructure sanctions worth ₹1,202 crore.**
- **As per the plan, the deliveries of all 83 aircraft would have to be completed in eight years.**
- **"HAL will be delivering the first three aircraft in the third year and 16 aircraft per year for the five subsequent years,"** the Ministry of Defence had said in February 2021.
- However, there have been delays in the deliveries of LCA Mk1As by HAL.
- Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, during the Aero India 2025 in February, had criticised the PSU over the delays and said he was "just not confident" of HAL. HAL, however, had said that the delays in handing over of the aircraft to Indian Air Force (IAF) were due to supply chain issues of GE.
- "When the IAF Chief made the mention (about delays), we did not have a single engine from GE, though the airframe was ready. The first engine came in April and we are now getting the second one. This is the primary reason why the deliveries have been held up," HAL Chairman and Managing Director D.K. Sunil.
- Mr. Sunil said that if GE delivers 12 engines as assured, HAL will be able to have 12 aircraft ready by the end of this financial year.

Context: In a bid to give a push to the third phase of the Upper Krishna Project (UKP-III), which is currently mired in controversy and in limbo due to the land acquisition issue, the State government has scheduled a special Cabinet meeting for September 16 to arrive at a decision on the land acquisition issue.

- “Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar have been holding consultations with the leaders and farmers’ representatives from the region. To complete the project, we need to take the farmers into confidence since over 75,000 acres that will be submerged have to be acquired,” Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H.K. Patil told presspersons in his post-Cabinet briefing.
- Stating that the government intends to provide justice to the farmers, he said that technical and legal issues are to be sorted out, after which a decision could be taken. Though land acquisition rates were informally discussed, no decision was arrived at, he said.
- Meanwhile, government sources stated that farmers could be offered solatium for relinquishing their lands to help irrigate others’ lands, and that the huge compensation could be met through bonds, as the government does not have the necessary funds.

Protocol changed

- Changing the protocol procedures in the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms (DPAR), the State government also decided to restrict the number of persons to be invited and seated on the dais in public functions to a maximum of nine in ordinary circumstances.
- “We have brought changes to the protocol to bring discipline. Earlier, there was no limit. Only in unavoidable circumstances, the maximum number of persons to be invited and seated on the dais will be 13. Respective district in-charge Ministers and Cabinet Ministers will decide on the people whose names are to be included in the invitation and those to be seated on the dais,” Mr. Patil said.
- On fears that the Opposition party members could be ignored in the new protocols, he said that no one would be ignored. Asked what would happen if the protocols are violated, he said that it would be construed as ‘indiscipline’.
- **Among other decisions, the Cabinet approved a ₹160 crore package for 11 tribal communities, including Soliga, Hasalaru, Gowdalu, Siddi, Kudiya, Malekudiya, Kadukuruba, Iruliga, Betta Kuruba, Yarava, Paniyan and others, for a housing scheme to 6,856 households under the Chief Minister’s Adivasi Gruha Bhagya scheme and ₹150 crore for Karnataka -Global Information System.**
- **The Cabinet also approved Karnataka Minor Minerals Concessions (Amendment) Rules, 2025, which seeks to simplify permit fees and bring convenience to farmers and the public.**

❖ State govt. unlikely to take Ordinance route on ballot papers

Context: The State government said that it had recommended to the State Election Commission to use ballot papers instead of electronic voting machines (EVMs) and was contemplating promulgating an ordinance to amend the legislation, but may not take the Ordinance route.

SC judgment

- Government sources stated that the government is also considering not taking the Ordinance route, as the **Supreme Court, in one of its judgments, has ruled that the choice between ballot paper and EVM in local bodies is left to the State.** “Taking the ordinance route may trigger political debate,” said the sources.

❖ Cyber Command Centre should be made robust: Karnataka High Court

Context: Observing that the Cyber Command Centre (CCC) should not be a mere edifice of bureaucracy but a beacon heralding a new dawn in the fight against cybercrime, the High Court of Karnataka said that officials posted to the CCC should not face frequent transfers.

Directive

- Also, the court directed that it is imperative that the **cybercrime helpline 1930 be integrated with the Police Information Technology** application that is subsisting and all this to be a part of the CCC besides integration of the system of jurisdictional police station and the CCC for every cybercrime to be brought under the umbrella of the CCC, whether the crime is registered with jurisdictional police or the Cyber, Economic and Narcotic (CEN) police stations.
- Justice M. Nagaprasanna issued the directions while monitoring the progress made in making the CCC operational as per the directions issued by the court in April this year.
- Stating that the CCC must be insulated from external intrusion, the court said the officers, particularly the head of CCC, should not be frequently moved out of the centre, unless warranted at least until a year or two, till the teething problems of CCC or the birth pangs of the establishment do not get obviated.
- “The head of the CCC and his team working in the CCC must not be overnight de-positioned, without the consultation of the head of the CCC. I make it clear that it is consultation and not information, as any investigation by the CCC under way, should not be thwarted by repeated change of officers of the CCC,” Justice Nagaprasanna observed.

Transparency

- **The court also made it clear that it would be the duty of the CCC to ensure transparency in its functioning and take steps towards such transparency, including alleged corruption within the CCC.**

1930 helpline

- Pointing out that police officers, who act on complaints received on loss of money from bank accounts, take steps for freezing and de-freezing accounts to secure return

of lost money without any documents, the court made it clear that it is necessary that the conversation of 1930 helpline should be recorded as part of the police/information technology system.

- If necessary, draw up a zero FIR against each of the complaints received by the helpline, said the court.
- The State government is expected to make the CCC robust, people-friendly, deft and iron-handed to handle cybercrimes, the court said, while directing the head of the CCC to submit a status report by September 24 on the progress in the investigation of cybercrimes or integration of information and technology cases to be done under one roof i.e. CCC.

❖ Kerala to initiate SIR of electoral rolls soon: CEO

Context: After Bihar, it is Kerala's turn for the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls as the southern State moves towards 2026 Assembly elections.

- Chief Electoral Officer, Kerala, Rathan U. Kelkar, said that his office was awaiting a formal announcement of the SIR schedule for Kerala by the Election Commission of India (EC), but indicated that the roll-out could likely be in October.
- Mr. Kelkar said his office had been laying the groundwork for the exercise and had uploaded the rolls prepared under the 2002 intensive revision, the last time it was held in Kerala, on the CEO Kerala's website. **The SIR arrangements in Kerala were presented at a review held by the EC in New Delhi on the preparedness of States.**
- "We have been asked to be ready. I feel it may happen sometime in October," Mr. Kelkar said, adding that he was planning to meet political parties in the State on September 20.
- Mr. Kelkar sought to allay fears saying that no eligible voter would be left out of the rolls.
- "We don't feel that SIR will affect any eligible citizen in Kerala. Complaints regarding the electoral roll will be settled once and for all when the SIR is done," he said, adding that the SIR would make the rolls more "sanitised and healthier" and keep out non-citizens.

❖ Postal ballots for NRI voters may turn a reality

- Postal ballots for overseas electors may soon become a reality with the Election Commission of India exploring its feasibility.
- Chief Electoral Officer Rathan U. Kelkar said that his office had urged the EC to introduce the facility for the upcoming Assembly elections **in Kerala.**

❖ Govt. contemplates raising civil border guards along China border

Context: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is contemplating raising the Border Wing Home Guards (BWHG) along the China border, on the lines of the force patrolling the India-Pakistan border.

- The BWHGs drawn from the civilian population which lives in the border areas act as an ancillary to border guarding forces and the Indian Army during emergencies.

- **There are seven States authorised to have BWHGs — Meghalaya, Tripura, Assam, West Bengal, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat.**
- They are now operational only in Rajasthan and their utility was realised during the recent Operation Sindoor when their services were required to collect or disseminate information among the border population.
- **As many as 2,279 BWHGs are presently active in Rajasthan.** “It is a voluntary force and Rajasthan is the only State which has BWHGs in the present times. They perform the responsibilities of a constable and are usually enlisted for three or four years; 25% cost of training and financial support is borne by the Government of India.
- The usual pay compares to ₹800-900 per day equivalent to that of a constable’s salary,” said the official. The Ministry held a meeting recently on raising the strength of BWHGs for its active engagement with border guarding forces, including the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), which is deployed along the 3,488-km border with China.
- Since 2020, more than 50,000 Army and ITBP personnel have been deployed in eastern Ladakh and the raising of BWHGs will help in augmenting the presence and collection of intelligence, a senior government official said.
- Twenty Indian personnel, including a Colonel, were killed in violent clashes with Chinese troops on June 20, 2020 along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, in what is possibly the worst incident between the two countries in decades.**
- After several rounds of talks, there are 26 patrolling points, out of 65 PPs in eastern Ladakh that are not being patrolled by Indian troops since April-May 2020. The areas being patrolled earlier have been turned into “buffer zones” with the Chinese also not sending troops. PPs are often used to assert territorial claims along the undefined border.

❖ **Police officials must shed all personal biases when they don uniform, says SC**

Context: The Supreme Court, in a judgment, warned against communal colours seeping into the khakhi of the police.

- The court issued an unprecedented order that a special investigation team (SIT), comprising an equal number of Muslim and Hindu officers, be formed by the Maharashtra government to investigate allegations of murder and assault made by a 17-year-old Muslim boy during the **Akola communal riots of 2023.**
- “When members of the police force don their uniforms, they are required to shed their personal predilections and biases, be they religious, racial, casteist or otherwise. They must be true to the call of duty attached to their office and their uniform with absolute and total integrity. Unfortunately, in the case on hand, this did not happen,” Justice Sanjay Kumar observed in the ruling, issued by a Bench which also included Justice Satish Chandra Sharma.
- The case concerned the complaints made by a teenager, Mohammad Afzal Mohammad Sharif, who allegedly witnessed four men — including one who was later identified to have political connections — fatally attacking a man in an autorickshaw during the riots. The men assaulted the boy, leaving him with head injuries.

- Afzal and his father then went to the police station to file a complaint about the murder he witnessed and the assault on himself, but the police took no notice. A subsequent appeal to the Superintendent of Police of Akola came to no avail.
- The murder victim was identified as Vilas Mahadevrao Gaikwad. Afzal had stated that Gaikwad was killed under the mistaken impression that he was a Muslim. “It was for the police to investigate the truth or otherwise of the specific allegations made by the appellant, a 17-year-old boy, who asserted that he was an eyewitness to the murder of Vilas Mahadevrao Gaikwad and was himself assaulted by the very same assailants... If, in fact, the deceased was really murdered under the impression that he belonged to Muslim community and the assailants were not of that community, that was a fact that had to be ascertained after thorough and proper investigation,” Justice Kumar said.
- **The State Home Secretary was directed to initiate appropriate disciplinary action against erring police officials for their “patent dereliction of duties”.**

❖ India and Mauritius not just partners but a family: Modi

Context: India and Mauritius are not just partners but a family, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in Varanasi, at the signing of agreements to deepen ties between the two countries.

- Following bilateral discussions with his counterpart from Mauritius, Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Mr. Modi said that a stable, prosperous, free, open and secure Indian Ocean was a joint priority of both countries.
- **“Centuries ago, our culture and traditions travelled from India to Mauritius, and became a part of everyday life there. Just like the eternal flow of Maa Ganga in Kashi, the continuous stream of Indian culture has enriched Mauritius. And today, when we are welcoming friends from Mauritius in Kashi, it is not just a formality but a spiritual union. That is why I proudly say that India and Mauritius are not just partners but a family,”** said Mr. Modi.



- The Prime Minister said **Mauritius is an integral part of India’s “Neighbourhood First” policy.**
- At a press conference, Mr. Modi said, “Today, we have **announced a special economic package designed to support Mauritius’s needs and priorities.** This will strengthen infrastructure, create new employment opportunities, and further enhance healthcare facilities.
- **The first Jan Aushadhi Kendra outside India has now been established in Mauritius.”**

AYUSH centre

- India also announced that it would extend cooperation in establishing an AYUSH Centre of Excellence, a 500-bed Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital, as well as a veterinary school and animal hospital in Mauritius.

- The two countries also signed memorandums of understanding to enhance cooperation in science and technology, oceanographic research, power sector and implementation of Phase 2 of small development projects.
- In a proposed hydrography project, the countries will work together on joint surveys, navigation charts, and hydrographic data of the exclusive economic zones of Mauritius.
- “Very soon, we will also launch the training modules of **Mission Karmayogi [capacity building for government officials] in Mauritius.**
- The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, and the Indian Institute of Plantation Management have entered into agreements with the University of Mauritius. These agreements will elevate our partnership in research, education, and innovation to new heights,” added Mr. Modi, lauding the unique “civilisational ties” between the two countries.
- **Mr. Ramgoolam, who arrived in Varanasi, witnessed the Ganga Aarti from a cruise in the evening. On Friday morning, he is scheduled to offer prayers at Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham before leaving for Ayodhya.**

❖ **Standard of debates should improve: Speaker Om Birla**

Context: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla expressed concern over the lack of meaningful discussions in the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and State legislatures, and said the standard of debates in the House should improve.

- Speaking at the inaugural function of a **three-day Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), India Region, Mr. Birla, who is also the Chairman of the CPA, said the debates in the State legislatures and Parliament should be of high quality to ensure meaningful discussion of laws.**
- He expressed concern that the dignity of the debates were getting lowered due to disruptions in the proceedings of the Houses owing to petty political reasons. He urged lawmakers to rise above party lines on issues of national interest and meet the aspirations of people.
- The programme, held at the Vidhana Soudha, was attended by Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh, and presiding officers of Legislative Assemblies.
- Mr. Siddaramaiah said **“a culture of dialogue, commitment to equality, and a willingness to listen, deliberate, and decide together is the true spirit of democracy”.**
- He said the **Parliament and State legislatures were laboratories of federal democracy, where diversity was debated, dissent was respected, and unity was forged.**

❖ Home Minister launches faster immigration clearance at 5 airports

Context: Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the Fast Track Immigration-Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP), which accelerates the immigration process for preverified Indian nationals and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders, at five more airports.

- After launching the FTI-TTP at Lucknow, Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruchirappalli, Kozhikode and Amritsar airports, Mr. Shah said travellers would no longer experience long queues or manual checking and would receive immigration clearance in just 30 seconds without delays.
- He said the programme had been launched in alignment with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "speed, scale and scope". The special initiative was first rolled out at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in July 2024, and two months later, extended to Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Cochin and Ahmedabad.
- Mr. Shah said the facility would not only enhance the convenience of travellers but also provide an opportunity to introduce them to the changes taking place in the country.
- Mr. Shah said with the FTI-TTP, seamless immigration facilities would be available at the designated airports and emphasised that merely providing convenience was not enough, action must be taken to ensure that the maximum number of travellers benefited from it.
- **"To achieve this, efforts should be made to enable registration at the time of issuing passports and OCI cards,"** he said, adding that if this could be implemented, travellers did not need to return for fingerprinting or documentation and they could travel using their passports whenever they wished.
- **"OCI cardholders will benefit the most,"** he said, adding that the Home Ministry has planned to integrate this programme with the upcoming Navi Mumbai and Jewar airports.
- About three lakh travellers have registered on this portal, of which 2.65 lakh have utilised it and efforts should be made to increase this number, he said. The FTI-TTP will eventually be launched at 21 major airports in the country.

❖ First tri-service all-women circumnavigation sailing expedition flagged off

Context: Commemorating women power and the vision of a developed India, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh virtually flagged off a historic tri-service all-women circumnavigation sailing expedition — Samudra Pradakshina — from the Gateway of India in Mumbai.

- The expedition is the first of its kind in the world. Addressing the gathering from South Block in New Delhi, Mr. Singh described the initiative, a first of its kind, as a glowing symbol of nari shakti (women power), the jointness of the armed forces, self-reliant India (Aatmanirbhar Bharat) and India's global vision.



The route

- According to the Ministry of Defence, over the next nine months, 10 women officers from the **Army, Navy and Air Force will sail onboard the indigenously-built Indian Army Sailing Vessel (IASV) Triveni, a 50-foot yacht.**
- They will follow **an easterly route covering nearly 26,000 nautical miles, crossing the Equator twice and rounding the three great Capes — Leeuwin, Horn and Good Hope. They will return to Mumbai in May 2026.**

❖ Centre to conduct 2 key surveys on household finances from July 2026

Context: The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation is all set to conduct two key economic surveys — to measure household finances and to gauge the economic situation of India’s farmers — between July 2026 and June 2027, the Ministry.

- These are the **All-India Debt and Investment Survey (AIDIS) and the Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) of Agricultural Households.**
- **“Both of these nationally representative surveys are scheduled to be conducted from July 2026 to June 2027,”** MoSPI said in a press release. **“The AIDIS is one of India’s most significant surveys on household finance,”** it added. **“The SAS of Agricultural Households, first launched in 2003, is designed to assess the economic conditions of farming communities.”**
- According to MoSPI, the **AIDIS provides “critical” data on household indebtedness and asset ownership across both rural and urban areas. “Its findings are instrumental in shaping national accounts, assessing inequality in asset distribution, understanding credit markets, and informing policies of the RBI, MoSPI, and other government institutions,”** it said.
- The **SAS of Agricultural Households, on the other hand, includes data on agricultural household income and expenditure, indebtedness and access to credit, land and livestock ownership, crop and livestock production, farming practices and the use of technology, and access to government schemes and crop insurance.**
- **“The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, NITI Aayog, researchers, and financial institutions utilise the survey findings to shape policies and programmes aimed at agriculture and rural development,”** MoSPI noted.

❖ U.S., Paraguay question India’s hiking of support price for rice

Context: The U.S. and Paraguay, in a joint submission at the WTO, have questioned India’s decision to raise Minimum Support Price (MSP) for rice in 2025 despite “record harvests, exports, stocks, and offloading of stocks for ethanol production”.

- The countries asked India to explain the rationale for increasing the MSP for rice in 2025, while it has been claiming benefits under the **‘Bali Interim Decision’ (that allows WTO subsidy limits to be breached), given India’s record harvests, exports, and stocks exceeding what is necessary to meet domestic food aid needs.**
- **“While the MSP scheme may be part of India’s domestic public food distribution system, the scheme’s effects on exports and disposal of stocks for non-food**

purposes appear to go far beyond food security,” the U.S. and Paraguay submitted to the Committee of Agriculture (CoA).

CoA review

- The submission will be taken up for detailed discussions at the CoA review meeting on September 25-26, together with other questions from different members about each other's policies.

❖ **'Working to blend isobutanol with diesel after ethanol blending failed'**

Context: The Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) is working to explore the possibility of blending 10% isobutanol with diesel, Union Minister for Transport Nitin Gadkari.

- At the annual conclave of the India Sugar and Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA), Mr. Gadkari said whilst **trials of blending one-tenth ethanol with diesel was not successful, other than the isobutanol blend, it was also being explored for a potential standalone use.**

• Isobutanol is an alcoholic compound with flammable properties, and is commonly used as a solvent in many industries including paints and coating.

- Mr. Gadkari's announcement comes amid the backlash the government received for petrol blended with ethanol at 20%.
- He also said that tractor companies and agricultural equipment manufacturers had expressed eagerness **to explore a flex fuel combination of CNG and isobutanol at a recent meeting.**
- Mr. Gadkari said **using corn to create an ethanol blend was a success, adding farmers had earned more than ₹42,000 crore, with prices spiking from ₹1,200/quintal to “ ₹2,600-2,800/quintal” since they commenced blending.**
- Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Pralhad Joshi urged biofuel producers to increase production and look to enter the global market to export ethanol.
- ISMA president Gautam Goel urged the government to consider, among other things, aligning the **fair and remunerative price (FRP) of sugarcane** in line with the rising (procurement) costs of cane.
- The industry body chief also sought the government to consider revision in the minimum support price of sugarcane, and increasing the permissible export quota in the sugar season 2025-26.

'Healthy harvests'

• Sugar production in 2025-2026 season (October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026) is likely to be 349 lakh tonnes, which will be significantly more than the production in the current year (2024-25).

- ISMA said that with a favourable monsoon and healthy growth, the crops in **Maharashtra and Karnataka** are expected to yield healthy harvests.

❖ Karki is Nepal's first woman PM

Context: Nepal President Ram Chandra Poudel appointed former Chief Justice Sushila Karki as the country's new Prime Minister and dissolved Parliament, as days of political turmoil showed signs of abating in the Himalayan nation. He also announced fresh elections on March 5, 2026.

- **Ms. Karki, 73, the first woman Chief Justice of Nepal, is now the country's first woman Prime Minister.**
 - Mr. Poudel agreed to dissolve Parliament, a key demand of **Gen Z protesters who brought down the government of K.P. Sharma Oli** on September 9. Ms. Karki will soon form a Cabinet that will oversee the elections.
 - Even after Gen Z campaigners agreed on Ms. Karki's name as the leader of the next government, a dispute over the dissolution of Parliament had delayed the process of her appointment.
 - Sudan Gurung, a prominent Gen Z campaigner, said that House dissolution was non-negotiable, echoing Kathmandu Mayor Balendra Shah, a leading figure in the movement. Protesters had agreed on the choice of Ms. Karki only after Mr. Shah endorsed her.
- A photograph showing Nepal President Ram Chandra Poudel in a grey suit and black cap, presenting a red folder to Sushila Karki, who is wearing a red and white sari. They are standing in a formal setting with a flag and a soldier in uniform in the background.
- **Nepal's tech-savvy Gen Z, frustrated with the political class for their years of misrule and flashy, luxurious lifestyles,** hit the streets on (September 8). At least 19 people were killed in a brutal response by the Oli government, which triggered further protests and a sweeping social media ban. On (September 9), the protests turned violent, as demonstrators stormed politicians' homes, set them on fire, and manhandled the leaders. They also burned down key government infrastructure — the Supreme Court, Parliament, and Singha Durbar, the seat of the government — in a symbolic takeover of the state.
 - **As the protests escalated, Mr. Oli stepped down and has been under Army protection since. After much deliberation, the campaigners locked in Ms. Karki's name to lead a civilian government to clean up the mess created by political parties and lead the country.** Now that Ms. Karki has been given the helm of the country, a daunting task rests on her shoulders — staying true to the demands of Gen Z and overseeing elections to hand over power to a newly elected democratic government.

Anti-corruption crusader

- Ms. Karki is widely regarded as clean and upright, with many even calling her an anti-corruption crusader. **She holds a master's degree in political science from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, and a law degree from Tribhuvan University.** After serving as Acting Chief Justice from April 13 to July 10, 2016, she was appointed Chief Justice on July 11, 2016. She retired on June 7, 2017.

❖ Retail inflation quickens to 2.1%, ending 9-month drop

Context: Retail inflation broke a nine-month declining streak in August, quickening to 2.1% from 1.55% in July 2025, according to official data. The inflation in August was marginally higher than the lower bound of the Reserve Bank of India's comfort band of 2%-6% for retail inflation.

- **The rate of retail inflation had been declining every month since November 2024.**

- The data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation showed that the **inflation in the food and beverages category remained flat in August, at 0.05%, compared with 5.3% in August last year.**

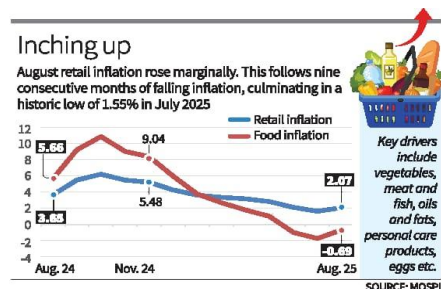
- **Inflation in the clothing and footwear category** remained virtually unchanged at 2.67% in August 2025 compared with 2.62% in July. Similarly, inflation in the housing segment stood at 3.06% in August compared with 3.03% in July.

- The **fuel and light category** saw a relatively faster increase in inflation, which quickened to 2.9% in August 2025 from 1.4% in July.

- **“Within food products**, the main drivers of low inflation are vegetables and pulses which recorded -15.9% and -14.5% respectively,” according to a note by the Bank of Baroda's economics research wing. “Oils continue to exert upward pressure with 21.2% inflation due to higher global prices as well as low base effect.”

- The GST rate cut impact is likely to play out in the year ahead, partly offsetting the impact of an adverse base effect in 2026-27.

- “While we see a pause by the RBI in the upcoming policy, we do see some scope for rate cuts worth 25-50 basis points opening up from December policy if downside risks to growth materialise and the Fed moves ahead with aggressive rate cuts,”.



❖ Why firecracker ban only in Delhi, when all have right to clean air: CJI

Context: The ban on firecrackers should not be confined to the national capital, the Supreme Court said in oral observations, noting that people across the country have a right to pollution-free air.

- “Therefore, a policy should be crafted for the entire country. If firecrackers have to be banned, it has to be done for the entire country... Also, the poor who are dependent on this industry have to be looked into,” Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai observed in a hearing ahead of Deepavali and the approach of winter.

- He asked why citizens living in other cities and other parts of the country should not be accorded the same relief from air pollution as the “elite” of Delhi. “Just because this is the national capital city or the Supreme Court is situated in this area, it should have pollution-free air and not the other parts of India?” the Chief Justice asked.

- Senior advocate K. Parameshwar, appearing for the firecracker industry, said their licences are being revoked due to the top court's confirmation of a complete ban on the sale, production and manufacture of firecrackers in Delhi and National Capital Regions (NCR) in April 2025. Some of these licences were valid till 2028.

❖ Govt. caps cinema ticket price at ₹200

Context: In a move that could benefit exhibitors and movie buffs alike, the Karnataka government notified the ticket price in cinemas across the State, capping the upper price at ₹200, exclusive of taxes. This will be applicable to all cinemas, including multiplex, and for all language movies and will be applicable from the date of the notification being gazetted.

- The cap of ₹200, however, is **not applicable to all multiplex cinemas with premium facilities of 75 seats or less.**
- The **fee capping has been done through the Karnataka Cinemas (Regulation) (Amendment) Rules, 2025.** The draft had been notified on July 15, 2025, inviting views and information from stakeholders.
- **Karnataka, with the notification, follows Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh where there is a cap on ticket price and only with special permission the ticket price can be increased.**

❖ ASTraM app and the 'Gundi Gamana' to be integrated to monitor potholes, flooding

Context: Officials of all the five newly formed corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) will be trained to use the ASTraM app developed by the Bengaluru Traffic Police for real-time monitoring of potholes and flooding in the city.

- The ASTraM app and the 'Gundi Gamana' must be **integrated for better monitoring of potholes and spots prone to flooding.**
- The Traffic Police Department recently identified 4,822 potholes across the city, of which only 1,861 have been filled.
- Flooding was another concern, with 137 vulnerable locations identified by the Traffic Police. While problems at 56 locations have already been addressed, Mr. Nath directed officials to resolve the remaining 81 spots and provide a permanent solution to ensure that rainwater does not stagnate on roads.

❖ Work on Sharavati project will start soon, says George

Context: Work on pumped storage project to begin after convincing local people who are opposing it. **The project will ensure production of 2,000 MW of power at a low cost** Central Wildlife Board has granted approval for the Sharavati Pumped Storage Project, and the work will begin soon after convincing the local people who are opposing it.

- "The local people need not have any apprehensions about the project. The damage to ecology will be minimum. We will convince the local public about these issues before beginning the work,"
- The Karnataka Power Corporation Limited will provide suitable compensation to the people who will lose their land owing to the project.
- A total of 120 acres of land was required for the project, of which, only 50 acres was private land.
- **"As much as 2,000 MW of power will be generated by supplying water from Gerusoppa reservoir to Talakalale reservoir through a pipeline. Since new**

reservoirs will be constructed for the pumped storage project, the natural flow of the river will not be obstructed. As much of the pipeline will be underground, there will hardly be any damage to the forest. The project will ensure production of 2,000 MW of power at a low cost and the same can be supplied to customers during peak hours.”

❖ Solar scheme

- “To facilitate irrigation for farmers, the **KUSUM-B scheme** has been implemented. Under this scheme, **solar power is being provided to borewells located more than 500 metres away from the electricity feeder.**
- **Farmers will receive 80% subsidy from the Central and State governments, and only the remaining 20% of the cost has to be borne by the beneficiaries,”.**
- Similarly, under the **KUSUM-C scheme**, steps had been taken to **generate solar power through private participation.** A project worth ₹10,000 crore had been planned for this purpose. Once implemented, this scheme **would generate 2,500 MW of electricity**, he said.

❖ State textile policy in the offing

Context: Karnataka will soon formulate a **Textile Policy 2025-2030** to attract investments in the **textile and readymade garment sector** and generate employment opportunities to about 2 lakh persons, Textile Minister.

- The government was taking steps for the comprehensive development of the textile sector, he said that after analysing the reasons for the loss during the audit, the government had decided to merge Handloom Development Corporation and Karnataka State Textiles Infrastructure Development Corporation.

❖ C.P. Radhakrishnan takes oath as 15th Vice-President of India

Context: Chandrapuram Ponnusamy Radhakrishnan was sworn in as the 15th Vice-President of India. President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of office at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in the presence of several dignitaries.

- Mr. Radhakrishnan, who later **assumed charge as the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, held a meeting with floor leaders of parties in Parliament.**
- The Trinamool Congress, Biju Janata Dal, NCP (SP), and Shiv Sena (UBT) skipped the meeting, citing short notice. Mr. Radhakrishnan reportedly told members he intended to take the Opposition along in running the House. “I am very patient,” he is learnt to have said, noting his long experience as an Opposition leader in Tamil Nadu.
- He emphasised that the **Opposition is an essential element of parliamentary democracy.** He also recalled his political journey, prompting some leaders to remind him that his grandfather was aligned with the Left while his uncle was with the Congress.

❖ SC asks Centre, EC to reply to plea for regulating parties

Context: The Supreme Court sought responses from the Union government and the Election Commission on a plea seeking a statutory framework to regulate political parties and curb their alleged misuse as channels for black money and criminal enterprise.

- A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi issued notice on the petition filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, while suggesting that all registered political parties be arrayed as respondents since any eventual directions would directly affect them.
- Mr. Upadhyay has urged the court to direct the polling body to frame comprehensive rules for the registration and functioning of political parties, and for the Centre to enact legislation to curb the **“menace of corruption, casteism, communalism, criminalisation, and money laundering in politics”**.
- The petition relies on recent income tax raids to underscore how little-known political outfits are allegedly being used as vehicles for laundering unaccounted wealth.
- It has also been contended that political parties, despite wielding significant power, are not treated as “public authorities”.

❖ 21% legislators have dynastic background, says report

Context: Around 21% or one in five MPs, MLAs, and MLCs are from dynastic backgrounds, indicating that a significant share of current elected representatives belong to established political families, according to an analysis by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

- **At 31%, the Lok Sabha has the highest dynastic representation, while the State Assemblies have the lowest at 20%.**
- The data include a total of 5,204 legislators across State Assemblies, the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha, and State Legislative Councils. Among them, 1,107 are from dynastic backgrounds.
- **In north India, Uttar Pradesh tops the list at 23%, followed by Rajasthan at 18%.**
- **In the south, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are among the highest at 29% and 34%, respectively.**
- **In the east and northeast, Bihar has 27% and Assam 9%.**
- **In absolute numbers,** Uttar Pradesh ranks the highest with 141 (23%) out of its 604 MPs, MLAs and MLCs having dynastic political backgrounds, followed by Maharashtra with 129 (32%) out of its 403 sitting MPs, MLAs and MLCs. In Bihar, 96 out of 360 representatives are from dynastic backgrounds.

❖ India's manuscripts reflect the journey of humanity, says Modi

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi batted for digitisation of India's ancient manuscripts and creation of a database to share the knowledge in them.

- Mr. Modi, who was addressing an International Conference on “Reclaiming India's Knowledge Legacy through Manuscript Heritage” as part of the launch of the **Gyan Bharatam Mission**, said **digitisation would help in curbing “intellectual piracy”, as the information sourced from the country's traditional knowledge system had been copied and patented many a time by others.**
- He said the exercise would be an extension of the country's resolve to forge ahead with the concept of **swadeshi (made in India) and atmanirbhar (self-reliant) Bharat.**
- The Prime Minister said **India had the world's largest collection of about one crore manuscripts, of which over 10 lakh had been digitised** so far. He commended private organisations for working with the government to achieve this goal.



‘Presenting heritage’

- India is now proudly presenting before the world its heritage of ancient knowledge preserved in its manuscripts for centuries, he said, adding that India was also working with other countries such as **Thailand, Vietnam, and Mongolia**, with whom it has enjoyed cultural ties and which are home to such manuscripts. “Throughout history, crores of manuscripts were destroyed, but the ones that remain show how devoted our ancestors were to knowledge, science, and learning,” Mr. Modi said. “India's manuscripts contain footprints of the development journey of the entire humanity.”

- He launched the **“Gyan Bharatam” portal, a dedicated digital repository platform to digitalise and preserve ancient Indian manuscripts, and enhance sharing traditional knowledge embedded in them.**

❖ Denying upward mobility to candidates with disabilities defeats purpose of quota: SC

Context: The Supreme Court in a judgment asked the Centre to clarify whether talented candidates with disabilities whose performance allows them to qualify for the unreserved category are pushed up to make room for more people with disabilities to avail reservation benefits.

- The top court asked the Union government to detail the steps taken so far to ensure the “upward movement” of such candidates.
- “We consider it appropriate to require the Union of India to explain whether appropriate measures have been taken to provide the upward movement of meritorious candidates applying against the post/s reserved for persons with disabilities, in case such candidates secure more than the cut-off for the unreserved category. The **same principle must also be applied to promotions,**” a Bench of

Justice Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said, directing the Union government to respond by October 14.

- The judgment, authored by Justice Mehta, said that candidates with disabilities continue to be restricted to seats or jobs allotted for the disabled category, instead of allowing them upward mobility.
- **“The direct consequence of not providing upward movement to meritorious candidates applying under the category of persons with disabilities would be that even when a candidate with disability scores higher than the cut-off for the unreserved category, such a candidate would invariably occupy the reserved seat, thereby denying the opportunity to a lower scoring candidate with disability to make a claim on the seat/post,”** Justice Mehta reasoned.
- **Such stagnation of a candidate with disabilities defeats the very purpose of reservation under Section 34 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act and “constituted a glaring example of hostile discrimination against persons with disabilities”, the court said.**
- Justice Mehta pointed out that meritorious candidates who belong to backward classes are automatically moved up to the unreserved category, leaving reserved seats vacant for the less advantaged among them. However, the same measures are not taken in the case of persons with disabilities, who have been deprived by providence as against persons who face societal discrimination, he said.
- The court said the government ought to see the larger objective of reservation, which is to open a window for people with disabilities to join the mainstream and equally share opportunities.
- “Rather than viewing disability as a deficit requiring correction, the law must recognise it as a lens that reveals the true nature of legal, social, and institutional frameworks, illuminating whether they embrace human diversity or create barriers that exclude certain members of society, i.e., those who have been discriminated against by providence or who have suffered the disability factor in their lifetime,” Justice Mehta noted.

❖ **Withdrawal of monsoon likely to begin around Sept. 15: IMD**

- The southwest monsoon is likely to start withdrawing from northwest India around September 15, the India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- The **primary rain-bearing system usually makes its onset over Kerala by June 1 and covers the entire country by July 8.**
- It starts retreating from northwest India around September 17 and withdraws completely by October 15. “Conditions are becoming favourable for the withdrawal of the Southwest Monsoon from some parts of west Rajasthan around September 15,” said IMD.
- This year, the monsoon covered the entire country nine days before the usual date of July 8.

❖ **Navy’s latest base INS Aravali commissioned in Gurugram**

Context: The Indian Navy commissioned its latest Naval Base, INS Aravali, at Gurugram, marking a major boost to its information and communication infrastructure.

- Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff, presided over the ceremony, which included a 50-men Guard of Honour, the reading of the commissioning warrant by Captain Sachin Kumar Singh, and the unveiling of the commissioning plaque by Mrs. Shashi Tripathi, President NWWA.
- Admiral Tripathi said that the new base would serve as a hub of technology, linking platforms and partners across oceans. **INS Aravali is expected to boost the Navy readiness and maritime security.**

❖ Will meet Dec. FTA deadline, assures EU trade commissioner

Context: European Union's Trade Commissioner expressed confidence that the free trade agreement between India and the EU, which is currently being negotiated, would meet its December-end deadline.

- Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, too, expressed shared commitment towards an "early conclusion" to the negotiations. The negotiating team from the EU has been in India since for a week-long round of negotiations.
- Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency for European Union arrived to continue negotiations with Mr. Goyal.
- "I am very happy to be able to address you in the middle of very intensive talks and negotiations of what I believe would be a ground breaking **FTA between the EU and India,**" he said at an event organised by the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association.

❖ India votes in favour of UNGA resolution on Palestine state

Context: India voted in favour of a resolution in the UN General Assembly that endorses the 'New York Declaration' on peaceful settlement of the Palestine issue and implementation of the two-state solution.

- **The resolution, introduced by France, was adopted with an overwhelming 142 nations** voting in favour, 10 against and 12 abstentions. Those **voting against included Argentina, Hungary, Israel and the U.S.**
- **India was among the 142 nations that voted in favour of the resolution titled 'Endorsement of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution'.**
- The declaration was circulated at a high-level international conference held in July at the UN headquarters and co-chaired by **France and Saudi Arabia.**
- In the declaration, the leaders "agreed to take collective action to end the war in Gaza, to achieve a peaceful and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the effective implementation of the two-state solution, and to build a better future for Palestinians, Israelis and all peoples of the region".
- It called on the Israeli leadership to issue a clear public commitment to the two-state solution, including a sovereign, and viable Palestinian State.

-----All the best! -----