



DR. RAJKUMAR ACADEMY BENGALURU

AN INITIATIVE BY DR. RAJKUMAR FAMILY

WEEKLY NEWS COMPILATION

A CRISP AND COMPREHENSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS CAPSULE

OCTOBER WEEK 1

29-09-2025 TO 04-10-2025

**ASTROSAT,
INDIA'S FIRST
SPACE
OBSERVATORY**

**CENTRE EXTENDS
RODTEP EXPORT**

**TWO RAILWAY
LINKS: INDIA AND
BHUTAN**

**OPENAI HITS
\$500 BILLION
VALUATION**

❖ Kerala CM releases journal of Raj Bhavan, flays article

Context: Article deals with Supreme Court judgment on Tamil Nadu Governor's reservation of Bills for the President's assent; Chief Minister says view expressed in it may be the author's personal opinions.

- The article titled **"Article 200 and a Constitutional Conundrum"**, attributed to Sreekumar, Legal Adviser to the Governor, dealt with the April 8 Supreme Court judgment with respect to the Tamil Nadu Governor's reservation of Bills for the President's assent.
- Merely because they appear on the the Raj Bhavan's official journal, it should not lend the impression that the State government shares the view, Mr. Vijayan said.
- The article observes that "Through the judgment, the judiciary steps into the realms of law-making and even adding something to the Constitutional provisions."
- It goes on to add that "Prima facie view, there could be two classes of legislations; one assented (to) by the Governor and the other, declared as law by the Court, which is not contemplated in the scheme of our Constitution."
- The article further notes that the public perception of a logjam, or of the Governor acting as a stumbling block in the enactment of Bills, is "based on political inclination or may be the result of the failure in the Constitutional provisions to deal with such a situation."

❖ India, Pakistan spar at UN over terrorism and Pahalgam attack

Context: India and Pakistan engaged in a back and forth following India's address to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in the afternoon.

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had, in his UNGA statement, accused Pakistan, without naming the country, of being a hub of terrorism, and emphasised that it was behind the Pahalgam terror attack in April. India also referred to Pakistan as "Terroristan" in its reply.
- Exercising Pakistan's right of reply, a diplomat for the country accused India of maligning Pakistan and said New Delhi had not provided evidence to Islamabad about its involvement in the Pahalgam attack.

India responded to Pakistan's intervention.

- "It is telling that a neighbour, who was not named, chose to nevertheless respond and admit their longstanding practice of cross-border terrorism," Rentala Srinivas, a Second Secretary at India's UN mission, said, exercising India's right of reply on Saturday evening.
- "Pakistan's reputation speaks for itself. Its fingerprints are so visible in terrorism across so many geographies. It is a menace not only to its neighbours but to the entire world," the diplomat said, adding, "No arguments or untruths can ever whitewash the crimes of Terroristan."

Pak. response

- Pakistan's representative made a second intervention, criticising India for distorting its name, calling it a "deliberate attempt to malign and insult an entire people".
- He accused India of engaging in destabilising neighbouring countries via its intelligence agencies.

❖ 'India-U.S. relations not a criterion for Delhi-Moscow ties'

Context: Russia fully respects India's national interests and the independent foreign policy being pursued by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said, asserting that India's ties with the United States or any other country cannot be a benchmark for New Delhi-Moscow ties.

- Mr. Lavrov, who addressed the UN General Assembly (UNGA) shortly before External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's speech at the high-level General Debate, said India and Russia share a **"particularly privileged strategic partnership"**.
- "These situations that might arise between India and the United States or India and any other country, I can't consider them a criteria for relations between India and Russia," he said at a press conference.
- Mr. Lavrov was responding to a question on India's continued imports of Russian oil despite U.S. pressure on countries to reduce such purchases, and how Moscow views its ties with New Delhi in this context.
- "We have full respect for the national interests of India, full respect for the foreign policy that (Prime Minister) Narendra Modi is carrying out to promote these national interests," he said.
- Mr. Lavrov cited the recent meeting between Mr. Modi and President Vladimir Putin at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in China. He added that President Putin is expected to visit New Delhi in December.

❖ At UNGA week, India signals realignment with the Global South

Context; India stepped up its engagement with the Global South quite visibly during External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's hectic consultations at the United Nation's 80th high-level week, with strong criticism of Israel's war on Gaza, U.S.-led trade turmoil, and the lack of UN reform in focus in statements.

- More than half of his approximately 30 one-on-one bilateral meetings with Foreign Ministers were with countries of the developing nations, while nearly all the multilateral meetings India hosted or Mr. Jaishankar hosted focused on the Global South's issues, and non-western groupings.
- **The multilateral meetings included the BRICS, IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa), India-CELAC (South American countries), India-SICA (Central American Integration System), FIPIC (Pacific Island countries), L-69 (developing countries from the Global South) and C-10 (African Union representatives) and the "High-Level Like-Minded countries of the Global South"**.
- Meanwhile, Mr. Jaishankar also met with Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and his Japanese counterpart on the sidelines of other groupings, but there was no Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting, raising questions about whether a date can still be agreed on for the Quad Summit India is due to host this year.

Gaza situation

- A significant shift at the UNGA week was indicated by India's position on the Israel war on Gaza. New Delhi, which has been an outlier from other Global South countries thus far and abstained on resolutions calling for a ceasefire, was instead seen backing a number of statements sharply critical of Israel during the UNGA. These included statements by the BRICS Foreign Ministers and the IBSA Trilateral Commission, which said the "Ministers expressed grave concern about the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and strongly condemned the Israeli attacks against Gaza, which, after almost two years, continue to cause unprecedented suffering to the civilian population of the territory, ravaged by deaths, destruction, forced displacement, and famine".
- The statements are much tougher than previous statements that India has agreed to being a part of, indicating a greater alignment with Global South priorities on the issue.
- Referring to India's commitment to dealing with the "especially acute" "predicament of the Global South" during India's statement at the General Debate, Mr. Jaishankar listed a number of issues they faced: from the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, to energy and food security, "non-market trade practices", tariff volatility and uncertain market access.
- "The resource-stressed ones scrambled to survive, only to hear sanctimonious lectures thereafter," he said, in a sharp dig at global superpowers for not doing more for the Global South.
- In its 48-point "priority paper", the Permanent Mission of India expressed its disappointment over the lack of movement on UN Security Council reform in the previous session.
- It also stressed maintaining "India's active engagement as a leading voice of the Global South", emphasising different areas such as climate finance, development financing, etc, and strengthening coordination with important groups like the **Landlocked Developing Countries, Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States as well.**

❖ **Astrosat, India's first space observatory, completes a decade among the stars**

Context: India's first dedicated space astronomy observatory, AstroSat, completed a decade of operations.

- Ten years ago, on September 28, 2015, the **PSLV-C30 (XL) rocket carrying AstroSat lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.**
- Though the designed mission life of AstroSat was five years, it continues to provide valuable data.
- In the last decade, the multi-wavelength space observatory with five payloads aboard has made major interesting discoveries.



Keen explorer: Though the designed mission life of AstroSat was five years, it continues to provide valuable data.

- Commemorating the milestone in a post on X, the Indian Space Research Organisation said, “On this day 10 years ago, **AstroSat, India’s first multi wavelength astronomy observatory was launched by ISRO. From black holes to neutron stars, from the nearest star Proxima Centauri to first time detection of FUV photons from galaxies 9.3 billion light years away, AstroSat enabled groundbreaking insights across the electromagnetic spectrum from UV/Visible to high energy X-rays.**

Five payloads

- **AstroSat was designed to observe the universe in the visible, ultraviolet, low and high energy X-ray regions of the electromagnetic spectrum simultaneously with the help of its five payloads.**
- The five payloads are the **Ultra Violet Imaging Telescope (UVIT), Large Area X-ray Proportional Counter (LAXPC), Cadmium–Zinc–Telluride Imager (CZTI), Soft X-ray Telescope (SXT), and the Scanning Sky Monitor (SSM).**

Collaborative effort

- Astrosat was realised by the **ISRO** with the participation of all major astronomy institutions, including the Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Indian Institute of Astrophysics, and the Raman Research Institute (**RRI**), some universities of India and two institutions from Canada and the U.K.

❖ **NATO bolsters Baltic presence after drone sightings in Denmark**

Context: NATO has “enhanced vigilance” in the Baltic after what Copenhagen called an intrusion of unwelcome drones into Danish airspace, a spokesperson for the defence alliance said.

- The reinforced measures “include multiple intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms and at least one air-defence frigate” in the region to the west of Russia, alliance spokesman Martin O’Donnell told a press conference overnight.
- Mr. O’Donnell said NATO’s top brass “have been in constant contact with Danish leaders” about the drone incidents, the latest in a series of violations of the airspace of the alliance’s member countries.
- Mysterious drone sightings across **Denmark and Norway have prompted the closure of several airports, with Denmark hinting at possible Russian involvement.**

Russian role suspected

- Several NATO countries say Russian fighter jets and drones have violated their airspace in Europe over recent weeks, accusing Moscow of testing the alliance.
- But Moscow rejected any suggestion it was behind the drones, with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Saturday warning NATO would risk a “decisive response” if it showed “any aggression against my country”.

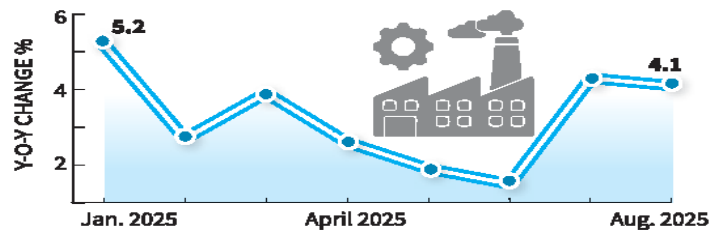
❖ Industrial output growth slows to 4% in August

Context: Country's IIP growth gets pulled down by consumer-related sectors; primary goods sector sees a turnaround with seven-month-high of 5.2%; experts say no effect of GST reforms that came in later

- Growth in industrial activity in India slowed to 4% in August from its six-month high growth of 4.3% in July.
- Growth was dragged down by the consumer durables and non-durables sectors, as well as slower growth in manufacturing, capital goods, and infrastructure sectors, government data showed.

Slowing growth

The year-on-year change (in %) in the Index of Industrial Production. The index saw 0% growth in August last year



SOURCE: CENTRE FOR MONITORING INDIAN ECONOMY

- On the other hand, mining activity, the primary goods sector, and electricity output saw a positive turnaround.
- **Data on the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**, showed that growth in the index this August was considerably faster than the 0% seen in August last year.
- “This data should be read with caution as it captures neither the tariff nor GST effect which have been in the news and affected sentiment in business,” Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at the Bank of Baroda, said. “Tariffs were implemented from August 27 while GST benefits kicked in late September.”
- The mining and quarrying sector in particular saw a significant turnaround. It grew 6% in August, a 14-month high, snapping a four-month streak of contractions.
- The **second sector to see a robust turnaround was the primary goods sector, which saw growth coming in at a seven-month high of 5.2%. The electricity sector grew at a five-month high of 4.1%.**
- The **manufacturing sector, however, slowed to 3.8% in August, down from 6% in July.** This was quicker than the 1.2% growth the sector saw in August last year. Similarly, growth in the capital goods sector slowed in August to 4.4% from 6.7% in July. This was, however, quicker than the 0% seen in August last year.
- The growth in the consumer durables sector slowed to 3.5% in August from 7.3% in July and 5.4% in August last year. The consumer non-durables sector saw activity contracting 6.3%, the worst performance in eight months.

❖ More women employed in agriculture, but half of them are unpaid

Context: Global trade trends, technology, and land and labour reforms can help bridge the gap

- Women-led development has been recognised as a structural game-changer for advancing India's economic ambitions, yet its full potential remains under-leveraged. Nowhere is harnessing this potential more urgently than in the agriculture sector, the backbone of India's economy and the largest employer of its women.

- Despite their growing presence on farms, women's contributions remain systematically unremunerative. By leveraging recent shifts in trade and technology, India has an unprecedented opportunity to unlock pathways that recognise women as equal partners in agricultural transformation.

- In the past decade, structural shifts in the Indian workforce have drawn rural men into higher-paying non-farm jobs, leaving women to replace them to do the agricultural work. As a result, women's employment in agriculture surged by 135%, and they now account for over 42% of the sector's workforce. Two out of every three working women are now in agriculture.

- Yet, this rise has come with diminishing returns. Nearly half of the women in agriculture are unpaid family workers, with their numbers jumping 2.5 times from 23.6 million to 59.1 million in just eight years (Chart 1). As a result, today, one in three working women in India is unpaid. In States such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, more than 80% of women workers are in agriculture, and over half of them receive no wages (Map 2).

- Much of this invisibility stems from systemic inequities. Women are not officially recognised as farmers, own only 13-14% of land holdings, and earn 20-30% less than men for equivalent work. Asset ownership, decision-making power, and access to credit and government support remain male-dominated, trapping women in low-value activities.

- As a result, women's greater participation has not translated into higher income for the economy, as agriculture's share of the national GVA fell from 15.3% in 2017-18 to 14.4% in 2024-25. Therefore, the 'feminisation of agriculture; has, in a way, reinforced inequities rather than enabling women's economic empowerment.

- Global trade trends are opening new windows for women's economic inclusion in agriculture. The India-U.K. Free Trade Agreement (FTA), for example, is projected to boost Indian agricultural exports by 20% within three years, granting duty-free access to over 95% of agricultural and processed food products. From rice, spices, and dairy to ready-to-eat meals, Indian producers will benefit from premium market access, with safeguards in place for sensitive sectors. Many of these export-oriented value chains employ a significant share of women (Chart 3). If FTA-embedded provisions for women, such as training, credit access, and market linkages, are catalysed, it could enable women's transition from farm labourers to income-generating entrepreneurs.

- The greatest opportunity lies in enabling women to move from unpaid, low-value tasks into higher-margin segments such as processing, packaging, branding, and exporting. With global demand rising for organic products and superfoods, India's value chains for tea, spices, millets and certified organic produce are poised for

All work, no pay

The data for the charts were sourced from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), 2023-24



Chart 1: The number of women in the agriculture sector who are unpaid family workers

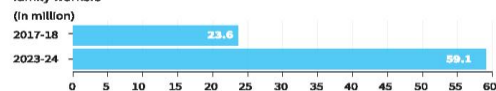


Chart 2: Proportion of women (in %) in agriculture who received no wages according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), 2023-24

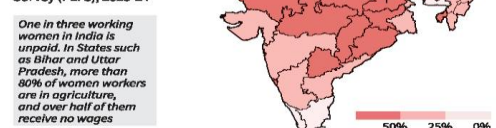
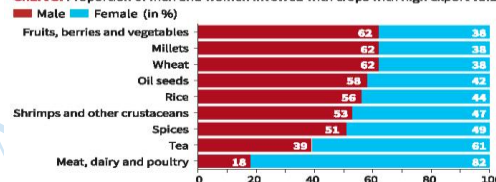


Chart 3: Proportion of men and women involved with crops with high export value



expansion — sectors where women are already strongly represented. Geographical Indications, branding initiatives, and support for meeting export standards can help women producers shift from subsistence farming toward premium, value-added product markets.

- Without targeted measures, women risk being excluded from the export-led opportunities emerging in Indian agriculture. Digital innovations can play a decisive role in bridging this gap. Platforms such as e-NAM, mobile-based advisory services, voice-assisted applications, and precision agriculture tools are already connecting women to markets, knowledge systems, and financial services. These solutions help formalise women’s labour while expanding access to schemes, credit, and fair pricing.
- However, these benefits are contingent on overcoming structural barriers such as low digital literacy, language gaps, and limited access to affordable devices. Tackling these challenges requires collective action by all ecosystem actors — government, private sector, NGOs, self-help groups, and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).
- Encouragingly, promising models are emerging. AI-enabled solutions such as the government’s BHASHINI platform and Microsoft–AI4Bharat’s Jugalbandi are extending multilingual, voice-first access to government services. L&T Finance’s Digital Sakhi programme has trained rural women in digital and financial literacy across seven States.
- At the State level, Odisha’s Swayam Sampurna FPOs showcase how technology can position women farmers at the forefront of export competitiveness. The Jhalawari Mahila Kisan Producer Company in Rajasthan leverages digital tools for direct sales and branding. Multi-stakeholder training programs for women farmers in Assam’s tea sector focus on diverse areas. It is important to scale up and emulate these platforms.
- To transform women’s role in agriculture, land and labour reforms are equally vital. Policies must recognise women as independent farmers by promoting joint or individual land ownership, which in turn strengthens their eligibility for credit, insurance, and institutional support.

❖ X to appeal HC judgment upholding Sahyog portal

Context: X, formerly Twitter, said that it would appeal the Karnataka High Court’s decision that rejected its challenge to the Union government’s Sahyog portal.

- The Sahyog portal was set up last year to allow the police and other authorised government agencies to send takedown notices to social media platforms, a move that X has argued is a broad and illegal censorship regime that would leave it with criminal liability if it did not comply.
- The company said it was “deeply concerned” by the judgment handed down by the single Bench of judge M. Nagaprasanna, and that it would appeal. It did not indicate whether this appeal would be directed to a larger bench of the Karnataka High Court, or to the Supreme Court.
- “The Sahyog [portal] enables officers to order content removal based solely on allegations of ‘illegality,’ without judicial review or due process for the speakers, and threatens platforms with criminal liability for non-compliance,” the platform said.
- “X respects and complies with Indian law, but this order... is inconsistent with the Bombay High Court’s recent ruling that a similar regime was unconstitutional.”

- X is referring to the Centre's fact checking unit, which was designed to flag misinformation about the Centre that, once a given post was notified, would strip away the "safe harbour" that a platform would enjoy for continuing to host it; the "intermediary," X, in this case, would be liable for posts made by users as though it were a publisher. The Sahyog portal, X argues, is similar.
- Justice Nagaprasanna argued in his ruling that X was not in a position to take umbrage under constitutional guarantees as its parent, X Corp., is a foreign company.

❖ Two railway links to offer easy connectivity to Bhutan

Context: Kokrajhar-Gelephu and Banarhat-Samtse lines will run to a total distance of 89 km; they will be developed at a cost of ₹4,033 crore; Railway Minister says project will boost economy, tourism.

- The Centre announced two rail links with a total distance of 89 km between India and Bhutan — Kokrajhar-Gelephu (Assam) and Banarhat-Samtse (West Bengal) — at a cost of ₹4,033 crore.
- These two projects are part of the first set of rail connectivity projects between India and Bhutan, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced at a press conference.
- The memorandum of understanding (MoU) for these projects was signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bhutan in March 2024 and a formal agreement was signed here on the occasion of the Bhutanese Foreign Secretary's visit to New Delhi.
- "India is the largest trading partner of Bhutan. Most of the EXIM trade of Bhutan is through Indian ports, therefore, it becomes very important to have seamless rail connectivity for the Bhutanese economy to grow, and for the Bhutanese people to have better access to the global network," Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

For Vande Bharat trains

- The Minister said the two rail links would provide Bhutan access to 1,50,000 km of the Indian railway network. While the Kokrajhar-Gelephu rail link would be developed over the next four years, the Banarhat-Samtse line would be constructed over a period of three years. The railway lines would be designed for running Vande Bharat trains. The former will have six stations, two viaducts, 29 major bridges, 65 minor bridges, two good sheds, one flyover and 39 underpasses. The latter will include two stations, one major flyover, 24 minor flyovers, and 37 under passes. It will be developed at a cost of ₹577 crore.
- "This will provide a lot of economic benefits to the people, in terms of tourism, industrial growth, people-to-people movement, and goods movement. Practically, every benefit that railway brings will happen with this," Mr. Vaishnaw added.
- The Government of India has pledged ₹10,000 crore in development assistance to Bhutan for its 13th Five-Year Plan running from 2024 to 2029. This funding doubles the support provided during the 12th Plan.
- Bhutan is also set to benefit from the Jogighopha Inland Waterways Transport Terminal, opened in February. The two nations have also collaborated on five major hydropower projects — Chukha, Tala, Mangdechhu, Kurichhu, and the recently completed Punatsangchhu II.

❖ Govt. norms for EV charging infra subsidy

Context: The Centre has issued norms offering up to 100% subsidies for setting up vehicle charging stations, battery swapping and charging stations, targeting high-density cities, satellite towns, and key national and state highways.

- The guidelines were issued under the ₹10,000- crore PM E-drive scheme for promotion of EVs within which ₹2,000 crores has been apportioned for charging infrastructure.
- The government is aiming at installing 72,300 EV chargers for cars, two- wheelers, buses and trucks, said Additional Secretary, Ministry of Heavy Industries, Dr. Hanif Qureshi in a LinkedIn post.
- The post mentioned the government was aiming at a charging grid coverage of at least one charging station in every 3km × 3km grid; on highways, one every 25 km, plus long-range EV chargers every 100 km.
- The ₹2000 crore subsidy offers support for chargers in government buildings like offices and hospitals, private establishments, including malls and metro stations and other locations as determined by State/ UT governments.
- “India is ensuring infrastructure leads the way — breaking the adoption bottleneck, boosting consumer confidence, and building a strong public-private ecosystem for clean mobility,” Dr. Qureshi added.

❖ State launches Unified Land Acquisition System to ensure transparency and efficiency

Context: The Karnataka government on Monday launched the Unified Land Acquisition System (ULMS) Data Module, aimed at streamlining and digitising the land acquisition process across the State. Officials said the platform will bring greater transparency, efficiency, and accountability in land acquisition proposals and ongoing litigations.

- Developed by the Centre for Smart Governance under the e-Governance Department, the module has been created with inputs from an expert committee of the Revenue Department, senior officers, Special Land Acquisition Officers (SLAOs), and field officials.

Common platform

- The system will serve as a common platform for multiple land-acquiring agencies, including Revenue, Irrigation, Urban Development, BDA, BMRDA, Metro, K-Ride, KSHIP, KIADB, KHB, and NHAI. It will provide a consolidated dashboard offering real-time updates on the status of land acquisition proposals.
- Officials said the module will cover the full life cycle of acquisition — from proposal submission to award, compensation, and rehabilitation — in line with the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.
- Integration with systems such as Bhoomi, e-Swathu, e-Aasthi, Kaveri 2.0, and Khajane II will ensure that authentic data is sourced directly from respective departments.
- Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, who launched the module, said, “With ULMS, Karnataka is setting a new benchmark in citizen-centric governance. The platform

ensures transparency for landowners and affected families while providing officials with a robust workflow. It balances the State's development needs with the rights of citizens.”

❖ **HC: Charge created earlier will prevail during conflict between GST Act and SARFAESI Act**

Context: If there is a conflict between the GST Act and the SARFAESI Act, the priority of the charge must be determined based on the order in which the charges were created, said the Karnataka High Court.

- “If the charge under the Goods and Services Tax (Tax) Act was created prior to that under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002, the GST Act will prevail, and vice versa,” the court said while clarifying the position of law when charges were created separately on a same property under these two enactments.
- Justice Suraj Govindaraj passed the order while allowing a petition filed by Canara Bank while challenging the charge/encumbrance created by the State Commercial Tax Department over an immovable property, which was already mortgaged to the bank, for GST dues. The court declined to accept the Commercial Tax Department's argument that only the claims under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) can override those under the GST Act, and that, since the GST Act is subsequent to the SARFAESI Act, the GST Act should prevail in all circumstances of charges.
- The claim under the GST Act, the court said, is not directly enforceable until the tax authorities have made an assessment and an entry is made on public records, like the encumbrance certificate or property card. What needs to be considered is the date of creation of the charge, the court pointed out.
- If the charge under the SARFAESI Act was created before the charge under the GST Act, the SARFAESI Act charge would take precedence, the court said while pointing that the charge in the present was created in 2017 by the Bank and the charge over the same immovable property was created by the department only in 2019
- While directing the department to remove the encumbrance or charge created over the property in question, the court permitted the bank to auction the property to recover dues to it and if any surplus amount remains after dues to the bank, the same should be deposited with the department for adjustment towards GST dues.

❖ 7.42 crore voters on Bihar's final electoral rolls at the end of SIR

Context: EC says physical, digital copies of rolls being shared with parties; electors with complaints can appeal before the District Magistrate and State CEO.

- Ahead of the Assembly election in Bihar, the Election Commission released the final electoral rolls in the State with nearly 7.42 crore names on the completion of the special intensive revision of the list.
- Prior to the revision, the State had 7.89 crore voters as on June 24. When the draft list was released on August 1, there were 7.24 crore names with 65 lakh removed. On the final list, 21.53 lakh names were added and 3.66 lakh removed, a press statement from the commission.
- “If any eligible person still wishes to apply for inclusion of their name in the electoral roll, they can submit an application up to 10 days before the last date for filing nominations for election,” Apurva Kumar Singh, Assistant Director, EC, said in the statement.
- Mr. Singh said if any person was not satisfied with the decision of the electoral registration officer on entry on the electoral rolls, they may, under Section 24 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, file a first appeal before the District Magistrate and a second appeal before the CEO.
- The draft electoral rolls were shared with all political parties, while the list of names not included on the draft rolls was displayed by the district election officers and district magistrates, as well as on the website of the Bihar CEO.
- He said the **SIR exercise was carried out in line with Article 326 of the Constitution.**

❖ CM announces more relief for rain-hit farmers

Context: After an aerial survey of flood-hit areas in Kalyana Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that the State government would provide an additional ₹8,500 per hectare over and above the Union government's crop loss compensation under National Disaster Response Fund norms, across all three crop categories – rainfed, irrigated, and perennial.

- After an aerial survey of Kalaburagi, Vijayapura, Bidar, and Yadgir districts and chairing a review meeting.
- **“As per NDRF norms, rainfed, irrigated, and perennial crops are entitled to ₹8,500, ₹17,000, and ₹22,500 per hectare, respectively. The State government will add ₹8,500 across the board, raising compensation to ₹17,000 for rainfed, ₹25,500 for irrigated, and ₹31,000 for perennial crops.”**

Extent of damage

- The Chief Minister said over 9.6 lakh hectares of crops have been damaged across the State, of which 9.03 lakh hectares were in just eight northern districts of Kalaburagi, Vijayapura, Yadgir, Bidar, Bagalkot, Belagavi, Raichur, and Gadag, accounting for 95% of the State's total loss.

Excess rainfall

- Between June 1 and September 29 this year, Karnataka recorded 879 mm of rainfall – 4% above normal. But the surge was much higher in northern districts: Vijayapura 615 mm (+58%), Kalaburagi 768 mm (+34%), Yadgir 659 mm (+29%), and Bidar 750 mm (+16%).
- “This year, North Karnataka has seen rainfall levels not witnessed in many years. Coupled with the massive inflow from Maharashtra’s reservoirs, it has created one of the worst flood disasters in recent memory,” he observed.
- Stressing the Centre’s role in disaster response, he said his government would submit a memorandum seeking additional funds.

❖ Five city corporations to have 368 wards, up from 198

Context: As anticipated, the East Corporation, with the lowest population, has the least number of wards at 50, the West Corporation, with the highest population, has the highest number of wards at 111

- The State government published a draft of the new wards within the five city corporations in Bengaluru, taking the total number of wards in the city to 368, up from 198.
- As anticipated, the **East Corporation, with the lowest population, has the least number of wards at 50, the West Corporation, with the highest population, has the highest number of wards at 111.**
- While **North and South corporations have 72 wards each, the Central Corporation will have 63 wards,** as per the draft notification.
- The draft notification gives ward boundaries and prominent areas in the ward, but gives neither a map nor the population and size of the wards.

Ward sizes

- While the **ward delimitation was carried out based on the 2011 Census,** the average ward size as per projected population for 2023 varies in the range of 26,000 in the East Corporation to over 43,000 in the North Corporation.
- This ward size is definitely an improvement from the situation under the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) where the population of many wards crossed 1 lakh.
- But given that the Greater Bengaluru Governance Act, 2024, provides up to 150 wards in each corporation taking the total to 750 in the city, and Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister D.K. Shivakumar had hinted at 500 wards, many argue there was room to carve out much smaller wards.

Outdated on arrival

- The guidelines for the Delimitation Commission mandated that each ward should represent around 20,000 residents, with a leeway for 25% variance to ensure balanced representation, as per the 2011 Census, the latest census available, based on which ward delimitation has to be done.
- While, as per the 2011 Census, the city’s population was around 85 lakh, it is projected to be 1.44 crore in 2023, which essentially means the new wards are outdated on arrival.

- M. Maheshwar Rao, Chief Commissioner, Greater Bengaluru Authority and Chairman of the Ward Delimitation Commission, said that the wards have been carved out based on the 2011 Census within the guidelines issued to the Commission. Citizens can submit their objections to the draft by writing to the Additional Chief Secretary, Urban Development Department by October 15. The final notification of the ward boundaries is expected to be published by November 1.

❖ India got 8% more monsoon rainfall this year, says IMD

Context: India this year received 8% more monsoon rainfall than normal, the fifth-highest since 2001 and the 38th highest since 1901, the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

- The IMD considers only the rainfall from June 1 to September 30 to calculate monsoon data.
- While the southwest monsoon season largely boded well for agriculture by boosting storage in reservoirs, it wreaked havoc in several parts of the country — particularly in North India — leading to loss of life and property.
- Seasonal rainfall over northwest India, central India, and south peninsula was 27%, 15% and 10% more than their seasonal averages. However, rainfall in eastern and northeastern India was 80% of what those regions usually get.
- The rainfall over northwest India was 74.79 cm, the highest since 2001 and sixth highest since 1901, while that over east and northeast India was 108.9 cm, the second lowest since 1901. Overall, the monsoon rainfall was 93.7 cm.
- The monsoon season saw extremely heavy spells in several parts of northern and southern India, thanks to the conjoining of storms that originated in the Mediterranean region, along with the monsoon trough that hovers over the Indian landmass during the monsoon season. When parsed by months, rainfall was 9% more than what is usual in June, 5% more in both July and August, and 15% excess in September.
- The southwest monsoon advanced over the south Andaman Sea and Nicobar Islands on May 13, 2025, nearly nine days ahead of the normal schedule. It arrived in Kerala on May 24, ahead of the usual onset date of June 1, and covered the entire country by June 29.
- **There were seven monsoon depressions, or sub-cyclonic storms that form in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, during the season. Of the seven, one intensified into a deep depression. Storms falling in this category last an average of 69 days against a normal of 55, contributing to the extended spells of heavy rain.**
- Though the monsoon system has not fully withdrawn and will prevail over the next couple of weeks, the IMD does not count that rain in its quota of monsoon rainfall. For October, the agency has forecast 'above normal' rain in the country, except for parts of north and northwest India.
- While a **La Nina is expected to form in the central equatorial Pacific Ocean and it usually means a stronger winter**, IMD Director-General M. said this was not always the case.

- A forecast for winter (December, January and February) will be available around November, he added.

❖ Centre directs NGOs to seek FCRA renewal 4 months before expiry

Context: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs directed non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to submit applications for renewal of their Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) registration at least four months before expiry.

- **FCRA registration, which is mandatory for NGOs and associations to receive foreign funds, is renewed every five years.**
- In a communication, the Ministry noted that several associations had been submitting renewal applications less than 90 days before the expiry of their certificates.
- “Such delayed submissions do not allow sufficient time for scrutiny and for obtaining inputs from security agencies,” the Ministry said. It stated that NGOs are “strictly advised to submit their renewal applications well in advance and, in any case, not later than four months before the validity expires.

❖ Maharashtra, Karnataka report most number of farmer suicides

Context: The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has said in its report that 10,786 farmers and agricultural workers committed suicide in 2023. The most number of cases was from Maharashtra (38.5%), followed by Karnataka (22.5%).

- The organisations of farmers blamed the Narendra Modi government’s policies for the situation, and said the decision to waive off import duty on cotton would vitiate the situation as most of the suicides were still from the cotton belts of the country.
- Of the 10,786 suicides from the farming sector, 4,690 were farmers or cultivators, and 6,096 were agricultural workers. The farm suicides accounted for 6.3% of total suicides (1,71,418 suicides in 2023) in the country.
- Out of the 4,690 farmers who committed suicide, 4,553 were male and 137 were female, and out of the 6,096 suicides by farm workers, 5,433 were male and 663 were female.
- After Maharashtra and Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh (8.6%), Madhya Pradesh (7.2%), and Tamil Nadu (5.9%) registered the most number of suicides. West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Chandigarh, Delhi, and Lakshadweep reported no suicides from the farm belt.
- Commenting on the NCRB data, the president of the All India Kisan Sabha, Ashok Dhawale, said more than 10,000 suicides had been reported from the farm sector in 2021, 2022 and 2023, and it showed the systemic crisis that the Modi government could not grasp or combat.
- “This crisis is going to aggravate as a large number of farmer suicides take place in the cotton and soybean belt. Maharashtra has turned out to be the graveyard of farmers.
- The Marathwada and Vidarbha region are cotton and soybean belts. In spite of this, the Union government is bowing to the pressure to sign Free Trade Agreements, and

to U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff terrorism. The government cancelled the 11% import duty on cotton. This means that American cotton is going to come here. Agriculture will be finished by these treaties," Mr. Dhawale said, adding that the NCRB data could not be trusted.

- For those in distress, counselling is available at TeleMANAS-14416

❖ Crime against children records 9.2% rise in 2023

Context: A total of 1,77,335 cases of crime against children were registered in 2023, showing an increase of 9.2% over the 2022 figure, according to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report.

- The data compiled by the NCRB showed that the crime rate in 2023 stood at 39.9 per 1,00,000 child population in comparison to 36.6 in 2022.
- The major crime heads in 2023 were "Kidnapping and abduction of children" (79,884 cases, 45%) and "Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act" (67,694 cases, 38.2%).
- Madhya Pradesh topped the list with 22,393 total cases, followed by Maharashtra (22,390) and Uttar Pradesh (18,852).

❖ IISc researchers develop new system to transform seawater into drinking water

Context: This is said to carry out the process in a faster and cost effective manner compared to the existing methods; the desalination unit is low-cost, scalable, and sustainable.

- Researchers from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have developed a new siphon-based thermal desalination system which can transform salty seawater into clean drinking water. This system is said to carry out the process in a faster and cost effective manner compared to the existing methods.
- According to the Department of Science and Technology, traditional solar stills, which mimic nature's water cycle, have long been promoted as simple water purifiers.

Two challenges

- However, the department said that this method faces two persistent challenges which are salt buildup, where crusts form on evaporator surfaces resulting in blocking water
- The second challenge with this method is scaling limits where wicking materials can only lift water about 10–15 cm, restricting system size and output.
- The department said that the IISc team of researchers have addressed both challenges using the principle of siphonage. The siphon-based thermal desalination system developed by the researchers uses a composite siphon which is a fabric wick paired with a grooved metallic surface. The fabric draws salty water from a reservoir, while gravity ensures a smooth, continuous flow. Instead of allowing salt to crystallize, the siphon flushes it away before buildup occurs.
- "The water spreads as a thin film across the heated metal surface, evaporates, and then condenses just two millimeters away onto a cooler surface. This ultra-narrow air gap significantly enhances efficiency, producing more than six liters of clean water

per square meter per hour under sunlight which is several times higher than conventional solar stills,” the department said.

- By stacking multiple evaporator–condenser pairs, the device recycles heat repeatedly, squeezing maximum output from each ray of sunshine.
- The department said that the desalination unit is low-cost, scalable, and sustainable, relying only on simple materials such as aluminum and fabric.
- The system can run on solar energy or waste heat, making it suitable for off-grid communities, disaster zones, and arid coastal regions. It can also handle extremely salty water (up to 20% salt) without clogging which is a major advance in brine treatment.
- The department said that this system could help secure safe drinking water for millions in water-stressed regions.
- “From small villages to island nations, the siphon-powered desalination system may finally make the ocean a dependable source of fresh drinking water,” it said.

❖ ADB cuts India's FY26 growth forecast to 6.5% on U.S. tariff impact

Context: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has downgraded India's growth outlook for the current financial year to 6.5% from the 6.7% predicted in April, on account of the impact of the 50% tariffs imposed by the U.S. on imports from India.

- The outlook for 2026-27 has also been revised downwards to 6.5% from the earlier prediction of 6.8%.
- The ADB, in its Asian Development Outlook September 2025, released on Tuesday, also reduced its growth forecast for developing Asia to 4.8% for the current year 2025 from its forecast in April of 4.9%. Similarly, the forecast for 2026 has been cut to 4.5% from 4.7%.
- “The revisions reflect downgrades for India, hit by steep tariff hikes, and Southeast Asia, driven by a worse and more uncertain global environment,” the report said. India faces the steepest tariff hikes among developing Asian economies, prompting a downgrade in its growth outlook.”
- The report further said that, despite strong growth in the first quarter of the current financial year, driven by consumption and public investment, the elevated U.S. tariffs, which it said affected about 60% of goods exported to the U.S., will weigh on growth starting in the second half of 2025-26 and in 2026-27.
- “Merchandise exports are expected to grow only modestly, constrained by US tariffs on key exports, while exports of services are expected to remain robust and a key driver of growth,” it said. “Investment growth is expected to be lower than previously forecast, with corporate investment still subdued by global trade uncertainty.”
- The escalation in tariffs is expected to weigh heavily on key export sectors such as textiles, ready-made garments, jewellery, shrimp, and chemicals, the report noted. On the other hand, however, it noted that consumption demand is expected to grow more than previously expected, aided by lower food prices and cuts to consumption and income taxes.
- “The 2025-26 inflation projection for India is revised downward to 3.1%, reflecting subdued global oil prices and a faster-than-expected decline in food prices due to higher agricultural production,” the report said.

- However, it added that food prices are expected to normalise in 2026-27, leading to an upward revision of the inflation forecast to 4.2% for that year.

❖ Centre extends RoDTEP export sop plan till March 2026

Context: The Government has extended the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) incentive scheme for exporters until March 31, 2026. Exporters welcomed the move, saying it removes substantial uncertainty and comes when Indian exports are facing significant headwinds.

- Started in 2021, the RoDTEP scheme provides refunds to exporters for any embedded duties, taxes, and levies incurred by them not already refunded under other schemes.
- The scheme had earlier been available until February 5 this year. In May, following significant lobbying by exporters, the government restored the RoDTEP scheme for exporters done by Advance Authorisation (AA) holders, Export-Oriented Units (EOUs), and units in Special Economic Zones (SEZs).
- “The timely extension of RoDTEP has removed the uncertainty that was weighing on the exporting community,” said S.C. Ralhan, president of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations.

❖ NASA’s IMAP will show how solar particles are energised and shield us

Context: IMAP, which was launched on September 24, will map the heliosphere’s boundary, trace energetic particles, and improve space weather forecasting.

- Space isn’t empty. The sun issues a continuous stream of charged particles called the solar wind, which creates a vast region around our solar system called the heliosphere. This region acts like a protective bubble that shields the planets from cosmic rays and interstellar particles. Yet the structure, dynamics, and boundary of the heliosphere are still poorly understood. Scientists want to know how particles are accelerated in the solar wind and how they interact with the space between stars. Changes in the solar wind and its particles also affect space weather, which can damage satellites, harm astronauts, and disrupt communication systems on earth.
- To address these questions, NASA launched the Interstellar Mapping and Acceleration Probe (IMAP) on September 24. Its goal is to map the heliosphere’s boundary, trace energetic particles, and improve space weather forecasting.
- IMAP is equipped with 10 scientific instruments, each designed to detect different types of particles or phenomena in space. Some of them are energetic neutral-atom detectors (IMAP-Lo, IMAP-Hi, IMAP-Ultra), which capture neutral atoms that were once charged ions but were changed by acquiring electrons. Other instruments detect charged particles directly, magnetic fields, interstellar dust, and solar-wind structures.
- After launch, IMAP will travel to the sun-earth Lagrange point 1 (L1), about 1.6 million km from the earth toward the sun, where gravitational forces balance in a way that allows the spacecraft to remain in a stable orbit with minimal fuel use. Once there, IMAP will continuously observe incoming solar wind and energetic particles from a fixed vantage point. IMAP will also send data in near real-time to help scientists monitor space weather conditions.

- Based on mission design and early operations, scientists expect IMAP will produce the most detailed maps yet of the heliosphere's boundary, revealing how the solar wind collides with the interstellar medium. It will also trace how particles accelerate from the sun, move out, or are energised in the heliosphere. In more specialised research, IMAP-Lo is expected to be able to observe interstellar neutral hydrogen and deuterium, possibly distinguishing primary versus secondary populations of these atoms at the heliopause, which is the outermost layer of the heliosphere.
- IMAP data are expected to have profound implications. By revealing the structure and dynamics of the heliosphere, physicists can deepen their understanding of how our solar system is protected against cosmic radiation. That is relevant to understanding the earth's habitability and that of exoplanets as well. Second, better data on solar wind behaviour will strengthen physicists' ability to forecast space weather, in turn helping protect satellites, communications networks, power grids, and orbital crews.
- For future human exploration beyond the earth, IMAP's measurements of how particles travel and are accelerated will help plan safer routes and design better shielding for spacecraft.

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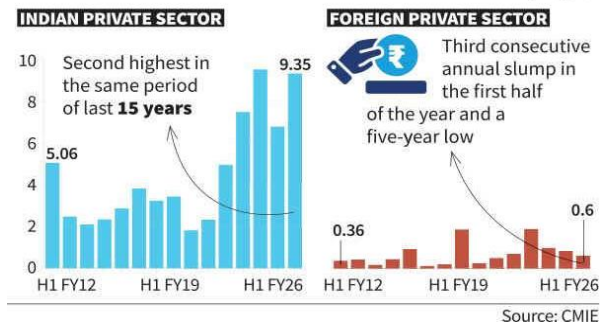
❖ Private project plans in first half of fiscalare at a 15-year high

Context: Indian firms alone account for 94% of the ₹9.95 lakh crore announced by the sector; government and foreign investment proposals slump.

- The value of new project announcements by the Indian private sector surged to nearly a 15-year high in the first half of the current financial year, even as new government projects and those by foreign companies slumped.
- The value of such announcements by the Union government and those of the States fell to at least a 15-year low during the period, while those by foreign companies were at a five-year low.
- Data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) shows that the private sector announced projects estimated at ₹9.95 lakh crore in the April-September 2025 period, up 30.4% over the first half of the previous financial year. Of this, it was the Indian private sector that did the heavy lifting. It announced projects estimated at ₹9.35 lakh crore, 94% of the value of the new project announcements in the first half and up 37.5% over the corresponding period of 2024-25. The value was the second highest in the corresponding period of the past 15 years. The highest was in the first half of 2023-24, when it touched ₹9.54 lakh crore.
- However, the data also showed that India's attractiveness as an investment destination for foreign companies might be diminishing. New project announcements by foreign companies fell to about ₹0.6 lakh crore in the April-September 2025 period, down nearly 28% from the corresponding period of last year.
- This also marks the third consecutive year where foreign announcements have slumped in the first half of the year, and a five-year low for the figure.
- New project announcements by foreign companies had risen to a peak of ₹1.9 lakh crore in the first six months of 2022-23 before declining subsequently.
- The slump in new project announcements in India by foreign companies is not in line with global trends. Data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development show that global foreign direct investment grew by 11% in 2024 over its level in 2023, which itself was 3% higher than in 2022.
- New project announcements by governments — both Central and State — slumped to ₹1.51 lakh crore in the first six months of financial year 2025-26, down more than 71% over their level in the corresponding period of the previous year.
- This level of investment intention was the lowest in at least 15 years, the period for which there is data.
- India's first helicopter final assembly line in the private sector will come up at Vemagal in Kolar district of Karnataka. The assembly line will be established by Tata Advanced Systems Ltd. (TASL) to build the Airbus H125 helicopters.

Domestic **enthusiasm**

Indian private sector's new project announcements in first half of 2025-26 was up 37.5% over the corresponding period of 2024-25. Announcements by foreign companies fell nearly 28%



- According to Airbus and TASL, the “Made in India” H125 helicopter will help develop new civil and para-public market segments, and also meet the Indian armed forces’ requirement for a light multi-role helicopter, especially on the icy heights of the country’s Himalayan frontiers. technologies,” according to Airbus and TASL. The delivery of the first “Made in India” H125 is expected in early 2027.

❖ ANRF’s SARAL to simplify scientific research papers

Context: As part of outreach to make scientific research more accessible, the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) — India’s newest science funding agency — has developed a tool called SARAL (Simplified and Automated Research Amplification and Learning).

- This tool, the organisation’s CEO, Shivkumar Kalyanaraman said, would help generate layperson summaries of complex scientific research.
- This meant using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to extract information from research publications to generate “videos, podcasts, posters and presentation”, he said at a meeting organised earlier this week by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The ANRF would focus on harnessing “deep science and engineering” to create “deep tech products and start-ups”, Mr. Kalyanaraman said.
- The organisation would be developing an “AI Science and Engineering Open India Stack” that would significantly influence “drug and chemical discovery, aerospace design, climate and weather and advanced materials and design”, he said.

Funds allotted

- In July, the Union Cabinet approved a ₹1 lakh crore Research Development and Innovation Scheme that intends to provide low interest, long tenure loans to private companies for investment in core research and development.
- The Foundation’s governing council is expected to play a critical role in evaluating which sectors could receive such funds. The ANRF is envisaged as a single-window clearance mechanism for funding research and development for universities and academic institutions. It is also expected to receive about 70% of its budget from private sources. In function, it has absorbed much of the role the erstwhile Science and Engineering Research Board had played in funding scientific research.

❖ Musk is first to hit \$500 billion net worth, Forbes list shows

- Tesla CEO Elon Musk became the first person ever to achieve a net worth of almost \$500 billion, propelled by a rebound in the EV firm’s shares and surging valuations of the tech entrepreneur’s other start-ups this year.
- His net worth stood at \$500.1 billion as of 4:15 p.m. E.T., as per Forbes’ billionaires index. His fortunes are tied closely to Tesla, where he held a more than 12.4% stake as of September 15. The stock has risen more than 14% so far this year.

❖ **PLI scheme for textile sector likely to be revised**

Context: The textile industry is expecting an announcement soon on a revised Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the sector, with focus on manmade fibre (MMF) textiles.

- Union Minister for Textiles Giriraj Singh recently posted on X, “From expanding opportunities to smoother implementation, the PLI Scheme is now more dynamic than ever.
- “With new reforms, the Ministry of Textiles has made it more flexible, industry-friendly and geared towards ease of doing business, which will help in driving growth in MMF & Technical Textiles to the next level.”
- As per the post, the scheme will include eight new HSN codes for MMF apparel and nine new codes for MMF fabrics. The unit can be set up within an existing firm and the investment criteria is revised to ₹150 crore (part IA) and ₹50 crore (part 2A). Further the incremental turnover needed for sops is 10%.
- Chairman of Confederation of Indian Textile Industry Ashwin Chandran said in a release the significant lowering of investment thresholds and changes in the turnover-linked sop structure would prove pivotal in fast-tracking the growth of Indian textile and apparel sector.
- Durai Palanisamy, chairman, Southern India Mills’ Association, said the scheme will attract investments from MSMEs.

❖ **OpenAI hits \$500 billion valuation after share sale to SoftBank, others, sources say**

Context: OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, has reached a valuation of \$500 billion, following a deal in which current and former employees sold roughly \$6.6 billion worth of shares, a source familiar with the matter.

- This represents a bump-up from its current valuation of \$300 billion, underscoring OpenAI’s rapid gains in both users and revenue.

Sale to consortium

- As part of the deal, OpenAI employees sold shares to a consortium of investors including Thrive Capital, SoftBank, Dragoneer Investment Group, Abu Dhabi’s MGX and T. Rowe Price, according to the source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media.
- The company had authorized sales of \$10-billion-plus worth of stock on the secondary market, the source added. Thrive Capital, SoftBank, Dragoneer, MGX and T. Rowe Price did not respond to Reuters’ requests for comment. The share sale adds to SoftBank’s earlier investment in OpenAI’s \$40 billion primary funding round.
- The company generated around \$4.3 billion in revenue in the first half of 2025, about 16% more than it generated all of last year, the Information reported earlier this week. The sale comes at a time when tech giants are competing aggressively for AI talent with lucrative compensation packages. Meta is notably investing billions in



Scale AI and poached its 28-year-old CEO, Alexandr Wang, to lead its new super intelligence unit.

❖ Indian-made H125 helicopters to roll out from Kolar in 2027

Context: India's first helicopter final assembly line in the private sector will come up at Vemagal in Kolar district of Karnataka. The assembly line will be established by Tata Advanced Systems Ltd. (TASL) to build the Airbus H125 helicopters.

- According to Airbus and TASL, the "Made in India" H125 helicopter will help develop new civil and para-public market segments, and also meet the Indian armed forces' requirement for a light multi-role helicopter, especially on the icy heights of the country's Himalayan frontiers. technologies," according to Airbus and TASL. The delivery of the first "Made in India" H125 is expected in early 2027.

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❖ Nations must prepare to deal with stablecoins: FM

Context: Innovations in cryptocurrency are transforming landscape of money and capital flows, and they may force nations to adapt to new monetary architectures or risk exclusion, says Sitharaman.

- Hinting at a possible shift in India's cryptocurrency policy, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said countries would have to "prepare to engage" with stablecoins whether they welcome the change or not.
- "Innovations like stablecoins are transforming the landscape of money and capital flows," Ms. Sitharaman said in her inaugural address at the Kautilya Economic Conclave here.
- "These shifts may force nations to make binary choices: adapt to new monetary architectures or risk exclusion," she said.
- "Such developments underscore the scale of the transformation under way. They also remind us that no nation can insulate itself from systemic change. Whether we welcome these shifts or not, we must prepare to engage with them."
- Stablecoins are a type of cryptocurrency that attempt to maintain stable prices as they are pegged to an underlying asset, such as a basket of currencies or precious metals.
- The remarks come at a time when the Finance Ministry and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have both voiced their reservations about private cryptocurrencies, also referred to as virtual digital assets. India has not legalised these products in terms of regulation, but it does tax transactions that involve them.
- The RBI, on the other hand, has lobbied hard to ban virtual digital assets outright, while simultaneously launching pilot projects of its own Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).

What is a stablecoin?

A stablecoin is a crypto asset that aims to maintain a stable value relative to a specified asset, or a pool of assets

- These assets could be a monetary unit of account such as the dollar or euro, a currency basket, a commodity such as gold, or unbacked crypto assets

- This stability can also be achieved only if a centralised institution is in charge of issuing (minting) and redeeming (burning) these crypto assets



SOURCE: IMF

Legal backing

- CBDCs are cryptocurrencies issued by central banks and have the same legal backing as official currency.
- The Finance Minister said India's capacity to absorb external shocks was strong and that its economic leverage was evolving. "Wars and strategic rivalries are redrawing the boundaries of cooperation and conflict," Ms. Sitharaman said.
- "Alliances that once appeared solid are being tested, and new coalitions are emerging. For India, these dynamics highlight both vulnerability and resilience."
- However, despite this reliance, she also cautioned that there was no time for complacency. "Just as eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, eternal performance is the price of strategic independence," she said.
- "There is no room for complacency or self-congratulation beyond a quiet confidence in our abilities to take the right decisions and execute them," the Finance Minister added.

❖ NK region gets surplus rain while it was deficient in south

Context: The south-west monsoon, which spans from June 1 to September 30, has withdrawn, leaving deficient rain in the south and surplus in north, presenting a picture of contrast. It averaged out as “normal” overall in Karnataka.

- Mysuru and Chamarajanagar are the only two of the 31 districts in the State to record deficient rain during the season, while in the rest of Karnataka, the rains were higher than the seasonal average.
- Reflective of the uneven spatial distribution of rains, several districts of North Karnataka, which were on the deficient side till the first week of September, ended the season with excess, according to Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC).
- Mysuru received 324 mm of rainfall from June 1 to September 30, which was 23% below seasonal average for the district. Similarly, Chamarajanagar district received 211 mm of rainfall, which is 34% below normal. Even Kodagu, which is the catchment area for the river Cauvery, received 2,176 mm of rainfall this year which is 1% below the long period average.
- However, any rainfall which is up to 19% above long period average and 19% below long period average is categorised as normal and, hence, Kodagu is under green or normal category.

Copious rains

- In sharp contrast, several districts in North Karnataka received copious rains, resulting in swollen rivers and extensive flooding.
- The downpour in districts such as Vijayapura, Kalaburagi Bidar, Yadgir, etc., was higher than normal over the four-month monsoon period.
- But both Vijayapura and Kalaburagi districts received heavy rains in September, and not only was the shortfall of the earlier weeks bridged, but these districts were categorised under “large excess” category, the only two in the State.
- While Vijayapura received 239 mm of rain in September, it was 61% higher than long period average. Kalaburagi received 285 mm and it was 63% higher than the long-term average for the month, according to KSNDMC.
- Only two districts, Mysuru and Chamarajanagar, were under deficient category, as per KSNDMC while 23 districts were under “normal”, and 6 districts under “excess” category.

❖ Shakti scheme gets world recognition

Context: Shakti scheme, the flagship women-empowerment initiative of the State government, has achieved another global milestone by entering the International Book of Records – World Record of Excellence. Over 500 crore free tickets have been issued since the launch of the scheme, which offers free bus travel for women.

- This recognition comes close on the heels of the scheme being listed in the Golden Book of World Records. Launched on June 11, 2023, as the first of the Congress government’s five guarantees, the Shakti scheme allows women, including transgender persons and students, to travel free of cost on non-premium State-run buses.

- Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy expressed gratitude to the officers, employees, and labour union leaders of the four State Road Transport Corporations for their role in this achievement. He said, “The scheme has empowered women not just economically but also socially and professionally, providing them greater mobility and opportunities.”
- Mr. Reddy noted that the successful implementation of the initiative across the State highlights its wide impact. “It is a matter of pride that the scheme has now another world record to its credit. I extend my congratulations to all women passengers,” he said.

❖ **Doddahatti Bore Gowda is best film; Rakshit Shetty, Archana Jois are best actor and actress**

Context: The Karnataka government has announced the State Film Awards for 2021, with Doddahatti Bore Gowda winning the best film and Rakshit Shetty taking home the best actor award for his performance in Charlie 777. KGF-fame Archana Jois was named best actress for her role in Mute.

- Produced by Rajarajeshwari Combines and directed by Raghukesh M., Doddahatti Bore Gowda was chosen for the top honour by a jury headed by senior journalist Sadashiva Shenoy.
- Charlie 777, produced by Paramvah Studios and directed by Kiranraj K., has been declared second best film, while Bisilu Kudure, directed by Hridaya Shiva, won the third best film award. The award for best social concern film went to Bharatada Prajegaalada Naavu, directed and produced by Krishnamurthy Chamaram.
- Puneeth Rajkumar’s Yuvarathna has been adjudged best popular entertaining film. Pramod won the best supporting actor for Ratnan Prapancha, while Umashree was named best supporting actress for the same film.
- Ravi Santhekaklu received the award for best art direction for Bhajarangi 2 and Nagarjuna Sharma has been honoured as best lyricist for his song in Charlie 777. The best playback singer (Male) award went to Aneesh Keshav Rao for Sri Jagannatha Dasaru, while Sahana M. Bharadwaj was recognised as best playback singer (Female) for Dandi.
- The jury also made special mentions, with Bhairavi recognised as a film of merit; Yogi G. Raju being awarded for costume design in Bhajarangi 2, and Shivakumar honoured for his make-up work in Thayi Kastur Gandhi. Shivakumar S. has been named the best production executive for his work in Pogaru.

❖ **Amid tensions with Russia, Poland to join NATO fuel network**

Context: A quarter of a century after it joined NATO and amid rising tension on its eastern frontier, Poland will finally join the alliance’s fuel pipeline network.

- The Western allies operate a 10,000-km network of European pipelines, bringing fuel and lubricants for tanks and aircraft to where troops might need them in time of war.
- But the system was set up during the Cold War, when Poland was still a member of the opposing Warsaw Pact, and NATO’s pipelines still do not reach its bases closer to the borders with Russia and Belarus.

- Poland has been considering joining the NATO Pipeline System (NPS) for many years, and, the Defence Ministry and national pipeline operator PERN unveiled a €4.7-billion-euro to do so.
- “This is one of the largest investments in the security of the Polish state in the last 30 years,” Deputy Defence Minister Cezary Tomczyk told reporters at the signing ceremony.
- Warsaw, plans to build a 300-km pipeline from Germany to its military base in Bydgoszcz, in north-central Poland and home to NATO’s “joint force training centre” and several support units.

❖ Mullally appointed first woman to lead the Church of England

Context: A 63-year-old former nurse, Sarah Mullally, was named as the first female Archbishop of Canterbury, pledging to improve safety at the Church of England following an abuse scandal that ousted her predecessor.

- The former midwife becomes the first woman to lead the centuries-old mother church of the world’s 85-million strong Anglican community.
- Her nomination by a committee tasked with finding a successor to Justin Welby, who stepped down earlier this year, was approved by King Charles III, the U.K. government said.
- Ms. Mullally acknowledged the “huge responsibility” of her new role and vowed to “confront the dynamics of power” that had led the church to cover up the abuse of dozens of boys and young men several decades ago.
- She cautioned that it would “not be easy”, due to a “history of safeguarding failures” that has “left a legacy of deep harm and mistrust” in the Church of England. “We must all be willing to have light shone on our actions, regardless of our role in the church,” she said during an appearance at Canterbury Cathedral in southeast England.
- The Church of England became the country’s state establishment church following King Henry VIII’s split from the Roman Catholic Church in the 1530s.

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