



**DR. RAJKUMAR ACADEMY
BENGALURU**

AN INITIATIVE BY DR. RAJKUMAR FAMILY

WEEKLY NEWS COMPILATION

A CRISP AND COMPREHENSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS CAPSULE

OCTOBER WEEK 5

27-10-2025 TO 01-11-2025

**INDIA, U.S.
SIGN
DEFENCE
PACT**

**JANJATIYA
GAURAV DIVAS ON
NOVEMBER 15**

**BLACK HOLE
ACTIVITIES**

**IUCN RED-
FLAGGED THE
WESTERN GHATS**

**HANLE DARK SKY
RESERVE:LADAKH**

❖ **Andhra Pradesh braces for cyclone as IMD issues high alert for 23 districts**

Context: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday put the entire administrative machinery on high alert as the India Meteorological Department issued red and orange alerts for 23 of the 26 districts in the State in view of Cyclone Montha.

- The IMD said the deep depression over southeast Bay of Bengal was likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm. Thereafter, it was likely to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm and was very likely to cross the Andhra Pradesh coast between Machilipatnam and Kalingapatnam around Kakinada in the evening or night.
- **While crossing, the severe cyclonic storm could have a maximum wind speed of 90-100 kmph gusting to 110 kmph**, it said.
- According to the IMD bulletin, **the deep depression lay about 780 km southeast of Kakinada and 790 km south-southeast of Visakhapatnam.**
- The Regional Meteorological Centre, Chennai, forecast **light to moderate rain** in a few places over the Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal regions.
- **Heavy rain is likely** to occur in isolated places in Chennai, Tiruvallur, Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram, Ranipet, Vellore, Villupuram, Kallakurichi, Cuddalore, Mayiladuthurai and Tiruvannamalai districts and Puducherry.
- Cyclone alert has been issued for Andhra Pradesh, Yanam and adjoining South Odisha coasts so that officials could begin taking precautionary measures.
- **Red alert, which indicates a possibility of extremely heavy rainfall**, has been sounded for seven districts of Andhra Pradesh — SPSR Nellore, Prakasam, Bapatla, Krishna, West Godavari, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema and Kakinada.
- The IMD has warned that the sea condition may be 'very rough' along and off the Andhra Pradesh and Yanam coasts. It would further worsen, becoming 'very rough' to 'high'.

Montha is the third severe cyclonic storm after Asani in 2022 and Michaung in 2023 to cross the Andhra Pradesh coast.

- During a teleconference with senior officials, Mr. Naidu reviewed the preparedness of all the departments. He instructed the officials to ensure there was no disruption to power supply, telecom connectivity, or drinking water systems.
- Mr. Naidu urged officials of all departments to ensure there was no loss of life or property. "Alerts should be sent through SMS, social media, IVRS [Interactive Voice Response] calls, and WhatsApp. Ensure that information from the village level reaches the State control room in real time," the Chief Minister said.
- Mr. Naidu said **State and national disaster response teams have already been deployed in the coastal districts, and that predictive models and real-time data were being used for accurate analysis.**

❖ Cyclone Montha: Widespread rainfall forecast till Oct. 30

Context: The India Meteorological Department (IMD), Bengaluru, has forecast fairly widespread rainfall over Karnataka for the next four days owing to Cyclone Montha.

- “Fairly widespread rainfall is expected over Karnataka from October 27 to 30 because of the anticipated cyclone,” IMD, Bengaluru, director.
- The IMD said that a depression over east-central Arabian Sea moved nearly south-westwards with a speed of 13 kmph during the past six hours and lay centered at 8.30 a.m .on Sunday over the same region, about 970 km west to northwest of Mangaluru.
- **For coastal Karnataka** on October 27, the IMD has forecast heavy to very heavy rain and thundershowers with sustained winds at one or two places over Udupi and Uttara Kannada districts and heavy rain and thundershowers with sustained winds at one or two places over Dakshina Kannada district.
- **For north interior Karnataka**, it has forecast heavy rain and thundershowers with gusty winds at one or two places over Belagavi and Dharwad districts and light to moderate rain and thundershowers at many places over Bagalkot, Bidar, Gadag, Haveri, Kalaburagi, Koppal, Raichur, Vijayapura, and Yadgir districts.
- **For south-interior Karnataka**, IMD has forecast heavy rain and thundershowers with gusty winds at one or two places over Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, and Hassan districts.
- **“Light to moderate rain and thundershowers** are likely to occur at a few places over Ballari, Bengaluru (Rural), Bengaluru (Urban), Chamarajanagar, Chickballapur, Chitradurga, Davanagere, Kodagu, Kolar, Mandya, Mysuru, Bengaluru South, Tumakuru and Vijayanagara districts,” IMD said.
- **For Bengaluru city and the neighbourhood** the forecast for the next 36 hours is generally cloudy skies with light to moderate rain. It added that the maximum and the minimum temperatures are very likely to be around 27°C and 20°C respectively.

❖ India-ASEAN ties making steady progress, says PM

Context: Modi says strong partnership is emerging as robust foundation for global stability, development; he announces further deepening of cooperation in the domain of maritime security in 2026.

- India-ASEAN strategic partnership has continued to prosper despite the prevailing “era of uncertainties”, Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Delivering his opening remarks virtually at the **22nd ASEAN-India summit being held in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur**, Mr. Modi described **ASEAN as a “cultural partner” of India, and announced further deepening of India-ASEAN cooperation in the domain of maritime security in 2026.**
- “Even in this era of uncertainties, India-ASEAN comprehensive strategic partnership has continued to make steady progress. And this strong partnership of ours is emerging as a robust foundation for global stability and development,” the Prime Minister said in his remarks that were telecast to the summit.



'Shared values'

- Mr. Modi **welcomed Timor-Leste as the newest member of ASEAN**, and said India and ASEAN together represented nearly one-fourth of the global population and the two sides were connected by “historical ties and shared values”.
- “The 21st century is our century, the century of India and ASEAN,” he said.
- Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who co-chaired the ASEAN-India summit, said India-ASEAN relationship was rooted in the “values of friendship, trust, and shared interests”.
- **“Among the issues and matters discussed were efforts to finalise the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) and the implementation of the ASEAN-India Plan of Action 2026-2030 to strengthen cooperation in trade, investment, education, food security and technological development,”** Mr. Ibrahim said.
- He appreciated **close ties between India and the ASEAN region in the fields of education, economy, and culture**. Mr. Modi said the AITIGA could “unleash the full economic potential” of India-ASEAN relationship.
- Mr. Modi said **India and the ASEAN member-states in Southeast Asia were “companions in the Global South”, and promised that India would work with the ASEAN countries to advance digital inclusion, food security, and resilient supply chains “amid global challenges”**.
- The Prime Minister referred to India’s active participation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief activities in the ASEAN region, and said that to deepen maritime relation between the two sides, 2026 would be declared **“ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation”**.
- Mr. Modi mentioned the danger posed by terrorism and reminded the need for unity in fighting terror. “At the same time, we are steadily advancing our cooperation in education, tourism, science and technology, health, green energy, and cybersecurity,” he said, highlighting the “shared cultural heritage” and “people-to-people” ties between India and the ASEAN member-states.
- While addressing the heads of governments of the ASEAN region, Mr. Modi conveyed his condolences to the Royal Family and the people of Thailand on the passing of the Queen Mother.
- The ASEAN summit began with the arrival of heads of the member-countries as well as President Donald Trump of the United States.

❖ U.S. seeks stronger ties with Pakistan, but not at India’s expense, says Rubio

Context: The U.S. sees an opportunity to expand its strategic relationship with Pakistan but it will not be at the expense of its historic and important ties with India, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said.

- Ahead of his meeting with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in Kuala Lumpur on Monday, Mr. Rubio, referring to India’s energy ties with Russia, said New Delhi has already expressed a desire to diversify its procurement of crude oil.
- The U.S. Secretary of State was interacting with journalists ahead of his trip to Malaysia for the ASEAN summit.

- Mr. Rubio, to a question on the U.S. ties with Pakistan, said New Delhi is “concerned for obvious reasons” and that Washington’s relationship with Islamabad will not be at the expense of the ties with New Delhi.
- “But, I think they (India) have to understand we have to have relations with a lot of different countries. We see an opportunity to expand our strategic relationship with Pakistan,” he said.
- “I think the Indians are very mature when it comes to diplomacy and things of that nature. Look, they have some relationships with countries that we don’t have relationships with. So, it’s part of a mature, pragmatic foreign policy,” he said.
- “I don’t think anything we’re doing with Pakistan comes at the expense of our relationship or friendship with India, which is deep, historic, and important,” Mr. Rubio added.
- The U.S.-Pakistan ties have witnessed an upswing in the last six months, especially after President Donald Trump’s meeting with Pakistan Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir following the military conflict between India and Pakistan in May.

India-Russia oil trade

- To another question on if India will be willing to really shove off its purchases of Russian oil for a trade deal with the U.S., Mr. Rubio said New Delhi has already expressed an interest in diversifying its oil portfolio.

❖ U.K. interested in e-Courts project; team to visit India next week

Context: The United Kingdom has evinced interest in the e-Courts project that seeks to digitise entire court records, and a delegation from that country would be in the national capital next week to interact with top Union Law Ministry officials.

- The **ambitious e-Courts project is currently in its third phase with an aim to upgrade the digital infrastructure of subordinate judiciary across the country.**
- Officials said a delegation from the United Kingdom will visit the Department of Justice here on November 6 and interact with top officials and members of the e-committee of the Supreme Court.
- The e-committee is the governing body charged with overseeing the e-Courts Project conceptualised under the **“National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Indian Judiciary-2005”**.
- Under the ongoing phase three of the project, a total of 3,108 crore documents will be digitised.
- **As part of Phase-III, the system will be migrated to cloud technology,** and the cost estimated for providing 25 petabytes (according to existing requirement) of cloud storage is ₹1,205.20 crore.
- The **project also seeks to establish and expand the scope of virtual courts for the hearing of cases by creating a robust digital infrastructure.** A sum of ₹413.08 crore is the cost estimate for the establishment of 1,150 virtual courts.
- Phase three of the project was cleared by the Union Cabinet in September 2023.

Context: Japan, with one-third of its population over the age of 65, requires a workforce, academics for research, and a market for its goods, while India, with 65% of its 1.4 billion population under 35, faces rising pressure to create opportunities for its youth.

- Since 1981, when Suzuki Motor Corporation set up a factory in India to manufacture the Maruti car, the Japanese company has been a byword for bilateral ties, Kenichi Ayukawa, executive vice-president and chief global marketing officer, who headed Maruti Suzuki operations in India from 2013 to 2022, says.
- Suzuki was among the first to bring Japanese engineers to India to streamline processes and train Indian workers to build the car. With both New Delhi and Tokyo seeking solutions to Japan's ageing population and India's burgeoning youth population, the company is now reversing that trend.
- "Suzuki is now trying to invite a lot of Indians to Japan, training them and helping them develop technology in Japan," Mr. Ayukawa said, accompanied by Indian scholar and Suzuki executive Chandrali Sarkar. Ms. Sarkar first came to Japan to study at Keio University and has been working on India operations at Suzuki's Hamamatsu headquarters, about 250 km from Tokyo, since 2022. She noted that while some hesitation among Indians stems from limited Japanese language skills, the broader challenge is unfamiliarity with Japan.
- "Japan should know more about India and vice versa. Especially the next generation needs to connect, and we need more Indian students, engineers, professionals to come to Japan," said Kenji Hiramatsu, Chairman of the Institute for International Strategy at The Japan Research Institute (JRI), and Japan's Ambassador to India from 2015 to 2019. "It is important that we change the mindset of Indian youth that Japan is a special partner for India," he added, noting that the current number of Indians studying in Japan is far below its potential.

Japan opens doors

- According to a parliamentary response from the Indian Ministry of Education last year, Japan ranks 34th among countries where Indian students pursue higher education. Only about 1,500 Indian students are currently registered in Japan, a small fraction of more than 3.3 lakh foreign students in the country.
- Employment figures are similarly modest: about 54,000 Indians work in Japan, one-fourth of the 2.3 lakh Nepali citizens among a total of 23 lakh foreign workers.
- To address this shortfall, Japan is preparing to open its doors to thousands like Ms. Sarkar under an "Action Plan" launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba in August. The plan aims to facilitate five lakh workforce exchanges over the next five years, including the movement of 50,000 skilled personnel from India to Japan.
- Officials in the Cabinet Secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs point to the "perfect complementarity" between the two countries. Japan, with one-third of its population over the age of 65, requires a workforce, academics for research, and a market for its goods. India, with 65% of its 1.4 billion population under 35, faces rising pressure to create opportunities for its youth amid stricter immigration policies in the

U.S., Canada, and Europe, and Chinese restrictions on high-tech and semiconductor exports.

- Despite decades of growing government-to-government and business-to-business ties, the officials said, people-to-people connections between India and Japan continue to lag.

❖ Satellite for armed forces to be launched next week

Context: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch military communications satellite CMS-03 on November 2 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

- The CMS-03 communication satellite, also known as GSAT-7R, will be launched by the Launch Vehicle Mark 3 (LVM3).

Heavy satellite

- **“CMS-03 is a multi-band communication satellite that will provide services over a wide oceanic region including the Indian landmass. CMS-03, weighing about 4,400 kg, will be the heaviest communication satellite to be launched to Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) from Indian soil,”** the ISRO said.
- The launch vehicle has been fully assembled and integrated with the spacecraft, and has been moved to the launch pad on Sunday for further pre-launch operations, it added.
- **The launch of CMS-03 will be the first by the LVM3 rocket in over two years. The last time the rocket was deployed was in July 2023 to launch the historic Chandrayaan-3 mission from Sriharikota.**

❖ Prepare for Janjatiya Gaurav Divas in November, Centre tells States

Context: In the run-up to the fifth Janjatiya Gaurav Divas on November 15, which will mark the end of tribal icon Birsa Munda’s 150th birth anniversary, the Union government has written to the States, including poll-bound Bihar, and Union Territories, saying they “must organise” commemorative events at the State and district levels from November 1 to 15.

- In a letter sent to the Principal Secretaries of Tribal Welfare Departments in the States and Union Territories last week, the Tribal Affairs Ministry said that since November 15 marked the end of **Birsa’s 150th birth anniversary year**, “all the States/UTs must participate in celebrating” the occasion.
- “However, States where the model code of conduct is in force are being requested to celebrate the Diwas adhering to the MCC.”
- The letter asked the States and Union Territories to “actively participate” in “inauguration or benefit disbursement targeting tribal populations, launch of tribal-focused schemes, capacity building” and highlighting government schemes such as PM-JANMAN, Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan, and Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan.



Tribal artists performing traditional dance during the Janjatiya Gaurav Divas programme in Bhopal in 2021. A.M. FARUQUI

- The letter said that for the national-level event at this year's Janjatiya Gaurav Divas, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected, and participation has been requested of 25 States and Union Territories, excluding Bihar.
- In the suggested activities annexed with the Tribal Affairs Ministry's letter, the government has recommended the display of "Tribal Village Vision 2030" documents prepared under the Adi Karmayogi scheme, interactions of State VVIPs with PM-JANMAN beneficiaries, and painting exhibition of artworks by students of Eklavya school for tribal students. The list also recommends events like Adi Haats for products made by Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, self-help groups, and tribal artisans.
- The government has also suggested that the States and Union Territories hold campaigns for saturation of individual entitlements and contests in schools, colleges, to celebrate tribal heritage, in addition to arranging health awareness campaigns through Mobile Medical Units.

❖ Piyush Goyal to visit Brussels today as India-EU trade talks intensify

Context: Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will visit Brussels on October 27 and 28 to hold high-level discussions with his counterpart in the European Union (EU) to provide "strategic direction and political impetus" to the ongoing negotiations on a free trade agreement between India and the European Union.

- At the same time, a delegation of the European Parliament Trade Committee will be in New Delhi from October 27 to 29 to enhance "mutual understanding amid intensive trade negotiations between the EU and India".
- According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Goyal's visit to Brussels and meeting with Maroš Šefčovič, Executive Vice-President and European Commissioner for Trade of the European Union, comes at a "crucial stage" in the negotiations.

'Will cover key areas'

- "Building on the momentum generated by the 14th round of negotiations held earlier this month, the Minister's visit aims to provide strategic direction and political impetus to the talks," the Ministry said in a release.
- "Discussions are expected to cover key areas of the proposed FTA, including market access, non-tariff measures, and regulatory cooperation," the release added. "The visit will also serve to review progress achieved so far and to identify areas requiring further convergence."
- Mr. Goyal will hold a bilateral meeting with Mr. Šefčovič, which will be followed by a working dinner.
- This will not be considered a formal round of negotiations, but a continuation of discussions.
- While discussions were ongoing between India and the EU, the next formal round of negotiations had not yet been finalised as the issues holding up the deal required continuous communication rather than waiting for a formal round.
- These issues included market access, regulatory cooperation and agricultural sensitivities.
- The delegation of the Trade Committee will include seven members of the European Parliament, according to a press release issued by the European Parliament.

- “The main objective of this visit is to contribute to increasing our mutual understanding amid intensive trade negotiations between the EU and India,” the co-heads of delegation Cristina Maestre and Brando Benifei said in a joint statement. “The mission is timely taking place just a few months ahead of the deadline to conclude negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement by the end of 2025.”
- During their visit to India, the delegation will meet a variety of stakeholders.

❖ Hanle protects its dark skies and builds a future on stargazing

Context: With the motto ‘come for the mountains, stay for the stars,’ the Hanle Dark Sky Reserve is showing how the Himalayan skies are being preserved today and will be carried forward for future generations, with thousands of new visitors also lending a helping hand to the local economy.

- Astronomy is the oldest of the sciences. The sky is a free resource, and those who live away from city lights are fortunate to enjoy it for their passion, imagination, and even livelihoods.
- That’s the story of **Hanle, a small Himalayan village that hosts one of the darkest skies in the world.** Its Bortle-1 skies — the highest clarity rating on a nine-point scale — seem to say astronomy is for everyone.
- **Located in Ladakh, Hanle is now protected as India’s first dark sky reserve.** It’s managed as part of a memorandum of understanding between the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) in Bengaluru, the Union Territory of Ladakh, and the Ladakh Hill Development Council in Leh. Once a region of nomadic people, Hanle is now emerging as a stargazing destination.
- **A dark sky reserve is a designated area with an exceptionally clear sky, and maintained that way by minimising light pollution.** The Hanle Dark Sky Reserve, a unique government-funded and science-driven sustainable development initiative, is located within the Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary, surrounding the Indian Astronomical Observatory, a research facility operated by IIA.
- **The Observatory hosts two optical telescopes, the Himalayan Chandra Telescope and the GROWTH India Telescope (with IIT Bombay), and two Cherenkov telescopes — the High Altitude Gamma-Ray Telescope Array (with the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research) and the Major Atmospheric Cherenkov Experiment (with the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre).**
- “Countless clear sky nights, fewer atmospheric particles that absorb the celestial objects’ light, and low light pollution make Hanle an ideal location for astronomical observations,” Dorje Angchuk, the engineer-in-charge of the Observatory, said.
- To minimise light pollution at the reserve, the IIA has distributed lamp shades, blackout curtains, and bulbs of warm tones to all homes and infrastructure in the village, Mr. Angchuk said. In support of astrotourism, IIA scientists have trained 25 local youth, 18 of whom are women, as “Astronomy Ambassadors.” These ambassadors are equipped with telescopes and taught basic astronomy concepts. The night-sky tours they lead for visitors help them with a part-time income.

❖ Why has IUCN red-flagged the Western Ghats?

Context: The expansive Western Ghats and two national parks in India — Assam’s Manas national park and West Bengal’s Sundarbans national park — have been categorised as being of “significant concern” in the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN) list of natural World Heritage sites across Asia.

Why did the IUCN state?

- The IUCN’s World Heritage Outlook 4 report released earlier this month attributes four threats to the loss of habitats and species in South Asia: climate change, tourism activities, invasive alien species, and roads. The report categorises the natural sites as “good”, “good with some concerns”, “significant concern”, and “critical”. The report uses four cycles of conservation assessments undertaken since 2014.
- “Each of these categories not only shows the potential for a site to preserve its values and underlying attributes but also indicates the urgency of measures that need to be taken to improve the conservation outlook and ensure the long-term conservation of all sites,” says the report. The IUCN assessment of over 200 natural and mixed World Heritage sites “offers the most in-depth analyses of threats facing natural World Heritage around the world and their protection and management status,” says Grethel Aguilar, IUCN director general, in the introduction to the report.
- The report points out that the percentage of sites with “a positive conservation outlook has, for the first time, decreased significantly.”

Do we have ‘good’ protected areas?

- Protected areas in South Asia are being usurped rapidly, obliterating natural habitats. Of the 228 sites assessed since 2014, some 63% of sites had a positive outlook in 2014, 2017 and 2020, however, ‘the IUCN World Heritage Outlook 4 shows that in 2025 only 57% of these sites have a positive conservation outlook.’
- The threats are also shapeshifting, “it is ...notable that roads and railroads are now among the top five greatest threats to natural World Heritage in Asia, while in 2020 this was not the case.” The other threats include: forest fires, hunting, roadkill, waste disposal, encroachment, illegal logging etc.
- Of the 32 Asian sites categorised as “good with some concerns,” four happen to be in India — The Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, Kaziranga National Park, Keoladeo National Park, and Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks. Khangchendzonga National Park in Sikkim has been rated “good” in its conservation outlook, valuing “attributes [that] are currently in good condition and likely to be maintained for the foreseeable future, provided that current conservation measures are maintained.”
- The Western Ghats, a mosaic of forests and grasslands, are older than the Himalayas and have an exceptionally high level of biological diversity and endemism, habitat to some 325 globally threatened (listed in IUCN’s Red List) flora, fauna, bird, amphibian, reptile and fish species, according to UNESCO. This includes the Nilgiri tahr, a stocky, agile goat found nowhere else in the world.

What makes the Ghats vulnerable?

- The Western Ghats are highly endangered not least by hundreds of hydropower projects such as the proposed ₹5,843 crore Sillahalla Pumped Storage Hydroelectric project in the Nilgiris, which involves constructing dams across River Sillahalla and River Kundah, with an aim to generate 1,000 MW of power for Tamil Nadu's plains.
- Moreover, tourism is creating problems of garbage, often consumed by wild animals such as elephants and exacerbating conflict. Plantations are replacing natural ecosystems. And climate change has forced fauna to adapt by redistributing themselves from fast-warming lower altitudes to higher reaches, such as in the case of the Nilgiri flycatcher and the black and orange flycatcher. Exotic species are colonising natural forests, such as eucalyptus and acacia (both originally from Australia), which were introduced here during the colonial era. As for the Sundarbans mangroves where tigers swim, salinity, heavy metal contamination, and unsustainable resource extraction threatens the ecosystem. Sea level rise and frequent storm surges reduce mangrove biodiversity, says the report.

Is there hope yet?

- Outside India, seven sites in China have been proclaimed "best protected and managed protected areas," including the Badain Jaran Desert-Towers of Sand and Lake, Chengjiang Fossil Site, and Mount Huangshan.
- The Natural World Heritage sites make up less than 1% of the Earth's surface, but nurture more than 20% of mapped global species richness. "This includes over 75,000 species of plants, and over 30,000 species of mammals, birds, fishes, reptiles and amphibians," says the report.
- This report is timely. "The world has agreed to halt biodiversity loss through the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention is uniquely placed to meet these challenges by bridging the gap between nature and culture, and protecting places with extraordinary biodiversity, functional habitats and high ecosystem integrity," says the report. "This report is more than a health check. It is a guide for action," says Ms. Aguilar.

UPSC
Integrated
Course

ADMISSIONS OPEN
MORNING, AFTERNOON
& EVENING BATCHES

Don't Miss Out!
Secure Your Spot Now!

Exclusive Opportunity!
Limited Seats

DREAM BIG

IAS

IPS

❖ Cyclone set to cross coast; red alert in 16 A.P. districts

Context: Cyclone Montha is very likely to cross the Andhra Pradesh coast between Machilipatnam and Kalingapatnam around Kakinada evening or night as a severe cyclonic storm with a maximum sustained wind speed of 90-100 kmph gusting to 110 kmph, the India Meteorological Department said on Monday. A red alert has been issued for 16 districts in the State.

- The cyclonic storm triggered heavy rainfall in three north coastal districts and moderate rainfall in other stations of the State. Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam, and Anakapalli received moderate to heavy rainfall.
- Stations in the central and south coastal parts of the State received light showers. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu directed officials to ensure that aid reaches without delay.
- Rainfall data compiled by the State Directorate of Economics and Statistics showed Jathara in Visakhapatnam district receiving the day's highest rainfall of 92.25 mm, followed by Madhurawada with 86 mm and Kapuluppada with 85.25 mm.
- The alerts for SPSR Nellore, Prakasam, Bapatla, Guntur, Krishna, West Godavari, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema, Kakinada, Anakapalli, Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram, the IMD said.
- Red alerts have been issued for 16 districts and orange alerts for five districts. Except for SPSR Nellore and the eight districts of the Rayalaseema region, all other districts are under red alert as isolated extremely heavy rainfall is likely, with the cyclonic storm likely to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm morning, the IMD added.
- It said the cyclonic storm over west-central and adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal moved northwestwards at a speed of 13 kmph and remained over the same region at 8.30 p.m.
- It was positioned at 400 km east-northeast of Chennai in Tamil Nadu, 410 km south-southeast of Kakinada and 460 km south-southeast of Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh and 640 km south-southwest of Gopalpur in Odisha.
- It is likely to move north-northwestwards and intensify into a severe cyclonic storm by Tuesday morning. Continuing to move further north-northwestwards, it is likely to cross the Andhra Pradesh coast in the evening.
- Holding a high-level review meeting, Mr. Naidu has directed officials to issue hourly bulletins on Cyclone Montha. He also said Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally enquired about the State's preparedness and has assured all possible help. Mr. Naidu directed officials to keep 3,211 generators ready across 110 mandals for power backup at 2,707 villages. He instructed that National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and SDRF teams remain on standby, and that the Fire Services, Electricity, Roads and Buildings, and Panchayat Raj departments stay fully alert.

❖ Kakinada braces for cyclone impact

Context: More than 600 boats return to shore; 142 pregnant women relocated to government hospitals; 269 relief camps opened along the stretch between Kakinada and Uppada, 14,500 inmates of welfare hostels sent home as precautionary measure; special teams mobilised to tackle coastal erosion.

- With the sea churned by Cyclone Montha, the Andhra Pradesh government said that more than 600 boats, including mechanised boats engaged in fishing in the Bay of Bengal, had returned safely to the shore by Monday. As many as 142 pregnant women were shifted to nearby government hospitals as a precautionary measure, it added.
- As many as 269 relief camps have been opened, with evacuation under way mostly along the stretch between Kakinada and Uppada, which witnessed heavy wind and rains on Monday.
- As many as 40 boats and 140 swimmers have been deployed for relief operation along the coast, mostly on the Uppada coast. According to sources, more than 14,500 inmates of all the welfare hostels were sent home.

Emergency meet

- Municipal Administration and Urban Development and Kakinada district in-charge Minister P. Narayana, chairing a meeting on cyclone preparedness, said the Sri Veera Venkata Satyanarayana Swamy Vari Devasthanam in Annavaram, along with the NGO Alluri Sitarama Raju and Akshaya Foundation, would supply 10,000 food packets at the relief camps.
- “As many as 80 personnel including 50 from the National Disaster Response Force have been deployed along the Kakinada coast,” he said.
- A team of 100 personnel of the Electricity Department from the Rayalaseema region have arrived for power restoration works in the district, the Minister said.
- Special teams have been mobilised in Uppada, Kothapalli, Tallarevu, Thondangi, and Kakinada Rural areas in expectation of heavy rain and coastal erosion. The police are guarding the Kakinada-Uppada road which is facing a threat of submergence from sea erosion. Most of the relief camps have been opened between the Kakinada and Uppada coastal belt with essential commodities to meet the requirement for one week, the Minister said.
- As many as 23 ambulances are ready to tackle emergencies. Medical and health staff at the Pithapuram and Tallarevu primary health centres will be dispatched during relief operations.
- Kakinada District Collector S. Shan Mohan, Rajya Sabha member Sana Sateesh, Kakinada City MLA Tangella Uday Srinivas, and Special Officer V.R. Krishna Teja were present at the meeting.

❖ 10,000 to be evacuated, water release from Godavari canals cut

Context: Nearly 10,000 people are being evacuated in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district, while 126 pregnant women expected to deliver within a fortnight have been shifted to nearby hospitals along the coastline. All of them are under medical care and will remain in government hospitals until Cyclone Montha makes landfall. As many as 120 relief camps have been opened across the district.

- “By Monday, we aim to evacuate 6,000 people out of the 10,000 likely to be affected along the coastline. Those living in thatched houses are being shifted immediately,” said District Collector R. Mahesh Kumar.

- **On cyclone preparedness**, Mr. Mahesh Kumar said hoardings are being removed along 400 km of State highways and 60 km of National Highway no. 216, as heavy winds are expected in the next two days. Farmers have been advised to stay away from fields.
- At a review meeting, the Collector said the Irrigation Department has been instructed not to release Godavari water into branch canals to prevent inundation of standing paddy crops, with heavy rain expected over the next 48 hours. **Two teams each from the NDRF and SDRF have been deployed to respond to emergency calls and assist in relief operations. Irrigation officials have stopped releasing Godavari water into the Western and Central Delta to prevent flooding.**

❖ Cyclone Montha:IMD issues yellow alert for 11 districts

Context: The India Meteorological Department (IMD), Bengaluru, which has forecast fairly widespread rainfall over Karnataka for the next few days owing to Cyclone Montha, has issued a yellow alert for 11 districts till 28th oct.

- C.S. Patil, a scientist at IMD Bengaluru, said that Uttara Kannada, Udupi, Dakshina Kannada, Bidar, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Vijayapura, Bagalkot, Raichur, Koppal, and Gadag are likely to receive heavy rain.
- IMD synoptic meteorological features stated that **Cyclone Montha is likely to move north-northwest wards and intensify into a severe cyclonic storm by Tuesday morning. “Continuing to move further north-northwestwards, it is very likely to cross Andhra Pradesh coast between Machilipatnam and Kalingapatnam around Kakinada on October 28 as a severe cyclonic storm with a maximum sustained wind speed of 90-100 kmph gusting to 110 kmph,”** it stated.
- Mr. Patil said that the coastal districts are likely to receive extensive rainfall till Wednesday. He added that rainfall in these districts is expected to continue till November 2.
- He added that on 27th oct, the coastal districts received extensive rainfall and many places in south interior and north interior Karnataka received rainfall.

KPSC

PRELIMS CUM MAINS

ADMISSIONS OPEN
MORNING, AFTERNOON
& EVENING BATCHES

ENROLL
NOW!!

WALK-IN FOR FREE
COUNSELING TODAY!

IF YOU CAN **DREAM IT**
YOU CAN **DO IT!!**
TAKE THE FIRST STEP!
JOIN OUR COURSE NOW!

❖ SIR 2.0 to begin in 12 States, U.T.s, cover 51 crore voters

Context: EC says exercise will be held in poll-bound Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, and Puducherry; Assam, which votes next year, is not on list; Trinamool Congress and DMK have raised concerns.

- The Election Commission kicked off the second phase of the special intensive revision of voter lists in **12 States and Union Territories, including poll-bound Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, and Puducherry.** The revision will cover 51 crore voters.
- With the announcement of the second round, the voter lists of the States and Union Territories were set to be frozen. **For now, there will be no SIR in Assam, scheduled to go to the polls next year, and a separate order will be issued later.**
- **“Under the Citizenship Act, there are separate provisions for citizenship in Assam. Under the supervision of the Supreme Court, the exercise of checking citizenship is about to be completed. The June 24 SIR order was for the entire country. Under such circumstances, this would not have applied to Assam,”** Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar said at press conference.
- The exercise will be in focus in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, where the ruling parties — the Trinamool Congress and DMK — have raised concerns. The SIR will be conducted in **Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep.**
- **The first phase of the SIR was held in Bihar** following which more than 68 lakh names were deleted from the electoral rolls.
- **Most States had the last SIR of the voter lists done between 2002 and 2004,** and they have nearly completed the mapping of current electors according to the last exercise. Voter mapping involves standardising addresses and correcting discrepancies.
- In this phase of the SIR, the house-to-house enumeration will take place for a month from November 4 to December 4, and the draft rolls will be published on December 9. Claims and objections can be raised from December 9 to January 8. Notices will be issued, and hearings and verifications will take place between December 9 and January 31. Booth-level officers will be trained, and forms will be printed between October 28 and November 3. The final electoral rolls will be published on February 7, the poll body said.
- To a question on the demands for putting off the SIR exercise in Kerala where local body elections are scheduled, Mr. Kumar said the poll notification was yet to be issued.

Rolls revision
Phase 2 of the special intensive revision of electoral rolls will be held between November 2025 and February 2026 across 12 States and Union Territories, covering 51 crore voters

TIMELINE
■ Enumeration start: November 4, 2025
■ Enumeration end: December 4, 2025
■ Draft electoral rolls release: December 9, 2025
■ Final electoral rolls publication: February 7, 2026

The first phase of SIR was held in Bihar. FILE PHOTO

UNION TERRITORIES:
Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Puducherry

STATES:
Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, T.N., U.P., Bengal

DOCUMENT PROCESS
■ No documents are to be collected from electors during the enumeration phase
■ For electors who have not returned enumeration forms, the booth-level officer may identify a probable cause, such as death or duplication based on an enquiry from nearby electors and note the same
■ These names will be displayed on boards of all panchayat and urban local body offices

- On the SIR in West Bengal, where the ruling Trinamool Congress has raised concerns about the exercise, the CEC said the Commission was doing its constitutional duty by carrying out the SIR, and the State government will perform its duties by giving all support and manpower needed.
- The poll body will give new EPIC cards to all voters as stated during the SIR in Bihar, Mr. Kumar said fresh voter IDs will be given to only those who have any change in their particulars.

❖ 'Black hole activities suppress the birth of new stars around it'

Context: A new study led by astronomers at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) has found that black hole activities suppress the birth of new stars around it. Supermassive black holes at the centres of galaxies are known to drive outflows of gas, and astronomers have long studied how feedback processes from these outflows can in turn determine the evolution of these galaxies.

- However, a key puzzle has been to understand the relative influence of this gas outflow versus radiation from the central regions on the behaviour and evolution of the host galaxy.
- The astronomers have uncovered key insights into these powerful forces shaping the universe.
- The Department of Science and Technology said that the study reveals that both intense radiation from around the black holes as well as the high-speed jets they emit can work together to eject gas from the centres of galaxies, potentially shutting down star formation in their central regions and regulating galactic growth.
- Using cutting-edge archival data from international astronomical facilities like the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS) Telescope at optical wavelengths and the Very Large Array (VLA) at radio wavelengths, both located in the United States, the researchers studied over 500 relatively nearby galaxies hosting active galactic nuclei (AGN).
- "AGN are energetic galaxy centres that emit copious radiation and gas, powered by matter falling onto their supermassive black holes, many millions of times more massive than our Sun," the department said.
- "We found that outflows of warm ionized gas are widespread in AGN, and while radiation from the black hole is the main driver, galaxies with radio jets show significantly faster and more energetic outflows," said Payel Nandi, a Ph.D. student at IIA and the lead author of the study.
- Their investigation further showed that such outflows, which are high-speed streams of gas pushed out from galactic centres, are more than twice as likely in galaxies detected in radio wavelengths (56%) compared to those without radio emission (25%).
- "These powerful winds can travel at speeds of up to 2,000 km per second, fast enough to escape the gravitational pull of the galaxy itself," the department said.
- Dhruva J. Saikia from the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics and co-author said that these findings are an important step in understanding the complex inter-relationships between supermassive black holes, radio jets, star formation, and evolution of their host galaxies.

Context: The announcement comes in the wake of back-to-back tiger attacks in a span of 10 days in Sargur.

- Eshwar B. Khandre, Minister for Forests, Ecology and Environment, stated on Monday that a conflict management task force to address human-wildlife conflict will be constituted in the State.
- While chairing a meeting of the officials in Bandipur, following a tiger attack in which a farmer was killed in Sargur, the Minister said that the task force will be a State-level entity and will comprise local representatives, NGOs and environmental experts.
- The meeting was a fallout of back-to-back tiger attacks in a span of 10 days in Sargur in which one farmer died while the other victim is under treatment but battling for life in a private hospital in Mysuru. Mr. Khandre said that the task force will take up educational awareness activities and sensitise people living in villages along the forest periphery on preventive measures to be taken to avoid conflict. The task force will visit schools in the forest periphery and sensitise students about wildlife and function as a bridge to promote amity between the Forest Department and the villagers, he said.
- The Minister directed the officials and the local administration to clamp down with prohibitory orders to prevent people from crowding during combing operations. The urgency for such a measure stems from the fact that the operations are hindered by the crowd which congregates to watch the exercise and courts a danger. On the imperatives of timely communication to the villagers of the presence of wild animals, the Minister said the public should be informed through loudspeakers if elephants or tigers enter residential areas, and information must also be disseminated through social media for greater reach.
- A command centre will be established for continuous monitoring of the presence of wild animals, and it will be equipped with thermal cameras, drones, and state-of-the-art technology. WhatsApp messages will be forwarded on sighting wild animals close to the villages, the Minister said, calling for its urgent implementation.
- Mr. Khandre emphasised the need to increase foot patrolling in conflict zones so that precautions could be taken to avoid injury or crop loss. To redress staff shortage and fill vacant posts, the officials were directed to initiate the recruitment process. In addition to it, frontline staff could be outsourced, Mr. Khandre said.
- The Minister instructed Chief Wildlife Warden P.C. Rai to submit a report within five days on possible measures that could be taken to prevent elephants and tigers from straying out of the forests. The officials were instructed to take up tentacle fencing, solar fencing, and dig elephant-proof trenches where necessary to supplement the rail barricades being installed in areas that are hotspots for human-elephant conflicts.
- Mr. Khandre said that farmers have attributed the rise in conflict situations to an increase in wildlife safaris and the disturbances being caused in forests and hence he would discuss the issue with officials.

❖ India's maritime global trade to get a boost with proposed Great Nicobar project: Shah

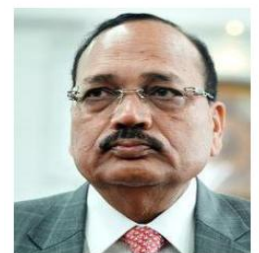
Context: India aims to be among the top five ship-building countries and significantly increase the port-handling capability by building new mega ports, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said in Mumbai on Monday, adding that the proposed Great Nicobar project will boost the country's maritime global trade multiple times.

- He was speaking at the inauguration of the fourth edition of the India Maritime Week 2025.
- **The \$5-billion Great Nicobar infrastructure project, which will include a power plant, transshipment port and airport,** has been criticised by activists and local population, citing environmental concerns and violation of forest rights.
- He said that the government plans to increase the country's port handling capacity to 10,000 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) from the present 2,700 MTPA (major and non-major ports combined). India's maritime strength was due to its strategic location, he said.
- **"Our coastline of over 11,500 km is spread across 13 coastal States. Maritime business contributes to 60 per cent of our GDP [Gross Domestic Product].** Today, over 100 countries are participating in the India Maritime Week. We have 350 speakers, over 500 companies, over one lakh delegates and we expect an investment of ₹10 lakh crore," he said.
- Mr. Shah highlighted India's growing leadership in the Indo-Pacific. "Leveraging its maritime position, democratic stability, and naval capability, India is acting as a bridge between the Indo-Pacific and the Global South, fostering development, security, and environmental progress," he said.
- Speaking at the event, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said India would soon bring down the logistics cost to single digit to nine per cent. "We are still at 16 per cent against China and Europe's 8 per cent and 12 per cent respectively," he said.
- Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, said 680 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) worth ₹10 lakh crore were slated to be signed during the India Maritime Week.

❖ Justice Surya Kant, part of poll bond, Article 370 verdicts, set to be next CJI

Context: The Chief Justice of India (CJI), B.R. Gavai, recommended Justice Surya Kant, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, as his successor to office, and the 53rd Chief Justice of India.

- **The government had in the previous week written to Chief Justice Gavai seeking his recommendation.**
- However, the CJI was on an official visit to Bhutan. Chief Justice Gavai gave his recommendation immediately on his return and met Justice Kant with the recommendation letter on Monday, the first working day of the court after the Deepavali holidays.
- Chief Justice Gavai is scheduled to retire on November 24.



Justice Surya Kant

- **Under the Memorandum of Procedure for the appointment of the Chief Justice of India, and Supreme Court Judges, the Union Law Ministry seeks the recommendation of the outgoing Chief Justice for the next appointment, following which the latter replies to the government.**

Key cases

- Justice Kant has been a part of several impactful decisions of the apex court, including the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution which removed the special status to the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir. He was also part of the Bench which held the electoral bonds scheme unconstitutional. He was a member of the Benches which heard the Pegasus spyware case, and the suspension of the sedition law.
- **He was born on February 10, 1962 at Hisar in Haryana. Justice Kant earned his Bachelor's degree in Law in 1984 from Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak. He started his legal practice at the Hisar district court and shifted to Chandigarh in 1985 to practice in the Punjab and Haryana High Court.**
- He was the youngest Advocate-General of Haryana on July 7, 2000, and designated as senior advocate in March 2001. He was elevated as a judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court on January 9, 2004. Justice Kant was appointed as the Chief Justice of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh in October 2018.
- **He was appointed as a Supreme Court judge on May 24, 2019. He is due to retire on February 9, 2027.**

❖ India welcomes Gaza peace plan, wishes for early end to Ukraine war: Jaishankar

Context: India recognises that enduring conflicts have the potential to disrupt food security and threaten energy flows, and, therefore, it welcomes the Gaza peace initiative by U.S. President Donald Trump and wishes for an early end to the conflict in Ukraine, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

- Speaking at the 20th East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Mr. Jaishankar spoke in favour of deepening maritime connections in the ASEAN region. “We are also witnessing conflicts that have significant repercussions, near and far. Deep human suffering apart, they undermine food security, threaten energy flows and disrupt trade. India, therefore, welcomes the Gaza peace plan. We also seek an early end to the conflict in Ukraine,” he said.
- Earlier, Mr. Jaishankar met Secretary of State Marco Rubio as India-U.S. relations continue to remain uneasy after Mr. Trump imposed penalty tariffs on India for buying Russian crude.
- Mr. Jaishankar, on his part, did not specifically refer to the challenges that India is facing because of Mr. Trump’s campaign to cut down Russian energy exports but pointed at “reliability of supply chains and access to markets” as an area of “growing concerns”. “Energy trade is increasingly constricted, with resulting market distortions. Principles are applied selectively and what is preached is not necessarily practised,” he said, supporting “adjustments” and “resilient solutions”.
- “Multipolarity is not just here to stay but to grow. All these warrant serious global conversations,” he said. He expressed India’s commitment to enhancing maritime cooperation in the ASEAN region.

❖ NDRF teams on the ground, schools closed in Odisha

Context: The Odisha government on Monday deployed disaster response forces and shut down schools in eight districts, which are likely to be impacted by Cyclone Montha. “We have deployed 24 teams of Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force and five units of National Disaster Response Force mostly in southern Odisha districts.

- As southern Odisha districts are likely to receive heavy rain under the atmospheric system, we have remained alert,” said Suresh Pujari, State Revenue and Disaster Management Minister. The schools and anganwadi centres have been shut down for two days— keeping the potential heavy rain in mind.

❖ CIC appointments in ‘two or three’ weeks, Centre tells top court

Context: The Centre informed the Supreme Court on Monday that vacancies in the Central Information Commission (CIC), which has no Chief Information Commissioner and is down to just two Information Commissioners out of a total sanctioned strength of 10, will be filled in “two or three” weeks.

- Appearing before a Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant, Additional Solicitor-General K.M. Nataraj said **the shortlisted names of candidates had been forwarded to the high-profile selection committee of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and a nominee of the government.**
- However, petitioners, represented by advocate Prashant Bhushan, countered that there was a complete information blackout on the appointment process to the Central Information Commission, and “names are air-dropped without any transparency”.
- Mr. Bhushan, appearing for Anjali Bhardwaj, Commodore Lokesh Batra (retd.) and Amrita Johri, said it was an irony that the appointments to the very apex body under the Right to Information (RTI) Act were shrouded in opacity while pendency was touching 30,000.
- He said even the Chief Information Commissioner had retired. Nothing had been done since the last order of the Supreme Court 10 months ago, directing the government to fill the vacancies. He said the government was applying the slow-choke to RTI.
- “The best way to kill the RTI is to not make any appointments... If they do make appointments, they select persons out of the blue. Names are just air-dropped. There is no information on who is being appointed,” Mr. Bhushan, along with advocates Rahul Gupta and Cheryl D’souza, submitted.
- Mr. Nataraj said the petitioners could not decide the suitability of the candidates, and their eligibility was decided by the RTI Act.
- He said the petitioners ought to wait till the appointments were actually made before complaining.

❖ Is the Dogri language losing resonance in India?

Context: Is the Dogri language declining at the same rate across rural and urban landscapes in the Jammu region?

Human society is rapidly moving towards the extinction of its linguistic heritage. According to one report by UNESCO, India has topped the list of countries with the maximum number of dialects on the verge of extinction. According to D.G Rao, former Director of the Central Institute of Languages, India has lost over 220 languages in the last 50 years.

Is Dogri in decline?

- In recent years, growing concern has emerged over the gradual decline of the Dogri language in the Jammu region. Globalisation, migration, and the pursuit of economic opportunity often encourage speakers to prioritise widely used languages, while regional ones fade into disuse.
- Political choices and a lack of active interest among native speakers further deepen this crisis. Against this backdrop, Dogri finds itself at a crossroads. Although the J&K Official Languages Bill, 2020 gave it the long-overdue recognition as one of the Union Territory's five official languages, its status on paper has not translated into meaningful presence on the ground. Unlike other regional languages that have secured space in school curricula or administrative use, Dogri remains largely absent from formal education.

Why is Dogri not being spoken?

- The decline of Dogri in the Jammu region can be looked at through three critical lenses — government policy, generational perspectives, and the rural-urban divide.
- One of the central reasons for the decline of Dogri lies in the absence of sustained government support.
- Unlike Urdu, Kashmiri, and Hindi, Dogri had to wait until 2003 for constitutional recognition. This long delay meant that by the time Dogri gained official status, it had already fallen behind in terms of institutional backing and visibility.
- A survey conducted by the authors further underscores this policy gap. The research employed a random sampling method, selecting households at intervals of three to four units to ensure representativeness. The sample was distributed across 20 different locations in the Jammu region; 130 people filled the survey form completely.
- Nearly half of the respondents (48%) from the Jammu region believe that the government has failed to provide adequate policy support for Dogri. Another 43.2% felt that the language offers little relevance for employment prospects or career advancement.
- Additionally, the survey revealed a stark generational divide in Dogri proficiency. The oldest respondents, those aged 60 and above, displayed the strongest connection to the language, with full proficiency in speaking and an intermediate score in reading and writing.
- However, among respondents aged 41-60, writing proficiency dropped sharply to just 0.25%, reflecting the gradual erosion of literacy in the language. Respondents under 20 years of age show 0% proficiency in reading and writing Dogri.
- The survey also revealed a striking contrast between rural and urban populations in terms of Dogri language usage. Approximately 56% of respondents from rural areas actively speak Dogri, with around 15% demonstrating the ability to write it. In contrast, among urban respondents, only 45% reported speaking Dogri, and only 4% had any proficiency in writing it.

What is the way ahead?

- To address India's linguistic crisis, two challenges must be addressed. **First** is technical — with the 2021 Census on hold, one lacks updated data on how many languages are endangered, and where urgent intervention is needed. Without this knowledge, both awareness and policy remain adrift. **Secondly**, one must shed the mindset that equates English alone with progress. The decolonisation of linguistics is the larger task at hand.

❖ Cyclone Montha makes landfall;rain batters several parts of A.P.

Context: The severe cyclonic storm Montha began its landfall near Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh around 7 p.m. on Tuesday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

- The storm triggered very heavy rain in the State as well as Odisha.
- In Andhra Pradesh, Ulavapadu in SPSR Nellore district recorded the day's maximum rain of 167 mm.Kakinada received only light showers till 7 p.m.
- The IMD withdrew red alerts issued for a few districts, and issued orange alerts for the districts of Srikakulam, Parvathipuram Manyam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Alluri Sitharama Raju, Anakapalli, Eluru, NTR, Krishna, Guntur, Palnadu, Bapatla, and Nandyal.
- Two days of heavy rain left crops on over 43,000 hectares submerged and affected 83,000 farmers, as per the initial assessment by the agricultural department. Paddy and cotton were the worst-hit.
- The estimated loss to the power sector crossed ₹2,200 crore, with massive damage to substations, transformers, and power lines.
- The Kakinada district administration opened 401 relief camps. At least 35,000 people have been evacuated so far.
- "The number of people to be evacuated is expected to rise as 67 villages and five towns and Kakinada city are falling in the cyclone-affected area," said Kakinada District Collector S. Shan Mohan. Nearly 1,600 school bus services have been deployed to evacuate people.
- Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu directed the **NDRF and SDRF teams to be deployed in and around Kakinada.**
- Twenty trains, 10 originating in Visakhapatnam, and 11 operating from various divisions of South Central Railway (SCR) in Andhra and one from Bhubaneswar, passing through Visakhapatnam, were cancelled due to heavy rain and gales.
- A total of 32 flights from Visakhapatnam were cancelled. The Vijayawada airport cancelled 16 flights, while four flights from Tirupati were cancelled on Tuesday.

❖ Crops, power sector bear cyclone's brunt

Context: Paddy and cotton are the worst hit, together accounting for more than 80% of the total damaged area in Andhra Pradesh; power sector records losses worth around ₹2,200 crore; restoration work under progress; Chandrababu Naidu orders round-the-clock monitoring in vulnerable districts

- Cyclone Montha has inflicted extensive damage on agriculture and power infrastructure across Andhra Pradesh.

- The preliminary assessment by the Agriculture Department reveal that over 43,000 hectares of crops have been submerged, affecting nearly 83,000 farmers across 292 mandals and 1,712 villages.

Cyclone trail

Cyclones that hit Andhra Pradesh in the past 15 years

Name	Category	Date	Landfall	Wind speed	Death toll
Phailin	Extremely Severe	Oct. 8 to 14, 2013	Gopalpur, Odisha	260 kmph	45
Helen	Severe Cyclonic	Nov. 20–23, 2013	Machilipatnam, A.P.	130 kmph	Nil
Hudhud	Very Severe	Oct. 7–14, 2014	Visakhapatnam, A.P.	150–180 kmph	124
Titli	Very Severe	Oct. 8–13, 2018	Near Palasa, A.P.	195 kmph	89
Michaung	Severe	Dec. 1 To 6, 2023	Near Bapatla, A.P.	120 kmph	17



A fallen tree blocks a road in Machilipatnam as Cyclone Montha brought in heavy rain in Andhra Pradesh. PTI

- According to the three power distribution companies in the State — APEPDCL, APCPDCL, and APSPDCL — the total estimated loss to the power sector would be around ₹2,200 crore, with large-scale damage done to power substations, transformers, poles, and power lines.

Worst- hit crops

- According to the Agriculture department's data, paddy and cotton are the worst hit, together accounting for more than 80% of the total damaged area.
- Paddy fields in 31,267 hectares were inundated, while cotton crops over 15,680 hectares suffered extensive damage due to continuous rainfall and flooding.
- Among the districts, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema reported the highest crop damage with 10,099 hectares being submerged.
- In addition to paddy and cotton, maize over 4,393 hectares and blackgram in 3,004 hectares were damaged, while bajra, redgram, and soybean suffered partial losses. The report noted that 53 hectares of nurseries were affected in several regions, compounding the impact on farmers' livelihoods.
- The officials said that restoration work of power infrastructure was progressing rapidly, despite heavy rains and flooding in several coastal areas.
- With teams working round-the-clock and power being restored in a phased manner, the authorities hope that supply to all urban centres and essential installations would be normalised within the next 24 hours.

❖ 'Rising sea surface temperatures leading to more cyclones'

Context: Since 2010, Andhra Pradesh has borne the brunt of at least 10 major tropical cyclones, some of them categorised as severe and very severe cyclonic storms. Tamil Nadu and Odisha have also been affected by these storms.

- Meteorologists have identified a common element in these storms — the high intensity of the storms and the trails of destruction they left — and they blame the rapid rise in sea surface temperature (SST) over the last few decades.

Rising SST

- According to Prof. S.S.V.S. Ramakrishna, former Head of Department (HoD) of Oceanography and Meteorology, Andhra University, the Bay of Bengal has recorded a consistent rise in the SST.
- **Sea temperatures have regularly exceeded the 20°C to 30°C mark, creating an ideal environment for the formation of tropical cyclones.**

- **“As the water gets warmer, latent heat energy increases, increasing the possibility of cyclones. In the last 50 years, studies conducted by IITM Pune have indicated that the SST in Bay of Bengal has gone up by 0.5°C to 1°C,”** he said.
- Prof. O.S.R.U. Bhanu Kumar, former HoD, from the same department, attributed the changing factor to global warming and climate change. The warming of the atmosphere increases the capacity of air to hold moisture, leading to heavier rainfall during cyclones.
- In recent times, positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and La Niña have contributed to more favourable conditions for cyclonic formations over the Bay of Bengal, he said.
- Both experts cautioned that deforestation and degradation of coastal ecosystems like mangroves and wetlands, have reduced the natural buffers, amplifying the damage caused by cyclones.

❖ Centre approves terms of 8th Central Pay Commission

Context: The panel, headed by Justice Ranjana Desai (retd.), will make its recommendations within 18 months of its constitution; it will propose changes in salaries of Union government employees.

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Terms of Reference of the eighth Central Pay Commission (CPC), the body in charge of deciding the pay structure and retirement benefits of Union government employees, the government announced.
- The government had announced the formation of the CPC in January this year to examine and recommend changes in the salaries and other benefits of Central government employees.

‘Formed in quick time’

- “As you know, the in-principle approval for the formation of the eighth Central Pay Commission was granted only recently in January, and within a short span, the commission has now been formally constituted,” Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said at a press conference announcing the Union Cabinet’s decisions here.
- “This is a major step that involves extensive consultations. Several Ministries with large numbers of Central government employees, such as Defence, Home, Railways, and the Department of Personnel and Training, were part of the process,” he said.
- The Commission will comprise one chairperson, one part-time member and one member-secretary. It will make its recommendations within 18 months of the date of its constitution. Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai (retd.) will act as the chairperson.
- Professor Pulak Ghosh of the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, has been appointed a part-time member, while Petroleum Secretary Pankaj Jain will serve as the member-secretary.
- “There are about 50 lakh Central government employees, and consultations were also held with many State governments, most of which extended their cooperation,” Mr. Vaishnaw added.

- The government said the CPC would have to keep several factors in mind while coming up with its recommendations. These included the economic conditions in the country and the need for fiscal prudence, the need to ensure that adequate resources are available for developmental expenditure and welfare measures, the unfunded cost of non-contributory pension schemes, the impact of its recommendations on State finances, as well as the current emolument structure, benefits and working conditions of employees of Central public sector undertakings and the private sector.

❖ Cabinet increases fertilizer subsidy for winter crops

Context: The Union Cabinet decided to provide ₹37,952 crore as fertilizer subsidy for the ongoing rabi crop of this winter season. The subsidy on phosphorous (P) and sulphur (S) fertilizers was increased by ₹736 crore, while the subsidy for nitrogen (N) and potash (K) will remain the same as the kharif (summer) crops.

- “The subsidy approved for 2025 rabi season is higher by about ₹14,000 crore from the previous rabi season (2024). During the last rabi season, the subsidy was about ₹24,000 crore,” Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told presspersons after the Cabinet meeting.
- The subsidy for phosphate will be increased to ₹47.96 a kg from ₹43.60 a kg in the 2025 kharif season; the subsidy for sulphur will be higher at ₹2.87 a kg, up from ₹1.77 a kg (kharif); and the subsidy rate for nitrogen and potash will remain ₹43.02 a kg and ₹2.38 a kg, respectively.
- The rates will be applicable from October 1, 2025 till March 31, 2026.
- The Centre had fixed the subsidy rate considering the import price, and other factors, including nutrient requirement, subsidy burden, and maximum retail prices, Mr. Vaishnaw said.
- The Centre had provided a special package to ensure adequate availability of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) and triple super phosphate (TSP) to farmers, he added.
- Union Minister for Agriculture Shivraj Singh Chouhan thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi on behalf of all farmers for increasing the subsidy.
- Cabinet increases fertilizer subsidy for wThe Union Cabinet on Tuesday decided to provide ₹37,952 crore as fertilizer subsidy for the ongoing rabi crop of this winter season. The subsidy on phosphorous (P) and sulphur (S) fertilizers was increased by ₹736 crore, while the subsidy for nitrogen (N) and potash (K) will remain the same as the kharif (summer) crops.
- “The subsidy approved for 2025 rabi season is higher by about ₹14,000 crore from the previous rabi season (2024). During the last rabi season, the subsidy was about ₹24,000 crore,” Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told presspersons after the Cabinet meeting.

Context: The Election Commission's authority to conduct the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls remains under question in the Supreme Court, even as the poll body announced the SIR's second phase that will cover 51 crore voters in 12 States and Union Territories, including Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, and Puducherry.

- The Supreme Court, in a July 10 order, had highlighted the basic questions posed by petitioners challenging the first phase of the SIR exercise in Bihar. These primarily included whether the Election Commission (EC) has the “very powers to undertake the exercise”.
- Second, the court had flagged the petitioners' objection to the “procedure and the manner in which the SIR exercise is being undertaken”.

Violating voters' rights

- The court recorded the petitioners' argument that the SIR, notified on June 24 under Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, broke that law as well as the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, apart from violating the fundamental rights of the voters.
- However, later orders of the court on the SIR had diverged into ensuring that voters were not arbitrarily excluded from the electoral rolls in Bihar.
- Though the court did not stay the Bihar SIR exercise, it made several timely interventions to infuse more transparency into the process, order the inclusion of Aadhaar as a 12th document of proof, and to ensure the publication of the draft electoral roll, among other steps.

Learning experience

- An October 9 hearing gave the first indication that a pan-India SIR had more or less become fait accompli, though the court has agreed to hear arguments on the constitutionality of SIR exercise from November 4.
- Addressing the EC's counsel and senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, Justice Surya Kant, who headed the Bench, orally observed that “you [EC] have decided to carry out SIR on a pan-India basis. So, this experience [with Bihar] would have made you wiser now... The next time you introduce a SIR module, owing to what you experienced now, you would also bring some improvements.”
- The second phase of the SIR in 12 States and U.T.s has indeed introduced modifications, such as the inclusion of Aadhaar as a proof of identity and the exemption from filing documents in the enumeration stage. The onus to be included on the voters' list, however, continues to be on the elector. The process of enumeration itself does not have the benefit of any statutory backing.
- Again, the question about the EC's jurisdiction to delve into the citizenship claims of an already registered voter without any formal objection lodged against the person continues to remain open.
- A cardinal point raised by petitioners was whether citizenship comes under the EC's purview when specific statutes like the Citizenship Act and the Foreigners Act address the issues of acquisition of Indian citizenship and illegal aliens, respectively.

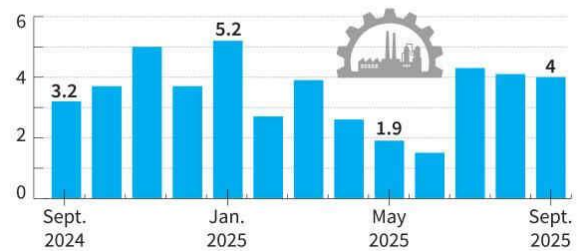
❖ IIP growth dips to 3-month low of 4% as mining, consumer non-durables slip

Context: Industrial activity dipped marginally to a three-month low of 4% in September. The data also show that the growth in industrial activity during the first half of the financial year was the slowest in at least five years.

- Growth in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, stood at 3.2% in September last year. However, growth had since accelerated to 4.3% by July 2025, following which it slowed again.
- The overall index grew 3% in the April-September period, the first half of the financial year 2025-26. This is the slowest in at least five years, the period for which data are readily available.
- The index grew 24% in the first half of 2021-22, owing to the low base of the previous pandemic-affected year 2020-21. In the first half of 2022-23, the index grew 7%, which slowed to 6.3% and 4.1% in the corresponding periods of 2023-24 and 2024-25.
- In September, the slowdown in industrial growth was mainly led by the mining, primary goods, and consumer non-durables sectors. Activity in the mining sector contracted 0.45% in September 2025 from a growth of 6.6% in August 2025 and a growth of 0.2% in September 2024.
- The consumer non-durables sector continued to contract for the second consecutive month in September 2025, by 2.9%, compared with a contraction of 6.4% in August 2025, and a growth of 2.2% in September last year.
- According to Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at the Bank of Baroda, this could be due to the fact that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate cuts were implemented late in the month.
- “As the GST cuts have targeted this industry, it can be assumed that the real impact will be seen in October-November as dealers have been facing a challenge of selling products with the older price labels,” Mr. Sabnavis said.

Industrial slowdown

The chart shows the year-on-year growth (in %) in the Index of Industrial Production between September 2024 and September 2025



❖ ‘Moving villagers from tiger reserves must be voluntary’

Context: The Union Tribal Affairs Ministry has mandated that the relocation of forest-dwelling communities from tiger reserves must be an “exceptional, voluntary, and evidence-based measure”.

- The Ministry’s new policy framework also spells out the mechanisms that allow communities to continue living in the forests and the procedures to be followed for obtaining their consent for relocation.
- The policy calls for a National Framework for Community-Centred Conservation and Relocation, through which the Environment Ministry and the Tribal Affairs Ministry can jointly set procedural standards, timelines, and accountability.

- It also suggests a National Database on Conservation-Community Interface to record and track relocations, compensation, and status post-relocation. It recommends annual independent audits of relocation projects by empanelled agencies that assess compliance with the Forest Rights Act, the Wildlife Protection Act, and human rights standards.
- Communities may choose to continue living in the “traditional forest habitats” while exercising their Individual Forest Rights or Community Forest Rights under the FRA, the policy says, emphasising that this must be an option for villages located within the reserves.

Serious concerns

- This brief, titled “Reconciling conservation and community rights: a policy framework for relocation and coexistence in India’s Tiger Reserves”, was sent last week to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change from the office of the Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- The Tribal Affairs Ministry noted that it has been receiving several representations from State governments and Gram Sabhas, flagging “serious concerns” about the non-implementation of the **Forest Rights Act, 2006**.
- Last year, the **National Tiger Conservation Authority’s** directive to States asking them to prioritise relocation of villages in core areas of tiger reserves drew protests from several Gram Sabhas and forest rights activists. There were 591 villages and 64,801 families within the core areas of tiger reserves, according to the NTCA.

❖ Trade talks with EU reduced ‘outstanding issues’, says Goyal

Context: India and the European Union have “significantly” reduced the gaps in their negotiating positions after three days of trade discussions in Brussels, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said.

- Mr. Goyal and his EU counterpart, Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič, held discussions to provide a political push to help get the negotiations for an India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) over the finish line.
- “The talks have significantly reduced our outstanding issues and allowed us to create the framework that will help deliver a win-win for our economies,” Mr. Goyal said on X, describing the discussions as “intense” but “very productive”.
- Mr. Goyal posted a video statement by the two Ministers, in which Mr Šefčovič characterised the talks as having occurred in an atmosphere of “full transparency and trust”. The Commissioner also said that “further work is required”. He said substantial progress had been made in a number of areas and the sides had given specific guidance to their teams on industrial tariffs.
- Mr. Šefčovič confirmed that a high-level EU trade delegation led by Director-General Sabine Weyand would be in New Delhi next week to conclude “technical tariff negotiations”. A trade delegation from the European Parliament is in New Delhi this week to better understand the challenges and opportunities presented by the trade negotiations. Some of the sticking points have included tariffs around agricultural products, a sensitive area for both sides and particularly for India. Tariffs on European automobiles being sold in India have also been under discussion in recent weeks.

Regulatory issues, including the EU's carbon tax on imports (Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism), have been contentious issues to work through.

- “The negotiations and discussions have laid the foundation for a robust and balanced agreement,” Mr. Goyal said.

❖ HAL signs pact with Russian firm for civil aircraft production

Context: Aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) and the Russian company United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) have signed a memorandum of understanding for production of the civil commuter aircraft SJ-100.

- The SJ-100 is a twin-engine, narrow-body aircraft. As on date, more than 200 aircraft have been produced and are being operated by more than 16 commercial airline operators.
- HAL said the SJ-100 would be a game changer for short-haul connectivity under the UDAN scheme in India. Under this arrangement, HAL will have the rights to manufacture SJ-100 aircraft for domestic customers.

Production in India

- “This collaboration between HAL and UAC is the result of mutual trust between the organisations. This will also be the first instance wherein a complete passenger aircraft will be produced in India. The last such project was HAL's production of AVRO HS-748, which started in 1961 and ended in 1988,” HAL said.
- It is estimated that over the next 10 years, the Indian aviation sector will require over 200 jets in this category for regional connectivity and an additional 350 aircraft for the Indian Ocean region to serve nearby international tourist destinations, it said.
- “The manufacturing of the SJ-100 aircraft marks the beginning of a new chapter in Indian aviation industry. Manufacturing will also strengthen the private sector and create direct and indirect jobs in the aviation industry,” the Bengaluru-headquartered PSU said.
- The MoU was signed in Moscow, Prabhat Ranjan from HAL and Oleg Bogomolov from UAC.

❖ Cloud-seeding trials done in Delhi to tackle air pollution

Context: Amid surging pollution levels, the Delhi government, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, conducted two cloud-seeding trials to induce rain. However, negligible rainfall was observed till late in the evening. The first such trial was conducted on October 23.

- “Today, the clouds had very little moisture content. We are doing a sortie tomorrow morning and the clouds are expected to have higher moisture content than today, and there are better chances of rainfall,” Manindra Agrawal, Director, IIT-Kanpur, said.
- He said they were generating data from the trials. “We are learning a lot, as cloud seeding has never been done for pollution control in Delhi or India before this.”
- As per officials, 0.1 mm rainfall was observed in Noida and 0.2 mm in Greater Noida around 4 p.m.

- Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said more trials would be done in the coming days. He said the humidity was only 15% to 20%.

❖ NDRF posted teams in five States ahead of cyclone landfall

Context: Ahead of Cyclone Montha's landfall on Tuesday night, the National Disaster Response Force deployed 25 teams across Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Puducherry, and Tamil Nadu, while another 20 teams were on standby.

- "The Director General, NDRF, has directed all formations to maintain a high level of readiness to provide immediate response for search, rescue, and relief operations," the organisation said in a statement.
- Each team is equipped with boats, cutting equipment, communication equipment, and other specialised rescue tools to carry out evacuation, relief and restoration operations.
- Coordination meetings are being held with the National Disaster Management Authority and their State-level counterparts and district administrations. The NDRF teams are also conducting public-awareness campaigns and community-sensitisation activities in vulnerable areas through local administrations to ensure timely evacuation and adherence to safety advisories.
- Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw also reviewed the Indian Railways' preparedness to deal with the aftermath of the cyclone. The meeting assessed readiness along the east coast, focusing on passenger safety, train regulation and coordination with local administrations.

❖ UN report finds countries' emission reductions short of goal set in Paris

Context: Ahead of the Conference of Parties (COP 30) in Belem, Brazil, next month, the United Nations made public a "synthesis report" on Tuesday that finds countries are poised to reduce emissions by only 17% of 2019 levels by 2035 — well below what is required to keep earth from heating up by 1.5 degrees Celsius or even 2 degrees Celsius by the end of the century.

- To keep temperatures below these limits, countries must cut emissions by 37% and 57%, respectively, of 2019 levels by 2035.
- The synthesis is based on countries' updated nationally determined contributions (NDC), which are promises to cut fossil fuel emissions or plant forests (to capture carbon dioxide) until 2035. Tuesday's report is only a partial picture as only 64, out of a potential 190 countries, have submitted updated NDCs until September 30. India is among the countries that is yet to submit updated NDCs, after its last submission in August 2022.
- While conversation in the lead-up to climate COPs generally end to weigh heavily towards emissions reductions, the NDCs that have been submitted so far are also stressing two other important pillars of climate action — adaptation and resilience, with 73% of the new NDCs including an 'adaptation' component, the report notes. Adaptation refers to steps that must be taken by countries to adapt to ongoing and future impact from warming.

- “All NDCs go beyond mitigation to include elements, inter alia, on adaptation, finance, technology transfer, capacity building and addressing loss and damage, reflecting the comprehensive scope of the Paris Agreement,” the report notes.
- With regard to greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reductions, the total GHG emission level resulting from the implementation of Parties’ new NDCs is projected to be around 13 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent in 2035, which is 6% below what they promised in their previous NDCs (submitted from 2020-2022).

Domestic pledges

- Afforestation, reforestation and adding solar energy were identified as the options with the greater need for support. Some Parties have announced domestic pledges and projects, such as tripling global renewable energy capacity by 2030, enhancing low-carbon hydrogen production and expanding Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) capacity.

❖ ‘Ready to share solar expertise with other parts of the world’

Context: Union Minister for Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi said India’s experience with PM Surya Ghar and PM Kusum had been ‘excellent’ and it was ready to share its expertise and experience in the solar sector with other countries.

- New Delhi has been looking to showcase the PM-Kusum (Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthan Mahabhiyan) and PM Surya Ghar Yojana to several African countries and island nations, he said at the International Solar Alliance (ISA) here on Tuesday.
- This could be of particular use for Africa, which has so far been able to tap only 4% of its arable land through irrigation due to lack of rural power. “We are ready to share our expertise and experience, and we [the government] are also supporting ISA to expand this in other parts of the world and member countries of ISA,” he said.
- Mr. Joshi informed that 10 lakh solar rooftops had been completed and 21 lakh were nearing completion under PM Surya Ghar.

❖ India’s diaspora diplomacy and the limits of cultural nationalism abroad

Context: The Indian diaspora has been in the spotlight in various countries in recent weeks. A section of the diaspora has attracted attention for its display of faith and culture, crossing the limits of acceptable public behaviour in developed countries. The immersion of Ganapati statues in waterbodies and the display of Deepavali fireworks in public places are examples.

- After Deepavali revellers set two houses on fire in Edmonton, Canada, an official police statement said: “Light up your home, not your neighbour’s roof.” Three men have been charged with arson. Anti-immigrant and nativist protesters in Australia have singled out Indians, and in the U.S. and Canada, nationalist campaigners have a special focus on people of Indian origin these days.
- The higher visibility of these incidents could also be because a section of Indians aggressively promotes cultural exhibitionism as a matter of community pride and right — for instance, in the use of firecrackers on Deepavali wherever they are. In the midst of all this, the Indian diaspora is being urged by some observers to advocate Indian positions in the United States.

- The Indian national movement was spread around the world in British colonies, and in the U.S. and Canada, but the first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, consciously decided to keep the new Republic aloof from PIO (person of Indian origin) politics in foreign countries. He did not want India to be seen as interfering in the domestic politics of another country through the diaspora, and he urged PIO to stay loyal to the countries that they had adopted.

Rise of Hindutva

- Issues of discrimination and racism were not narrow Indian concerns, and were raised as matters of universal human rights. This approach was consistent with the concept of territorial nationalism that guided Indian thinking then, as opposed to cultural nationalism.
- The rise of Hindutva and a parallel fresh surge in the outflow of Indians expanded a global network of cultural nationalists from the 1990s. With the ascent of Narendra Modi as Prime Minister in 2014, this approach gained further momentum. Mr. Modi addressed diaspora rallies in several countries, most notably the U.S.
- Exactly around this time, the fear of foreign interference in domestic politics became a central concern in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and several European countries. At various points in U.S. history, immigrants from specific regions or countries have been subjects of special scrutiny. In recent years, allegations of Chinese and Russian interference have dominated public discourse. Even Israel, which had a free pass as an autonomous actor in U.S. domestic politics for decades, is facing increased scrutiny and resistance. Not only left-leaning figures such as Bernie Sanders, but also Christian conservatives such as Marjorie Taylor Greene and media figure Tucker Carlson now call out Israel's influence in U.S. domestic politics.
- It may be noted that foreign influence operations per se are not illegal in the US, as long as they are openly registered as such.
- ***Historically, Indian immigrants were considered a benign presence in the U.S. and diverse within, as followers of all religions and speakers of several languages. But state-sponsored attempts to turn the diaspora into active members of Indian strategy have clashed with a rising fear of foreign interference in the West. India has escaped the kind of hostility that Russia and China face, but there is enough to suggest that New Delhi is not going unnoticed on this count in the West.***

Nationalist hype

- India does not allow dual citizenship, but the U.S. does. India gave partial citizenship rights to PIOs through the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003, by adding Sections 7A–7D to the Citizenship Act, 1955. This amendment introduced the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI), offering lifetime visa-free entry, exemption from police registration, and rights similar to those of NRIs in economic, educational, and financial fields for the community. In 2015, the technical categories of PIO and OCI were merged as OCI. India presents this arrangement as “dual citizenship in spirit, but not in law”.
- U.S. citizens can hold passports of more than one country, but some lawmakers, including Ms. Greene, are seeking more scrutiny on the issue. Fear of foreign interference in domestic politics is a universal concern of parties and state agencies in the West. Expectations from the diaspora to promote Indian interests in the U.S. or any other country must account for the reality that it is negotiating an era of heightened nationalism in host countries. Multi-alignment may not work for diaspora members always. After all, nationalist hype is not an exclusive preserve of India.

❖ U.S. is doing a trade deal with India, says Trump

Context: U.S. President Donald Trump said Washington is “doing a trade deal with India”, and emphasised that he has “a great relationship” with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as both sides continue negotiations on a proposed pact.

- “If you look at India and Pakistan... so, I’m doing a trade deal with India and I have great respect and love, as you know, for Prime Minister Modi. We have a great relationship,” Mr. Trump said at the **APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) CEO Summit in Gyeongju, South Korea.**
- He landed in South Korea from Japan as part of a three-nation tour of Asia.
- Mr. Trump, who did not elaborate on trade talks, reiterated his claim that he used trade to resolve the war between India and Pakistan in May.

‘Under strain’

- The U.S. President’s comment came at a time when the relations between New Delhi and Washington have been reeling under severe strain after Mr. Trump imposed 50% tariffs on India, including an additional 25% levies for its procurement of Russian crude oil.

❖ FTA talks with EU crossed halfway mark: Piyush Goyal

Context: The negotiations between India and the European Union on a free trade agreement have crossed the halfway mark, with 10 out of 20 chapters of the agreement having been finalised, and several other chapters nearing completion, Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said.

- “We have made significant progress in the three-day discussion between European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security Maros Sefcovic and his team and our team on several areas,” Mr. Goyal said at a press briefing.
- The Minister has returned from a three-nation tour over the last week or so, having visited Geneva for the 16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Berlin for the Berlin Global Dialogues, and Brussels to “further our negotiations with the European Union” for an FTA.
- He further said that, on an increasing number of issues, the two teams are moving towards convergence. The team from the EU is set to visit New Delhi next week for the next round of negotiations, and Mr. Sefcovic will visit the capital at the end of November or in December, the Minister said.

❖ ‘Swiss firms have shown interest in Quantum City’

Context: Swiss companies and key research institutions in the quantum technology sector have responded positively to partnership opportunities in the proposed Quantum City in Bengaluru, said N.S. Boseraju, Minister for Minor Irrigation, Science and Technology.

- The Karnataka government is implementing several programmes aimed at establishing Bengaluru as the “global focal point for the quantum sector”. Following the announcement at the country’s first Quantum Conference, the State government has already allocated land for the Quantum City.

- Discussions concerning the city's development were held with representatives from leading global quantum research institutions, including ETH Zurich and CERN. The Minister noted that Karnataka, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), has initiated courses to develop skilled quantum human resources. He emphasised the availability of expert talent and a conducive environment for new research in the State.
- **Karnataka participated in the “Swissnex Quantum Summit”, where the delegation provided information on investment opportunities to representatives of major global quantum companies. A demonstration of the proposed Quantum City was also showcased.**
- **The delegation visited ETH Zurich, the institution famously associated with Albert Einstein's research.** The Minister extended an invitation to world-renowned directors of the ETH Zurich Quantum Center — Andreas Wallraff, Jonathan Home, and Klaus Ensslin — pioneers in superconducting qubits and trapped ion systems research for over 20 years, to attend the upcoming Quantum India Conference.
- During the visit to Zurich Instruments, information was gathered on the manufacture of essential instrumentation required for Quantum Computing development. The Minister announced that this institution has agreed to provide training to research students from Karnataka.

❖ Kerala puts PM SHRI scheme on hold, sets up review panel

Context: Education Minister Sivankutty will chair the committee; move comes after ruling front ally CPI raises concerns over mandatory inclusion in the scheme to receive Central funds for education.

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced a seven-member Cabinet subcommittee to study the CPI's concerns on the PM SHRI scheme.
- The key ruling front ally publicly denounced the signing of MoU by the State government, as the “reactionary” National Education Policy-linked PM SHRI scheme, which the BJP-led Central government had set as an obligatory condition for releasing statutory federal grants estimated at ₹1,446 crore for school education.
- Mr. Vijayan said the government had frozen further procedures concerning the scheme until the panel submitted its report to the government.

❖ According to a survey of 25 countries, Indians are least aware of AI

According to a survey of 25 countries, Indians are least aware of AI

Despite low awareness, Indians expressed the most confidence in government regulation

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

According to a Pew survey covering 25 countries, Indians have the lowest awareness about Artificial Intelligence (AI). The survey found that about 14% of Indians have heard of or read a lot about AI; and another 32% have read a little about it. Together, this share (46%) is the lowest among the countries surveyed.

Chart 1 shows the share of people who have heard of or read a lot or little about AI. At 46%, India's share is well below the 25-country median of 81%.

Although AI is a new technology that young adults are generally expected to know more about, only 19% of Indians aged 18-34 said they have heard of or read a lot about AI. This is the second lowest share in that age group among the 25 countries surveyed (Chart 2).

Consequently, Indians are also among the least concerned about the increasing use of AI in daily life. Close to 19% of them said the increasing use of AI in daily life makes them more concerned than excited. This share is one of the lowest among the countries surveyed (Chart 3).

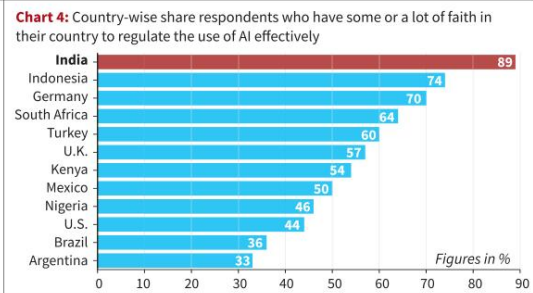
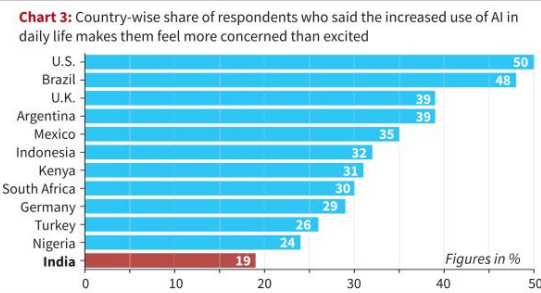
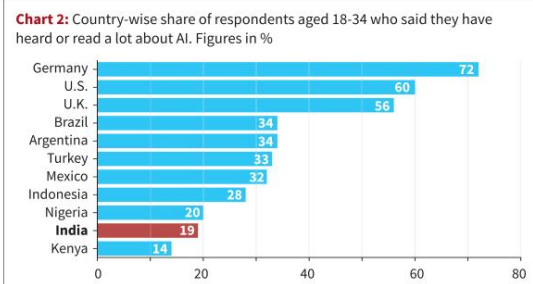
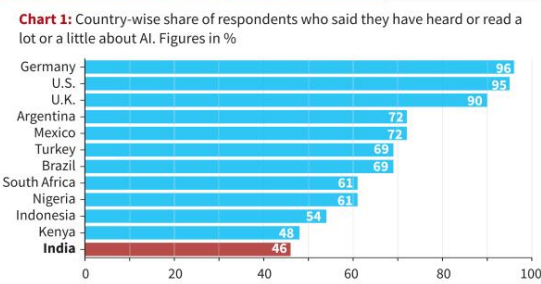
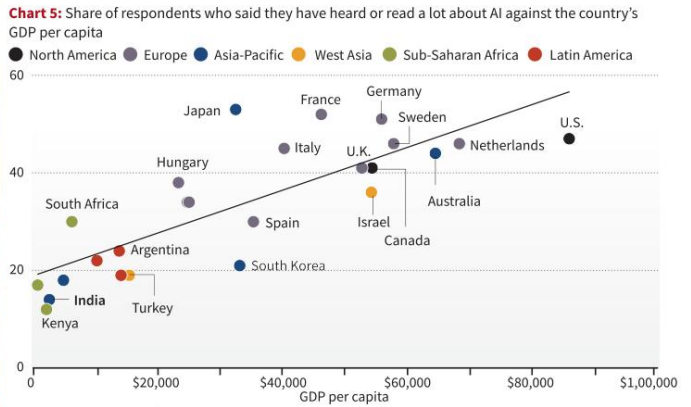
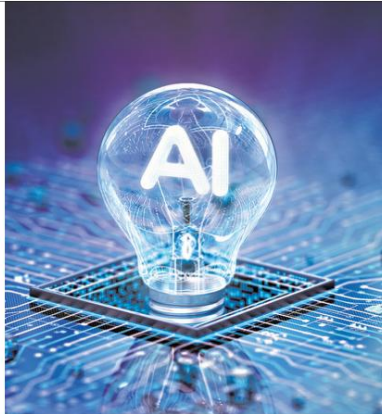
Nearly 90% of Indians also said they trust that their country will regulate the use of AI effectively. This share is the highest among all the countries surveyed, and by a significant margin (Chart 4).

Wealthier countries tend to have a higher share of people who have heard a lot about AI. Around half the adults in Japan, Germany, France, and the U.S. said they have heard a lot about AI, compared to the 14% in India and 12% in Kenya. Chart 5 plots the share of people who said they have heard of or read a lot about AI against the GDP per capita of the countries.

Charts 1, 2, 3, and 4 display data for only selected countries out of the 25 surveyed, while Chart 5 includes figures for all countries.

AI awareness: survey results

The data for the charts are sourced from the Pew Research Center's 'How People Around the World View AI' (October 2025). For non-U.S. data, this analysis draws on nationally representative surveys of 28,333 adults conducted from January 8 to April 26, 2025. Countries are classified as either high- or middle-income based on categories from the World Bank that rely on per capita gross national income



❖ Indian maritime sector has seen historic progress: Modi

Context: PM launches initiatives worth ₹2.2 lakh crore for shipping and shipbuilding sectors at Maritime Leaders' Conclave; amid global tensions, India represents autonomy and inclusive growth.

- The progress in India's maritime domain has been historic and the capability of major ports has doubled, Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- "Cargo movement has increased 700% in inland areas. Today, India's ports are considered among the best in the developing world," he added.
- Mr. Modi was speaking at the Maritime Leaders' Conclave held at the NESCO Ground to mark 'India Maritime Week'.

- During the event, Mr. Modi launched initiatives worth ₹2.2 lakh crore for the shipping and shipbuilding sectors, including acquisition of 437 vessels. Several memoranda of understanding (MoUs) for port-led industrialisation, sustainability, and shipbuilding, among others, were signed.

Sign of confidence

- “In 2016, the maiden India Maritime Week was held in Mumbai. Today, it has become a global summit. Eighty-five countries participate in it today. This itself sends a very big message,” Mr. Modi said.
- “The MoUs signed here show the confidence of the world in India’s maritime capabilities.”

“This [2025] is a crucial year for the country’s maritime capabilities. The Vizhinjam deep water transit hub has been operational. It is a matter of pride for every Indian. Kandla port and the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) have shown great capabilities. The JNPT’s handling capability has doubled, making it India’s biggest container port,” he added.

- Modern and futuristic laws have been implemented and old laws scrapped. They strengthen sustainability and enhance digitisation in ports. The safety of our ports has increased and ease of business has improved.”

Logistics performance

- Praising logistics performance of Indian ports, Mr. Modi said, **“In the Logistics Performance Index of the World Bank, India had performed better.”**
- “Shipbuilding is our top priority too. India is making great strides in shipbuilding,” he said, adding, “New alternatives for finance and easy credit will be offered.”
- “We welcome your ideas, innovation and investment. **Public-Private Partnerships [PPP] have been increasing.** We are giving incentives to States to attract investment,” he told the attendees at the conclave.

❖ India, China hold fresh round of talks on border peace

Context: The Indian and Chinese militaries held a fresh round of high-level talks aimed at maintaining peace and security along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

- It was the first such interaction between the two militaries after the Special Representatives’ talks in August between National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.
- According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the 23rd round of India-China Corps Commander-level meeting was held on October 25 at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point.
- This was the first meeting of the General Level Mechanism in the Western Sector since the 24th round of Special Representatives’ talks held on August 19. The discussions, the Ministry said, were held in a “friendly and cordial atmosphere”.

- The Ministry added that both sides had reviewed the progress since the 22nd round of Corps Commander-level Meeting held in October 2024 and shared the view that peace and tranquillity have been maintained in the border areas. The two sides agreed to continue using existing mechanisms to resolve any issues on the ground and to maintain stability along the LAC.
- The Chinese Ministry of National Defence also confirmed the talks, stating that “the two sides engaged in active and in-depth communication on the management of the western section of the China-India border”.
- The latest round of talks comes amid ongoing efforts by both nations to sustain dialogue and prevent incidents along the contested frontier, where disengagement efforts have been under way since 2020.

❖ Japan’s new PM calls Modi, discusses Quad, economic and security issues

Context: India and Japan would like to open a “golden chapter” in their ties, said Japan’s Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who held her first conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a week after she took office. The conversation, which lasted about 25 minutes, focused on the Quad, economic and defence cooperation, and the mobility of professionals, both sides said.

- In a post, Mr. Modi said he had discussed their “shared vision for advancing the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership, indicating India and Japan will move forward with the initiatives and agreements signed during Mr. Modi’s visit to Japan in August. Mr. Modi had then met with Ms. Takaichi’s predecessor Shigeru Ishiba, who subsequently had to resign from office.
- The Japanese Prime Minister’s office said that Ms. Takaichi stated that India and Japan share “fundamental values and strategic interests”.
- **“Japan intends to continue to work together toward realizing a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, including through Japan-Australia-India-U.S.,”** it said in statement, adding that Japan will continue its cooperation with India on security, economy, investment, innovation, and people-to-people exchanges. In a post responding to Mr. Modi on social media, Ms. Takaichi said that she would like to open a “new golden chapter in the Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership”, along with Mr. Modi.
- The new Japanese Prime Minister has met many of her Asian and Indo-Pacific counterparts already, as **she attended the ASEAN summit in Kuala Lumpur** last week, that Mr. Modi pulled out of. Ms. Takaichi will be in Gyeongju in South Korea for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit.
- When asked about whether she will meet Chinese President Xi Jinping, who will hold a summit with U.S. President Donald Trump morning, Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said that her schedule is still being finalised.
- The conversation between the two Prime Ministers came a day after Mr. Trump’s visit to Japan, when Ms. Takaichi had also **referenced the Quad**.

❖ Developing nations need 12 times more funds to fight climate crisis

Context: To adapt to climate change, developing countries will require anywhere from \$310-365 billion (at least ₹27 lakh crore) annually by 2035, according to a United Nations analysis. This is nearly 12 times more than the money that currently flows from the developed to the developing world for this purpose.

- The analysis, underlining the huge gap between the demand and supply of funds needed to protect developing nations from climate change impacts, appears in Running on Empty, an annual report on the shortfall released, ahead of the 30th edition of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP-30) to be held in Belem, Brazil next month.
- International public adaptation finance flows to developing countries stood at \$26 billion (about ₹2.2 lakh crore) in 2023, down from \$28 billion the previous year. If these trends continue, a target agreed upon by countries at the COP-26 in Glasgow, to double adaptation finance to \$40 billion by 2025 will be “missed”, the report added.

Disappointing target

- Finance is a significant issue in climate negotiations, as developing countries insist that developed countries pay the costs of adaptation (to deal with climate change impacts) and mitigation (to move away from fossil fuels), as well as compensation for losses and damages already occurring. This total bill is collectively called “climate finance”.
- **At COP-29 in Baku, Azerbaijan last year, developing countries, which were demanding nearly \$1.3 trillion annually by 2035, were disappointed when the developed world agreed to only \$300 billion, called the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance.**
- Tuesday’s UN report underlines this criticism. “...it is far too evident that the financial resources needed to enable adaptation action in developing countries at the scale necessary to meet the growing challenges of current and future climate risks is woefully inadequate. It will take nothing less than a global collective effort to increase climate finance to the levels articulated in the Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3 trillion,” it notes.
- The report also raises concerns that whatever money has been made available at present is primarily classified as ‘debt.’ Although 70% of international public adaptation finance was concessional in 2022-23, it is “worrisome” that debt instruments continue to dominate these overall flows, comprising 58% on average in that financial year, the report said.

❖ SEBI favours ‘simpler’ mutual fund rules

Context: Regulator proposes to do away with old rules, simplify language, and rationalise fee structure; changes aimed at reducing investor costs.

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed major changes to mutual fund regulations to reduce investor costs and to make them simpler.
- The markets regulator said that the proposals contained provisions to do away with old rules, simplify the language, and rationalise fee structures.

- “Numerous amendments over the last 29 years have contributed to the MF regulations becoming considerably voluminous and complex. Hence, SEBI has undertaken an exercise to comprehensively review the MF regulations,” according to a consultation paper.
- As part of the efforts to make MF schemes cheaper for the investor, SEBI has done away with the additional expense of 0.05% charged by AMCs over exit load. “In 2012, mutual funds were mandated to credit exit load to the scheme and AMCs were allowed to charge 20 bps more as additional expenses to the scheme. A basis point is one-hundredth of a percentage. The said additional charge, was reduced from 20 bps to 5 bps in 2018,” SEBI said.
- “The provision for additional expense of 5 bps allowed to the AMCs to charge the mutual fund schemes, was transitory in nature..with an objective to rationalise cost for unit holder, this expense charged to the scheme has been removed from the draft MF regulations,” SEBI said.
- To lighten the impact of the removal of additional expense on exit load, SEBI proposed that the first two slabs of the expense ratio of open-ended active schemes be revised upwards by 5 bps. It also proposed to exclude all statutory levy like STT, GST, CTT, and stamp duty from the expense ratio limits along with the present permissible expenses for brokerage, exchange and regulatory fees. SEBI also proposed to reduce brokerage charges to 0.02% from 0.12% in cash market and 0.01% from 0.05% in the derivatives market.

❖ India mulls \$12-bn plan to bail out debt-laden State power discoms

Context: India is considering a bailout exceeding ₹1 trillion (\$12 billion) for debt-laden state-run power distribution companies.

- To receive the bailout funds, the States will be required to privatise their electric utilities and transfer managerial control or keep control but list them on a stock exchange, according to three government officials and a document outlining the plan prepared by the Union Ministry of Power.
- The plan marks Prime Minister Narendra Modi's toughest reform push yet to overhaul the chronically inefficient state-run electricity distribution companies, seen as the weakest link in India's energy chain. The Power Ministry and the Ministry of Finance are discussing the final details of the bailout, with an announcement expected in the February budget, said two government sources.
- Under the proposal, at least 20% of the state's total power consumption must be met by private companies and the States must assume part of the retailer's debt, according to the Power Ministry presentation.
- To do so the States can choose to privatise their distribution operations for access to loans to pay off existing debt under two options. First, the States can create a new distribution company, divest 51% of the equity, which will enable them to access a 50-year interest-free loan for the privatised company's debt, along with access to low-interest federal loans for five years, the presentation showed.
- The second option would let States privatise up to 26% of the equity of an existing State-owned power distribution company in exchange for access to low-interest loans from the federal government for five years, it showed.

- Alternatively, States that do not decide to transfer managerial control through privatisation must list their utilities on a recognised stock exchange within three years.
- States that choose to list would receive low-interest loans from the federal government for infrastructure management, the presentation showed.
- The State power retailers have accumulated losses of ₹7.08 trillion (\$80.6 billion) and outstanding debt of ₹7.42 trillion (\$84.4 billion) as of March 2024, the documents showed.
- Private companies such as Adani Power, ReliancePower, Tata Power, CESC and Torrent Power are expected to benefit from the reforms as they are likely to gain stakes in the State companies.

❖ Sugar sector concerned over reduction in ethanol sourcing

Context: The sugar sector is concerned over the cut in ethanol sourcing in the 2025-2026 ethanol supply year.

- The Indian Sugar & Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA) said only 289 crore litre ethanol had been allocated from sugar-based feedstock or 28% of the total need. The industry invested almost ₹40,000 crore with a capacity to supply 650 crore litre of ethanol a year. It supplied 330 crore litre last ethanol supply year.
- **The sector expects almost 345 lakh tonne sugar output between October 1 and September 30, 2026. Of this, local consumption will be just 284 lakh tonne and sugar diversion for ethanol 34 lakh tonne leading to excess sugar stocks.**
- While the **Fair and Remunerative Price of sugarcane** rose 16.5% to ₹355 a quintal since 2022-23, ethanol procurement prices from sugarcane juice and B-heavy molasses was static at ₹60.73 and ₹65.61 a litre respectively. Ethanol's cost of production was ₹66.09 a litre from B-heavy molasses and ₹70.70 a litre from cane juice.
- The **minimum selling price (MSP) of sugar** has been ₹31 a kg since February 2019 with output cost at ₹40.24/kg. The Centre must ensure 50% ethanol is sourced from sugar sector, raise MSP, announce sugar export policy and increase ethanol procurement prices, ISMA said.

❖ What is China's complaint against India at WTO?

Context: China has filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO) against India. It alleges that India is providing subsidies, as part of the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, for the development of advanced chemistry cell (ACC) batteries; for boosting the auto sector; and for facilitating the production of Electric Vehicles, in contravention of WTO law.

What is the PLI scheme?

- India launched the PLI scheme in 2020 to give a fillip to Indian manufacturing. This scheme provides financial incentives based on incremental sales to strategic industries; aims to bolster India's position in global value chains; and integrates medium and small-scale industries into the industrial production process through backward linkages.

- **The three specific PLI schemes that China has challenged are — the PLI scheme which aims to incentivise the establishment of giga-scale manufacturing capabilities of ACC batteries in India; the scheme for the auto industry, which seeks to buttress the manufacturing of Advanced Automotive Technology (AAT) products in India, encompassing both vehicles and their components; and third, a scheme to promote EV manufacturing by attracting global EV manufacturers to the country.**

What is China's complaint?

- China alleges that the three PLI schemes provide **financial benefits or subsidies to companies operating in India contingent on Domestic Value Addition (DVA)**. For instance, under the PLI scheme for the auto sector, one of the conditions for eligibility to get financial benefits is that there must be a 50% DVA.
- Likewise, one of the salient features of the PLI scheme for ACC batteries is that the beneficiary must ensure a DVA of 25%. The Chinese argue that the DVA requirements under these PLI schemes incentivise companies to use domestic goods rather than imported goods, discriminating against Chinese goods in the Indian market.

What is the law on subsidies in WTO?

- While providing industrial subsidies to boost domestic industry is a sovereign right of states, WTO law ensures that these subsidies are not provided in a manner that jeopardises the international trade of other countries by ushering in unfair competition.
- Unfair competition may arise from subsidies that confer an artificial advantage on industries for exporting or competing with imported products. Consequently, the grant of industrial subsidies is regulated by the Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM) agreement of the WTO. Article 1 of the SCM agreement defines a subsidy as a financial contribution by a government or a public body that confers a benefit. The subsidy should also be specific.
- **The SCM agreement divides subsidies into three categories — prohibited subsidies, actionable subsidies, and non-actionable subsidies. Prohibited subsidies are forbidden by definition and are generally of two types: export subsidies and Import Substitution (IS) subsidies.** Export subsidies are contingent on export performance, and IS subsidies, as defined in Article 3.1(b) of the SCM agreement, refer to subsidies contingent upon the use of domestic goods over imported goods. Thus, if a country promises a financial contribution to a specific industry on the condition that it use domestic goods or goods produced locally, rather than imported goods, it would constitute a prohibited subsidy.

Do IS subsidies violate other laws?

- An IS subsidy will also breach two other WTO legal provisions. First is the national treatment obligation, codified in Article III.4 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which obligates countries to ensure that their domestic laws do not treat imported products less favourably than their domestic products; and second, is Article 2.1 of the Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) Agreement which states that no country shall impose any TRIM that is inconsistent with its national treatment obligations enshrined in GATT's Article III.

- The TRIMs agreement contains a specific illustration of a prohibited trade-related investment measure. This illustration pertains to local content requirements which incentivise the use of domestically produced goods. Since an IS subsidy gives preference to domestic over foreign goods, it constitutes as a proscribed TRIM under the WTO law.
- China alleges that India's three PLI schemes are IS subsidies. However, it is critical to note that the DVA milestones in India's PLI scheme do not automatically translate to local content requirements. Value addition at the domestic level can occur in multiple ways, and not just through the use of domestic goods. The analysis of the DVA component in these three PLI schemes must thus consider a complex set of facts.

What happens next?

- The first step in resolving a dispute at the WTO is through consultations. Thus, India and China will try to resolve this matter amicably. If this does not occur, the dispute will proceed to adjudication by a three-member ad hoc WTO panel. The WTO's appellate mechanism, the Appellate Body, has remained incapacitated since December 2019.
- Thus, if the WTO panel's decision is appealed, it would mean postponing the adjudication of the dispute till the time the Appellate Body is resurrected. The practical implication is that the status quo remains, and a country can continue with its impugned measures.

❖ How do cyclones form and how are they measured?

Context: If you think of a cyclone as a machine, it would be an incredibly powerful entity — an engine that draws heat from the earth's tropical waters to drive destructive winds, heavy rainfall, and storm surges. Similar storms are known variously as hurricanes in the Atlantic and eastern Pacific Oceans, and typhoons in the western Pacific Ocean.

How do cyclones form?

- A tropical cyclone begins as an area of low pressure, often associated with clusters of thunderstorms. For such a disturbance to develop into a cyclone, several atmospheric and oceanic conditions must come together.
- The most important is warm sea surface temperature, generally above 26.5°C and up to a depth of at least 50 m. When moist air near such a water surface rises, it releases its latent heat, cools, and condenses to form clouds. The released heat warms the surrounding air, causing it to rise even further and drawing in more moist air from below, setting up a self-reinforcing cycle of convection.
- A second important condition is that the atmosphere must be unstable, that is, rising air must continue to rise rather than being forced back down, and there must be a sufficient Coriolis force (a deflection of circulating air due to the earth's rotation, causing it to curve right in the Northern Hemisphere and left in the Southern Hemisphere) to induce rotation. As the Coriolis effect is weakest at the equator, cyclones rarely form within about five degrees of latitude from it. At the same time, the vertical wind shear, which is the difference in wind speed and direction between the

lower and the upper levels of the atmosphere, must be low. High wind shear can disrupt a cyclone's organised circulation and keep it from building in strength.

- As the cyclone develops, a well-defined centre called the 'eye' may form. This is a calm, clear region surrounded by a ring of towering thunderstorms that produce the most intense winds and heaviest rainfall, called the eyewall.
- Air spirals in towards the low-pressure centre at the surface and rises rapidly near the eyewall, while at higher altitudes it flows outwards, completing the circulation.

How are cyclones classified?

- Since the storm draws energy from the ocean through evaporation, it can intensify as long as it remains over warm water. Cyclones are primarily classified by their maximum sustained wind speed and central pressure. Different ocean basins use slightly different classification schemes but the principle is the same. In the North Indian Ocean, the India Meteorological Department classification ranges from a 'depression' (31-49 km/hr) to 'super cyclonic storm' (>222 km/hr).
- For measurements, meteorologists use ground-based observations, aircraft reconnaissance, satellite data, and ocean buoys. Satellites play a crucial role in monitoring cyclones over remote ocean areas: infrared images help estimate the temperature of cloud tops, indicating storm intensity, while visible and microwave sensors reveal structure, rainfall distribution, and eye formation.
- In the North Atlantic, specialised aircraft called hurricane hunters fly directly into storms to measure wind speeds, pressure, humidity, and temperature. Instruments called dropsondes are released into the storm, transmitting data as they fall. In the Indian Ocean, satellites and automated buoys provide most of the data.

How well are cyclones forecast?

- Forecasting the path and intensity of cyclones remains a complex challenge. Sophisticated numerical weather models simulate atmospheric and oceanic conditions, but even small errors in initial data can lead to large uncertainties. Advances in computing power, remote sensing, and data assimilation have improved forecasts significantly over the last few decades. Today, most meteorological agencies can predict a cyclone's track three to five days in advance with reasonable accuracy.

❖ India gets 6-month waiver for Iran port

Context: U.S. relief on sanctions against Chabahar in force from, says MEA; essential supplies to Afghanistan can now be sent through the port.

- India has received a waiver on the United States' sanctions against Iran's Chabahar port for six months, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal announced. Officials said that the sanctions waiver had come into effect from October 29.
- **India has been associated with the Chabahar port at least since 2005, when it entered into an agreement with Iran to develop the port.**
- **Both sides signed an MoU in 2015 to jointly develop the Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar in the hope that it would emerge as a major commercial hub helping India access the markets of Afghanistan, the Central Asian states, and Russia. The port's prospects came under a cloud due to Western sanctions against Iran, but in 2018, the first Trump administration gave a waiver to Indian operations at the Chabahar port as it was aimed at helping the development needs of the U.S.-backed Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.**
- In September, the U.S. Department of State said that it would revoke the waiver for Indian operations that was offered by Donald Trump in 2018. The move exposed anyone associated with the Chabahar project to U.S. sanctions under the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act.
- However, the latest U.S. decision means that supplies to Afghanistan, especially essential items like food grains and medical products, can still be sent through Chabahar.

❖ 70 persons selected for Rajyotsava award

Context: On the occasion of the Kannada Rajyotsava celebrations on November 1, the State government on Thursday announced its annual Rajyotsava awards for 70 personalities for their contributions in different fields.

- Writers including Rajendra Chenni, Rahamath Tarikere, R. Sunandamma, and H.L. Pushpa, multilingual actor Prakash Raj, actor Vijayalakshmi Singh, former IAS officer H. Siddaiah, and M.R. Jayaram of Ramaiah University are among the 70 people selected for the award for 2025.
- **The award carries an amount of ₹5 lakh, a 25-gram gold medal, and a citation.**
- Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will present the awards at a function to be held on Saturday. A committee headed by the Chief Minister selected persons for the award, Kannada and Culture Minister Shivaraj Tangadagi told mediapersons.

❖ Umashree to receive Dr. Rajkumar Award

Context: Veteran film and theatre person Umashree has been chosen for Dr. Rajkumar Award for lifetime achievement in Kannada cinema.

- The State government announced the recipients of the 2019 State Film Lifetime Achievement and Literary Awards. The awards will be presented at a ceremony in Mysuru on November 3, which will also include the presentation of the 2018 and 2019 State Film Awards.

- N.R. Nanjunde Gowda has been selected for the Puttanna Kanagal Award, which honors outstanding contributions to direction in Kannada cinema, while the Dr. Vishnuvardhan Award will go to filmmaker Richard Castelino. Each of these awards carries a cash prize of ₹5 lakh and a gold medal.
- In the literary category, the State Film Literature Award for 2019 has been conferred on senior journalist Raghunath Ch.Ha. for his book “Belli Tore – Cinema Essays,” published by Ankita Prakashana. Both the author and the publisher will receive ₹20,000 in cash and a silver medal each.

❖ Sardar Patel’s vision and the meaning of national unity today

Context: Every year, on October 31, India observes Rashtriya Ekta Diwas — National Unity Day — to honour the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Independent India’s first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister. Few figures shaped the foundations of the Republic as decisively as Patel, who brought together more than 560 princely states after 1947 to create a single political entity.

- Patel’s realism, patience and firmness prevented the subcontinent from fracturing in the wake of Partition. **Junagarh, Hyderabad, and Jammu & Kashmir** might well have slipped into uncertainty but for his persuasion and resolve. The idea of unity he espoused was never uniformity; it was a federation of minds and hearts bound by shared heritage. That belief remains India’s anchor in an age of widening diversities and new aspirations.
- The decision **in 2014 to commemorate Patel’s birthday as National Unity Day recognised that unity** is not a settled fact but a continuous act of national renewal. Across the country, schools, civil organisations and citizens reaffirm the pledge to uphold the nation’s integrity. Events such as the **‘Run for Unity’** embody Patel’s call for collective action — reminding us that patriotism must move from sentiment to participation.
- The **150th birth anniversary that falls this year** will be observed with special programmes at Ekta Nagar near the 182-metre-tall Statue of Unity — itself a monumental tribute to Patel’s nation-building legacy. Cultural parades, tableaux from States, and performances by over 900 artists will celebrate the idea that India’s strength lies in its many voices speaking as one.

Culture as a bond

- In a country where languages, faiths and folk traditions coexist in profusion, culture has long served as the most durable bond of unity. Institutions under the Ministry of Culture — from zonal cultural centres to national museums — work to democratise heritage, ensuring that no region feels isolated from the national narrative.
- Programmes such as **‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’** institutionalise this spirit by pairing States and Union Territories for exchanges in language, cuisine, and art. When students in Maharashtra learn Bihu or young performers from Assam stage Lavani in Pune, they practise Patel’s idea that knowing one another is the first step to standing together.

- Tourism, too, is an instrument of cohesion. The **'Dekho Apna Desh' campaign** and an upgraded 'Incredible India' digital platform encourage citizens to explore their own land — from Punjab's Golden Temple to Kerala's backwaters, from Assam's tea gardens to Rajasthan's deserts. In 2024 alone, domestic tourism crossed 294 crore visits, reflecting a surge in curiosity and pride among Indians about India.
- **Schemes such as Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD** go beyond infrastructure to create local livelihoods. When a woman in Nagaland runs a homestay for visitors from Gujarat or an artisan in Jodhpur sells crafts to travellers from Tamil Nadu, they exchange more than goods — they share experiences that knit the Republic closer.
- Unity, Patel taught, is a task renewed in every generation. It must be defended against the fragmenting impulses of indifference, ignorance and regionalism.
- **The 'Panch Pran' — the five resolves of the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'** — place the pledge of national solidarity at the heart of India's journey towards 2047.
- As India marks the sesquicentennial year of Sardar Patel's birth, the true homage to the Iron Man lies not in marble or memory, but in ensuring that every Indian feels part of the same national story. Whether through a cultural performance, a museum exhibit, or a journey across States, each act of participation strengthens the invisible threads that bind this civilisation together.
- In Sardar Patel's words and in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reiteration of them, unity remains both the means and the goal of India's destiny — Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.

❖ **Trump-Xi bonhomie and reference to G-2 may impact India and Quad**

Context: External Affairs Ministry non-committal on outcome of U.S.-China summit in South Korea; experts warn of ripple effects in region; after talks, U.S. reduced tariffs on China to 47%, making India and Brazil, at 50%, among nations with highest tariff.

- The summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Busan, South Korea, ended with several outcomes for bilateral ties between the two countries, but also sent ripple effects to India. As a result of the talks, the U.S. has reduced tariffs on China to 47%, making India and Brazil, at 50%, among the countries with the highest tariffs.
- More than the specific outcomes, including a one-year truce on trade tariffs and export restrictions on rare earth minerals, experts said the characterisation by both leaders of the U.S.-China "G-2" or grouping of the two biggest global powers, may have a bigger impact. At the meeting with Mr. Xi, Mr. Trump began by saying, "I think we are going to have a fantastic relationship for a long period of time."
- "China and the U.S. can jointly shoulder our responsibility as major countries, and work together to accomplish more great and concrete things for the good of our two countries and the whole world," Mr. Xi said, as per Chinese Foreign Ministry's statement.
- When asked about the summit, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal was non-committal. "As far as the question of the latest [Trump-Xi] talks and relaxations that have happened between U.S. and China, as to how it is going to play into our domain, I will come back to you," he told reporters on Thursday.

- The G-2 or the idea of creating an exclusive U.S.-China club to work on global issues was floated as a concept about 15 years ago around the summit between U.S. President Barack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao in 2009, when trade, climate change and nuclear proliferations were pressing concerns for the U.S.
- However, Mr. Obama never used the term, and subsequently as U.S.-China tensions increased, the administration dropped the idea entirely by 2011.

Impact of entente

- Another issue is the impact of any entente between the U.S. and China on the Quad and other Indo-Pacific initiatives.
- India has always been more for a multi-polar world order rather than for a shared hegemony between the top two powers. One has to wonder if this will lead to carving up of the world into “spheres of influence”, as that will challenge not only India’s stature but also the viability of the Quad.
- Speaking to reporters onboard his flight back to the U.S., Mr. Trump said he intended to visit China in April 2026, and host Mr. Xi in the U.S. later in the year. While no date has been sent for Mr. Trump’s travel to India to attend the Australia-India-Japan-U.S. Quad Summit to be hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, reports suggested that this was unlikely to take place in 2025.
- As a result, if Mr. Trump returns to Asia next year, the question won’t just be whether he will be part of the Quad summit in India, but also that whether his new “G-2” plans with China will dilute the group’s agenda to secure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

❖ Justice Surya Kant to take over as 53rd Chief Justice of India on November 24

Context: The appointment of Justice Surya Kant as the 53rd Chief Justice of India (CJI) was notified on Thursday. He will assume charge on November 24 and will remain CJI for nearly 16 months, till February 9, 2027.

- The notification was issued by the Department of Justice in the Union Law Ministry.
- “In exercise of the powers conferred by the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Justice Surya Kant, Judge of the Supreme Court as the Chief Justice of India with effect from 24th November 2025,” Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal wrote on X.
- “I convey my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to him,” he added.
- Justice Surya Kant succeeds Justice Bhushan R. Gavai, who demits office on November 23.
- According to a communique by the, Justice Surya Kant was born on February 10, 1962 in Petwar of Hisar, Haryana. He earned his Law degree from Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak, in 1984. He then began his practice the same year at District Courts, Hisar.
- In 1985, he shifted to the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh, specialising in constitutional, service, and civil matters. On July 7, 2000, he earned the distinction of being appointed the youngest Advocate-General of Haryana and was also designated as a senior advocate.



Justice Surya Kant

- He served as the Advocate-General until his elevation as a permanent Judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court on January 9, 2004.
- As a judge, he served on the governing body of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) from 2007 to 2011 and, later, earned a first class in his Master's degree in Law in 2011. He was appointed the Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court on October 5, 2018, and thereafter was elevated to the Supreme Court of India on May 24, 2019.
- Since May 14, 2025, he has been the Executive Chairman of NALSA and also serves on several committees of the Indian Law Institute.

❖ Fully aware of Great Nicobar project's impact, says Centre

Context: The Centre tells the NGT that no tribal persons will be displaced, noting that the project will cover about 18% of the Great Nicobar area, leaving over two-thirds of its land mass as forests.

- Defending the Great Nicobar Island mega-infrastructure project at the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Thursday, the Union government argued that it was fully aware of the project's likely impact on the biodiversity of the surrounding areas, positing that the main issue was whether the government was "alive to this or not".
- Noting that the government considers it its duty to undertake mitigation measures, Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati said that the Centre had mandated conservation and monitoring programmes to run for the next three decades as the project was developed. She said that the project "is going to be a national asset".
- The submissions came in response to a batch of petitions that have challenged the environmental clearance issued for the ₹92,000-crore project, which will include a transshipment port, an international airport, a township, and a power plant to be built on more than 160 sq. km of land. Of this, about 130 sq. km is forest land inhabited by the Nicobarese and the Shompen communities, both Scheduled Tribes, with the Shompen categorised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.
- One petition, submitted by activist Ashish Kothari, challenges the clearances obtained for the project, citing violations of the Island Coastal Regulation Zone (ICRZ) notification, 2019 notification and inadequacies in the environmental impact assessment.
- Making its arguments before the NGT Bench now hearing the matter, the Union government submitted that it had considered studies and research conducted over decades before mandating measures to translocate, conserve, and monitor the project activities' impact on the biodiversity of the region.



Mitigation plan: The Centre has mandated conservation programmes during the project's development. GETTY IMAGES

Coral colonies

- Ms. Bhati noted that while plans had been outlined for translocating over 16,000 of the 20,668 coral colonies that are under threat from the project's activities, there is also a plan in place to ensure the monitoring of the remaining 4,500-odd coral colonies. She submitted that there were about 51 active nests of the Nicobar megapode in the project activities' area; though about 30 will be permanently destroyed, there were also plans in place to conserve the remaining nests.
- "There is biodiversity all around the islands, and the conclusion was that this region is the most suitable. All other nesting beaches of the leatherback turtles will be protected and conserved," Ms. Bhati argued.
- The Centre added that no tribal persons will be displaced or dispersed, noting that the project will only cover 1.82% of the whole island's archipelago area, which amounts to about 18% of the Great Nicobar area, still leaving GNI with over two-thirds of its land mass as forests.
- The Centre also defended the environment clearance granted for the project, which has mandated detailed measures to study and monitor the biodiversity of the region as the project is developed, calling it "an alive document" that prescribes conservation measures till 2052.

❖ India ready to help Afghanistan with hydel projects: MEA

Context: India is willing to support Taliban-governed Afghanistan in building "hydroelectric projects", the official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Randhir Jaiswal.

- Addressing the weekly MEA press conference, Mr. Jaiswal said that the two sides can build on a "history of cooperation" on water-related matters and reiterated that India remains "committed" to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan.
- The Taliban side welcomed Mr. Jaiswal's remarks about cooperation in hydroelectric projects.
- "As emphasised in the recently adopted India-Afghanistan Joint Statement, India stands ready to support Afghanistan in its efforts to manage water resources sustainably, including with hydroelectric projects," Mr. Jaiswal said.
- The Taliban spokesperson for international media, Suhail Shaheen, welcomed the announcement and said, "There are a lot of opportunities for cooperation between the two countries."
- "The need is to send delegates from various Ministries to explore the opportunities and areas of cooperation. Hydel power is one of them," Mr. Shaheen. Sources here indicated that India would consider sending delegates if the Taliban made appropriate requests.
- Cooperation to build hydel power projects was part of a joint statement issued during a visit by the Taliban's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on October 10.
- Referring to Pakistani attacks against Afghan positions along the Durand Line earlier this month and also on the capital Kabul, Mr. Jaiswal said, "Pakistan is infuriated with Afghanistan exercising sovereignty over its own territories."

❖ 'Over 600 MoUs worth ₹12 lakh crore signed at the Maritime Week'

Context: Agreements were in diverse sectors such as port development, indigenous ship building and container manufacturing: Sonowal.

- More than 600 memorandum of understanding (MoUs) worth over ₹12 lakh crore were signed at the Indian Maritime Week 2025, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said.
- Mr. Sonowal said the MoUs were in diverse sectors such as ship building, port development, indigenous ship building and container manufacturing.
- “In the last 11 years, whatever transformative journey we could create, we did. Also, in the transformative policy programmes whatever changes we could create, we did. This will ultimately make India globally, the most desirable, favourable investment destination,” he said.
- Secretary in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Vijay Kumar said that of the MoUs signed, 30% were for port development and port modernisation, 20% for sustainable green shipping and green ports, 20% for shipping and ship building, 20% with regard to port-led industrialisation and 10% for trade, business and skilling.
- “Maritime sector projects have long gestation periods. Investment comes in, it takes time to get invested. Already 60% of the MoUs entered into at the last summit have been grounded, meaning, the money [has been committed] and has started coming in,” he said.
- During the event, 11 global CEOs met with the PM. “They represented different divisions of maritime sectors including, ports, port modernisation, port operators, dredging operators and ship building. In almost all the areas, they promised and committed to invest,” Mr. Kumar said.
- The event witnessed the participation of about one lakh people and delegates from 85 countries.

❖ India expected to add 6 GW of new wind energy capacity: Joshi

Context: Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) Pralhad Joshi on Thursday said 6 gigawatts (GW) of new wind capacity is expected to be added by the end of financial year 2025-2026, the highest-ever annual addition, up from last year's 4 GW.

- “[In] this financial year, so far, over **3 GW of new wind capacity has been added**,” he said in a media interaction on the sidelines of the 7th edition of Windergy India 2025 conference in Chennai.
- **“India is moving with clear determination towards the goal of achieving 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030, and wind power will play a major part — contributing 100 GW or more. With 54 GW of installed wind energy and another 30 GW under implementation, we are well on track to meet our 2030 target**, Mr. Joshi said.
- **Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh together contribute almost half of India's total wind capacity of 54 GW**, he said.

- **“India’s wind industry already has 70% local content, showing strong domestic capability.** Under the Atmanirbhar Wind Mission, our goal is to increase this to 85% by 2030,” Mr. Joshi said.
- **“The GST on wind equipment has been reduced from 12% to 5%,** helping reduce turbine cost by over ₹25 lakh per MW,” Mr. Joshi said.
- **“With the approved list of models and manufacturers (ALMM) – wind framework and related initiatives, India can soon meet 10% of global wind demand by 2030 and up to 20% by 2040 and emerge as a global manufacturing hub for turbines and components,”** he said.
- **“A study by the National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) shows a potential of 1,164 GW at 150 metres hub height across India. To unlock new areas, the government has launched a viability gap funding (VGF) scheme for offshore wind projects, targeting 1 GW in the first phase — 500 MW each off Gujarat and Tamil Nadu,”** Mr. Joshi said.
- MNRE Secretary Santosh Kumar Sarangi said the tender for the Tamil Nadu offshore wind project is expected to be floated by February.
- Earlier speaking at the inaugural of the conference, Mr. Joshi said **India’s total installed capacity was nearing 500 GW, with non-fossil sources contributing over 257 GW.**

Why choose Dr. Rajkumar IAS/KAS Academy?



❖ Human-animal conflict claims three lives on a single day in State

Context: In a sign of human-animal conflict situation only escalating, three persons lost their lives in Karnataka — two in Chikkamalur district and one in Mysuru district.

- Two persons died in an elephant attack in Kerekatte range of Kudremukh Wildlife Division in Sringeri taluk of Chikkamagaluru. The same day saw a farmer killed in a tiger attack close to the Muliyuru range of Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Saragur taluk in Mysuru district.

❖ India, U.S. sign pact to boost defence ties

Context: Framework outlines a 10-year road map for strategic collaboration; both sides reaffirm commitment to advance cooperation in defence industry.

- India and the United States have unveiled a 10-year defence framework, marking a new phase in their strategic cooperation aimed at “advancing peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific”.
- The “Framework for the U.S.-India Major Defence Partnership” was signed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth on the sidelines of the **12th ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**. The development came amid strained ties due to Washington’s slapping of 50% tariffs on Indian goods.
- According to the Ministry of Defence, both sides appreciated the continuing momentum in bilateral defence cooperation and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the partnership.
- They reviewed ongoing defence engagements, addressed emerging challenges, and discussed progress in defence industry and technology collaborations, the Ministry said.
- **Building on the 2013 Joint Principles for Defence Cooperation and the 2016 recognition of India as a Major Defence Partner (MDP), the new framework charts a 10-year road map to deepen collaboration across all defence domains — land, maritime, air, space, and cyberspace**, a senior Defence Ministry.
- The framework focuses on maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific, enhancing interoperability, and strengthening maritime security to ensure the free flow of commerce. It also seeks to expand cooperation with like-minded partners through mechanisms such as the Quad, prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and bolster defence industrial innovation through advanced technology partnerships, the official said.
- Both sides had already launched the **COMPACT initiative (Catalysing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce and Technology) to drive transformative changes in key areas of defence cooperation**.
- The new framework underscores a shared intent to respond jointly to common security threats, deter conflict, and uphold the sovereignty and autonomy of regional partners, while laying the foundation for collective peace and prosperity in the region.
- The U.S. Secretary of War reiterated that India remains a priority partner for Washington in defence cooperation.

- In a post, Mr. Hegseth stated that the framework advances the bilateral defence partnership, a cornerstone for regional stability and deterrence. “We’re enhancing our coordination, info sharing, and tech cooperation. Our defense ties have never been stronger,” he wrote.
- The defence framework is expected to provide unified policy direction to transform and expand the partnership between the two countries over the next decade, the Ministry added.

❖ Ministry of Mines recognises IISc as CoE to expedite India’s critical mineral mission

Context: The Ministry of Mines recognised the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, as one of the Centres of Excellence (CoE) under the National Critical Minerals Mission (NCMM).

- The NCMM was launched with a budget of ₹16,300 crore, and the mission aims to strengthen India’s self-reliance in critical minerals vital for clean energy, defence, and advanced technology sectors.
- The newly established CoE at IISc will set up an Integrated Critical Minerals Research and Development Facility covering the entire value chain right from exploration and extraction to processing and recycling. It will design modular pilot-scale plants using indigenous process and equipment technologies to reduce import dependence and drive sustainable growth.

Industrial solutions

- The CoE will also collaborate with industry partners through IISc’s Foundation for Science, Innovation and Development (FSID) to translate research into scalable industrial solutions, according to the IISc.
- Under this programme, the IISc would pioneer a greener lithium-ion battery recycling process, offering a sustainable alternative to the conventional black-mass route currently exported due to inefficient recovery systems. To support India’s Green Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Mission, the IISc would also recycle platinum group elements (PGEs) from spent auto catalysts, targeting up to 90% recovery efficiency through high-throughput systems integrated with PGE separation and purification technologies.
- Given the volatility in global supply chains, India’s reliance on imported rare earths and strategic minerals highlights the urgency of indigenous R&D. From toys to satellites, critical minerals underpin modern manufacturing and innovation.

Strong capabilities

- While India has built strong capabilities in semiconductors, digital infrastructure, and mobility, sustained progress depends on developing core material technologies at home.
- Omprakash Subbarao, CEO, FSID CORE at IISc, said, “This milestone marks a decisive step toward building India’s indigenous capabilities in the critical-mineral value chain right from exploration to processing and recycling.”

❖ 'Govt. committed to providing 1% quota to nomadic communities'

Context: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that the State government was committed to providing 1% reservation to nomadic communities as part of social justice.

- “The government will review and take action on how the reservation can be given. The government does not have any intention to cause injustice to the community, and the government intends to compensate everyone,” the Chief Minister told a delegation of the nomadic community that met him here.
- He said that the government has made efforts to provide internal reservation, and that the confusion around the issue will be sorted out.
- The government did not accept the recommendation of the one-man commission headed by retired judge H.N. Nagamohan Das that had recommended 1% reservation to 59 communities, including 49 microscopic communities, that are most backward. Instead, these communities were clubbed with backward communities of Lambani, Korama, Koracha, and Bhovi for a reservation matrix of 5%.
- However, the communities have argued that competition for reservation benefits is among unequals, and the nomadic communities may not be able to compete with relatively better off Lambanis and others.
- The community leaders petitioned the Chief Minister seeking a separate 1% reservation for their communities, whose numbers are about 5.2 lakh, a special financial package, and the setting up of a separate development corporation for the nomadic and semi nomadic communities.

❖ Centre allocates routes for seaplane project in Kerala

Context: The Union government has awarded 48 seaplane routes, including in Kerala, under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)-UDAN.

- Speaking, a government officer said the Centre directed Kerala to prepare a detailed project report for starting seaplane services from the Idukki dam, Malampuzha dam, Banasura Sagar dam, Mattupetty/Chenkulam dam, and Bekal. “The routes will be clear once the Centre issues a detailed government order,”.

❖ Union Health Ministry sets 3 Guinness World Records

Context: The Union Health Ministry has achieved three Guinness World Records titles under the nationwide Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan (SNSPA) campaign, according to a release issued by the Ministry.

- The records include — the most people to register for a healthcare platform in one month (over 3.21 crore), the most people to sign up for a breast cancer screening online in one week (over 9.94 lakh), and the most people to sign up for vital signs screening online in one week at the State level (over 1.25 lakh). The campaign was launched on September 17 in conjunction with Poshan Maah.

Context: The CJI-led Bench of the SC records that lawyers were not at the beck-and-call of probe agencies; it says their ability to protect their clients without fear was part of their fundamental rights.

- The Supreme Court in a judgment on Friday held that investigating agencies cannot summon lawyers and coerce them to disclose any professional communication made in confidence with their clients.
- A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai said compelling a lawyer to prejudice his or her own client, without the latter's consent or knowledge, amounted to an **"outrageous" infringement of the client's constitutional right against self-incrimination under Article 20(3) of the Constitution.**
- "The facts and circumstances of a crime committed, or an FIR registered, is not to be elicited from the advocate who represents the accused, which again is a reflection of the abject failure of the investigating agency.
- It is for the investigator to obtain independent evidence of the culpability of the accused. The position of trust the advocate occupies vis-à-vis his client cannot be put to test by an attempt to breach the professional confidence, conferred with a solemn privilege under Section 132; which has reflections of the constitutional protection against self-incrimination," Justice K. Vinod Chandran, who authored the judgment for the Bench also comprising Justice N.V. Anjaria, observed.

Lawyer-client privilege

- The judgment recorded that lawyers were not at the beck-and-call of probe agencies. Their ability to protect their clients without fear was part of their fundamental rights under **Article 19(1)(g) and Article 21 of the Constitution, coupled with the provisions of the Advocates Act, 1961.**
- The court said **lawyer-client privilege was protected in Section 132 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) of 2023, which mandates that an advocate cannot be coerced into revealing any information with respect to the client he represents or the cause he is engaged to prosecute or defend. The exceptions to this rule are clear. The confidentiality of the lawyer-client communication can be waived only with the consent of the client or if it was in furtherance of an illegal purpose or a if a crime or fraud is committed as a result.**
- The judgment was based on a suo motu case registered by the Supreme Court after two senior advocates were summoned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for legal advice they gave their clients. The Bar had risen up in unison against the ED, which had quickly withdrawn the summons. In fact, even the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General had highlighted that the such summons by investigative agencies affect a large body of advocates in the country "whose voice is the voice of the victim, the accused, the marginalised and the downtrodden".
- The court held that investigating or prosecuting agencies or the police cannot directly summon a lawyer to elicit the details of the case, unless there was something the investigating officer had knowledge of, which fell under the exceptions [of Section 132]. In such cases, the exception had to be specifically mentioned in the summons.

- The court made it clear that summons issued against a lawyer by a probe officer should be approved by a superior officer not below the rank of a Superintendent of Police, whose satisfaction has to be recorded in writing.

❖ 'Navy monitors every Chinese ship entering Indian Ocean Region'

Context: The Indian Navy is keeping a close and continuous watch on every Chinese vessel that enters the Indian Ocean Region, including naval and research ships, Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff Vice-Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan.

- “We are aware of what they are doing, when they come in, and when they go out,” he said, underscoring the Navy’s continuous surveillance of extra-regional powers operating in the region.
- In September, reports emerged of the Chinese tracking vessel Yuan Wang-5 operating in the Indian Ocean Region. The officer emphasised that the Navy remains fully alert and operationally prepared to meet any contingency.
- “At any given point of time, there are between 40 and 50 foreign ships operating in the Indian Ocean. We are aware of what they are doing, what they are likely to do, when do they come in, when they go out, etc. Challenges remain but the bottom line remains that the Indian Ocean is the main source of transit of goods and oil as far as the world is concerned,” he said.
- Vice-Admiral Vatsayan was speaking at a curtain raiser for three major international maritime events — **the International Fleet Review 2026, Exercise MILAN 2026, and the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium Conclave of Chiefs — to be held at Visakhapatnam from February 17 to 25.**
- He said 55 countries, including the U.S. and Russia, have confirmed their attendance, making it one of the largest maritime gatherings in the region. “These events align with the **MAHASAGAR vision** of inclusive maritime growth,” he noted.
- He said the Navy continues to operate under Operation Sindoor and maintains flexible deployment based on threat assessment and operational needs.

❖ Indian Railways to patronise 'Aabhar' online store in a bid to encourage local artisans

Context: In a bid to promote local talent, the Indian Railways will patronise the newly launched 'Aabhar' online store that will showcase a range of exquisite gift items manufactured by indigenous tribes, handloom weavers and others coming under the ambit of One District One Product (ODOP) and Geographical Indication (GI) products.

- The online store hosted by the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) sources gift items exclusively from the Central Cottage Industries Emporium (CCIE), Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), and various Central and State Handicraft and Handloom Emporiums.
- Promoted with the 'Vocal for Local' campaign, the store would offer a variety of articles and hampers that could be used in official events, ceremonies, and functions. The objective is to promote social inclusion and encourage local artisans and traditional industries.

Promote rich heritage

- Sharing details of the website and liaison officers to facilitate the purchase, the Railway Board referred to a note issued by the Chief Executive Officer, GeM, which stated that the purpose of the initiative was also to promote India's rich heritage through handlooms, handicrafts, artisanal goods, etc., by providing market access to local artisans, rural entrepreneurs and women-led enterprises. The GeM is aimed at supporting a sustainable and inclusive economic development.
- To provide a market for local/ indigenous products and create additional income opportunities for the marginalised sections of society, the railways launched 'One Station One Product' (OSOP) scheme over its network a few years ago where articles, like artefacts made by indigenous tribes, handlooms by local weavers, and handicrafts like chikankari were showcased.

❖ After 3 month outflows, FPIs net buy ₹14,610-cr. equities

Context: While FPIs' equity buying was a marginal increase compared with the overall selling in the calendar year, they bought debt securities worth ₹3,507 crore in the month of October.

- Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) net bought equities worth ₹14,610 crore in October after three consecutive months of selling, the strongest inflow since July this year.
- As of October 31, FPIs sold Indian equities worth ₹1.39 lakh crore, the worst number in three years. FPIs sold about ₹1.68 lakh crore in the 10-month period in calendar year (CY) 2022. The current year continues to be worse than CY2024, when global funds still net bought a marginal ₹6,593 crore. On a year-on-year basis, however, October 2025, is better than the same month last year when FPIs sold record ₹94,017 crore.
- While FPIs' equity buying was a marginal rise vis a vis overall selling in the calendar year, they bought debt securities worth ₹3,507 crore in October, making it the third consecutive month of buying.
- "The pressure on India dedicated flows continues from long-only funds, which saw a euphoric rise in flows and AUM in 2023-24. This week, long-only funds saw outflows of \$260 million and ETFs inflows of \$98 million," said Sunil Jain, VP, Elara Capital.

❖ 'H1 fiscal deficit stands at 36.5% of full-year goal'

Context: The Centre's fiscal deficit stood at 36.5% of the full-year target at the end of the first half of FY26, according to data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA).

- The **fiscal deficit was 29% of the Budget Estimates (BE) of 2024-25** in the first six months of the previous financial year.
- In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit, or gap between the government's expenditure and revenue, was ₹5,73,123 crore in the April-September period of 2025-26. The Centre estimates the fiscal deficit during 2025-26 at 4.4% of GDP, or ₹15.69 lakh crore.
- The government has received ₹17.3 lakh crore, or 49.5% of the corresponding BE 2025-26, of total receipts up to September.

- According to the CGA data, more than ₹6.31 lakh crore has been transferred to State governments as devolution of share of taxes by the Central government during the period. The total expenditure incurred by the Central government stood at about ₹23 lakh crore (45.5% of the corresponding BE 2025-26).

Spike in capex

- Aditi Nayar, chief economist at Icra, said a welcome 40% spike in capital expenditure widened the Government of India's fiscal deficit to ₹5.7 lakh crore or about 37% of the BE during the first half of the fiscal from ₹4.7 lakh crore in the year-ago period.

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

Dr. Rajkumar IAS/KAS Academy