



**DR. RAJKUMAR ACADEMY
BENGALURU**

AN INITIATIVE BY DR. RAJKUMAR FAMILY

WEEKLY NEWS COMPILATION

A CRISP AND COMPREHENSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS CAPSULE

FEBRUARY WEEK 4

23-02-2026 TO 01-03-2026

**MANIPURI FILM
BOONG CREATES
HISTORY,
SECURES FIRST
BAFTA WIN FOR
INDIA**

**INDIA AMENDS TAX
TREATY WITH
FRANCE**

**FDI RISES 18% TO
\$47.87 BN**

**U.S. SLAPS 126%
LEVY ON INDIAN
SOLAR IMPORTS**

**'KERALA' TO
BECOME
'KERALAM'**

❖ Time for nations facing tariffs to unionise: Lula

Context: Brazil's President says small countries negotiating individually with bigger ones always lose; he urges countries in the Global South to act together in negotiating with global superpowers

- Instead of negotiating with the U.S. on tariffs separately, countries should form “negotiating blocs”, Brazil’s President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said, advocating for “unionisation” of those suffering from the tariffs.
- Mr. Lula, himself a trade union leader in the 1980s before he founded Brazil’s ruling Workers Party, said that while he did not wish to comment on the internal workings of the U.S. where the Supreme Court struck down the tariffs imposed globally by U.S. President Donald Trump, he hoped that all countries would be “treated equally” by the U.S. on the issue.
- “I want to tell the U.S. President that we don’t want a new Cold War. We don’t want interference in any other country, we want all countries to be treated equally,” Mr. Lula said, answering questions from presspersons at the end of his four-day visit to Delhi.
- **Brazil and India were the two highest tariffed countries by the U.S., slapped with 50% duties on exports each, and face tariff threats from Mr. Trump over their membership of the BRICS grouping, trade with Iran, and imports of Russian oil.** Neither country has thus far concluded a trade deal with the U.S. Mr. Lula, who is expected to visit Washington next month, said he hopes to put all outstanding issues with the U.S. “on the table” for Mr. Trump.
- “When a small country negotiates with a bigger country, the agreement will always be harmful for the smaller country. This is the experience that I bring from the trade union and labour movement. To negotiate with the employer, all workers must get together and confront the company policy. If they do it individually, they all lose,” he said, likening international trade to his trade union negotiations, adding that countries in the Global South, as well as others, must “act together” in negotiating with global superpowers.
- Mr. Lula also called for **UN Security Council reforms, and in particular, seats in the Council for India, Brazil, and others.**
- “Why is India not a permanent member of the UN Security Council, a country that has 1.4 billion people? Why Brazil is not there at the UN Security Council,” he said, adding others such as Germany, Mexico, Nigeria and Egypt as well to the list. He said that as a result, the UN today does not have much efficacy. “UN is capable of making a diagnosis but it doesn’t have the capability to prescribe medication or do the treatment,” he said.
- He said India had taught him some lessons in economic management, recounting a story from his visit to India in 2005, during his previous tenure as President, when he was hosted by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

- **“It was in India in 2005 that, for the very first time, I perceived the importance of having international hard currency reserves,” he said, adding that he was impressed that India had then amassed \$100 billion in reserves. He said he had committed to do the same in Brazil, eventually building reserves of \$360 billion and Brazil moved from being a debtor to the IMF to a creditor, which he called a “transformative experience” for Brazil.**
- Mr. Lula recounted some personal memories as well, while speaking about his talks in Delhi which ended with agreements on critical mineral cooperation, steel mining and digital partnership. He said that he was touched that his favourite Brazilian songs were played during the official banquet lunch with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the dinner hosted by President Droupadi Murmu.

❖ **PM refers to export of GI-tagged Nanjangud Rasabale, Mysuru betel leaves, and Indi Lime**

Context: The Nanjangud Rasabale (bananas) and Mysuru betel leaves, which have long been enjoying a good demand in the domestic market, have now entered the Maldives market.

- About 500 kg of Nanjangud Rasabale and 250 kg of Mysuru betel leaves, known locally as Chigurele or Veelyadele, were part of the first-ever air-shipment of Karnataka’s Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged produce flagged off to Maldives, along with 500 kg Indi lemons, cultivated primarily in Vijayapura district, last month.



Mysuru betel leaves, characterised by their heart-shaped form and pungent flavour, are traditionally valued for their digestive and mouth-freshening properties. M. A. SRIRAM

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to the export of the three GI products from Karnataka during his ‘Mann Ki Baat’ on Sunday, and said these products were known for their taste and quality. He added that agricultural products were now reaching foreign countries more easily by air.
- Mr. Modi’s reference to the export of Nanjangud Rasabale, Mysuru betel leaves and Indi Lime, Deputy Director of Horticulture, Mysuru, Manjunath said the export of the GI-tagged bananas, betel leaves and lemons on a ‘trial basis’ was a significant milestone. He said the consignment had been well received by buyers in Maldives, effectively opening up an export channel. “We are optimistic and looking forward to sustained exports,” he added.
- The consignment was facilitated by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority in coordination with the Karnataka Department of Horticulture and the Indian Council for Agricultural Research). The produce was sourced directly from farmers in Mysuru and Vijayapura districts.
- “While there is steady local demand, exports will fetch better prices and strengthen farmers economically,” Mr. Manjunath said. Nanjangud Rasabale, known for its distinctive taste and texture, had faced a serious setback about eight years ago due to a disease that forced many farmers to abandon cultivation. However, sustained technical interventions and government support have helped revive the crop, with the

cultivated area expanding in recent years. At present, around 200 farmers grow Nanjangud Rasabale across nearly 250 acres, according to officials.

- Mysuru betel leaves once patronised by the erstwhile Mysore Maharajas, continue to be an integral part of auspicious occasions.
- **Indi Lime, cultivated predominantly in Indi taluk of Vijayapura district, is noted for its strong aroma and high juice content.**

❖ Manipuri film creates history; secures first BAFTA win for India

Context: India created history at the 79th British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) on Sunday with Boong, a Manipuri film directed by Lakshmipriya Devi, winning the country's first award on the prestigious stage, considered the British equivalent of the Oscars. The movie won the award in the Best Children and Family Film category.

- Boong was India's sole representation at this year's event in London, and beat high-profile and popular contenders such as Lilo & Stitch, and Zootropolis 2 (Zootopia 2), and animated science fantasy Arco. Actor and producer Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani, who backed the movie, attended the event along with Ms. Devi.



Sweet moment: Creators of Boong with their award at the 79th British Academy Film Awards in London on Sunday. AP

Manipuri film creates history; secures first BAFTA win for India

❖ Prime Minister launches full Delhi-Meerut RRTS corridor

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the remaining sections of the Namoo Bharat Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), including the 5-km stretch between Sarai Kale Khan and New Ashok Nagar in Delhi and the 21- km stretch between Meerut South and Modipuram in Uttar Pradesh. The RRTS has been integrated with the Meerut Metro, which was also launched.

- Mr. Modi said the entire 82-km corridor of the RRTS project provided a glimpse of what connectivity would look like in a developed India that used Metro rail for intra-city travel and the Namoo Bharat trains to accelerate the "twin cities" vision.
- "This integration allows commuters to travel within the city or go directly to Delhi, thus ending the compulsion for many workers and students to live in rented houses in Delhi. A unique feature of the project is the integration of Indian Railways, Metro, and bus stands at Sarai Kale Khan, Anand Vihar, Ghaziabad, and Meerut," he said.
- Talking about development in the regions, Mr. Modi said, "The government's investment in modern infrastructure, including expressways, freight corridors, and the Jewar International Airport is creating vast employment opportunities."
- Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal, speaking at the inauguration, said the proposal for two new rapid rail corridors starting from Sarai Kale Khan was expected to be approved soon.

- “One corridor is planned from Sarai Kale Khan to Karnal in Haryana, covering a distance of 125-130 km, which can be completed in about an hour and a half. Another route is proposed to connect Sarai Kale Khan with Babarpur in Haryana and Neemrana in Rajasthan,” he said.
- The Sarai Kale Khan station, the originating station of the corridor, is strategically located as a major multi-modal hub, seamlessly connecting the Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station, Delhi Metro’s Pink Line, Veer Haqeeqat Rai ISBT, and Ring Road.
- Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, commenting on the launch, said the Delhi-Meerut corridor will transform the capital’s pace of development and stimulate economic activity in the Delhi-NCR region.
- “The corridor will help passengers save time and resources, marking a historic milestone for Delhi and the surrounding region as the project is expected to ease traffic congestion and reduce carbon emissions by reducing the number of private vehicles on the roads, thereby creating a positive environmental impact,” she said.

TAS/KAS Academy



UPSC Integrated Course

ADMISSIONS OPEN

**MORNING, AFTERNOON
& EVENING BATCHES**

**Don't Miss Out!
Secure Your Spot Now!**

**Exclusive
Opportunity!
Limited Seats**



❖ 'State contributes one-fifth to India's bioeconomy'

Context: Karnataka's bioeconomy, a \$39 billion enterprise, contributes over one-fifth to the national bioeconomy and over 10% to the Gross State Domestic Product as of 2025, said a newly launched report.

- Between 2023 and 2025, the State's bioeconomy expanded from \$31 billion to \$39.2 billion, representing a cumulative rise of 26.5%; Karnataka also saw 218 new biotech start-ups being added in 2025 alone

- Karnataka's bioeconomy, a \$39 billion enterprise, contributes over one-fifth to the national bioeconomy and over 10% to the Gross

State Domestic Product (GSDP) as of 2025, observes a newly launched report. The Karnataka BioEconomy Report 2025, prepared by the Association of Biotechnology-Led Enterprises (ABLE) for the Karnataka government, was released on Monday.

Bioeconomy matters

Karnataka's bioeconomy size \$39.2 billion	Cumulative growth between 2023 and 2025 26.5%
State's contribution to India's bioeconomy 21%	Bengaluru Urban's contribution to State's bioeconomy 54%
Number of biotechnology start-ups in Karnataka 1,451	



Production-oriented

- Between 2023 and 2025, the State's bioeconomy expanded from \$31 billion to \$39.2 billion, representing a cumulative rise of 26.5%. The growth has been attributed to a robust biopharmaceutical base, rapid bioindustrial diversification, and strong bioservices integration.
- "Karnataka's innovation ecosystem — anchored in research institutions, start-ups, and global R&D centres— has transitioned from being research-heavy to production-oriented and globally competitive," reads the report, which pins the State's contribution to India's bioeconomy at 20.63%. According to the report, Karnataka's bioeconomy accounted for 10.51% of the GSDP in 2025. This is more than twice the share of the biotech sector to India's GDP (4.57%).
- "This positions biotechnology not merely a scientific discipline but as an economic pillar central to the State's development model," notes the report.

Start-up numbers

- Karnataka's biotech start-up ecosystem continued to grow, with 218 new biotech start-ups being added in 2025 alone, marking the highest annual start-up additions in three years. With this, the cumulative number of biotech start-ups in the State stands at 1,451, up from 1,233 in 2024.
- The State currently holds a 12–13% share of the national biotechnology start-up pool and more than 75% of them startups are focused on life sciences and health-tech. Bengaluru accounts for about 54% of the biotech start-ups.
- Mysuru contributes around 8.7% to the bioeconomy of the State, while Belagavi and Dakshina Kannada together account for over 9%.
- On the investment front, between January 2024 and October 2025, Karnataka attracted \$1.14 billion across around 40 deals.

Collaboration critical

- “The rapid expansion of biomanufacturing shows a sector moving decisively from research to global-scale production. Continued collaboration between government, industry and academia will be critical to sustaining Karnataka’s leadership in India’s next phase of bio-led growth,” said G.S. Krishnan, honorary president, ABLE.
- Priyank Kharge, Minister for Information Technology, Biotechnology and Rural Development, noted that biotechnology is no longer confined to laboratories, but is now a central driver of economic growth, industrial innovation and societal impact.
- “Our focus is on building a full-spectrum biomanufacturing economy by supporting deep-tech start-ups, strengthening innovation infrastructure, and ensuring that growth reaches beyond Bengaluru,” he said.

❖ Centre unveils policy to tackle terrorism threats

Context: PRAHAAR states that India faces terrorist threats on all three fronts — water, land and air; the policy adds that capacities have been developed to protect critical sectors of the economy

- The Union Home Ministry released the **country’s first-ever anti-terror policy**, emphasising that other than terror sponsored from across the border, “criminal hackers and nation states continue to target India through cyber-attacks”.
- The policy — titled PRAHAAR — has been uploaded on the Ministry’s website.
- It states that **India faces terrorist threats on all three fronts — water, land and air — and that capacities have been developed to protect critical sectors of the economy, including power, railways, aviation, ports, defence, space and atomic energy, from both state and non-state actors.**
- The Hindu first reported on December 23, 2025, that the **National Counter Terrorism Policy and Strategy** had been finalised and would be released soon.
- **The policy underlines that “India does not link terrorism to any specific religion, ethnicity, nationality or civilisation”. However, it notes that India has been affected by “sponsored terrorism” from across the border, with “Jihadi terror outfits as well as their frontal organisations” continuing to plan, coordinate, facilitate and execute terror attacks.**
- “India has been on the target of global terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and IS, which have been trying to incite violence in the country through sleeper cells,” it says, adding that extremists operating from foreign countries have hatched conspiracies to promote terrorism.



- “Their handlers from across the border frequently use the latest technologies, including the use of drones, for facilitating terror-related activities and attacks in Punjab and J&K. Increasingly, terrorist groups are engaging organised criminal networks for logistics and recruitment to execute and facilitate terror strikes in India,” the policy says.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah had announced on November 7, 2024, that a National Counter Terrorism Policy and Strategy was being drafted to fight terrorism and its ecosystem.
- Following the April 22, 2025, Pahalgam terror incident, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) conducted meetings with anti-terror units of all States and apprised them of the measures aimed at preventing and pre-empting such attacks.
- The policy further states that **for propaganda, communication, funding and guiding terror attacks, these terror groups use social media platforms as well as ‘instant messaging applications’ and technological advancements such as encryption, dark web, crypto wallets etc, enabling them to operate anonymously.**
- “Disrupting/Intercepting terrorist efforts to access and use CBRNED (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive, Digital) materials remains a challenge for Counter Terrorism (CT) agencies. The threat of state and non-state actors misusing drones and robotics for lethal purposes remains another area of concern,” it flags.
- As a way forward, the policy suggests that to make appropriate cases against the perpetrators of acts of terrorism, there is a need to associate legal experts at every stage of investigation.
- “Terrorist groups based outside (from abroad) nowadays use the infrastructure, logistics and terrain knowledge of local outfits for launching attacks. National actions, coupled with international and regional cooperation, are key elements in addressing the transnational terrorism challenge,” it emphasises.
- The MHA said Indian intelligence and law enforcement agencies have been continuously working to prevent the recruitment of Indian youth by extremist groups.
- Underscoring the role of community and religious leaders, the policy states that moderate preachers and NGOs are engaged to spread awareness about the adverse consequences and impacts of radicalisation and extremist violence.
- The Ministry said there is a move to establish a uniform anti-terrorism structure across States, as standardisation of processes and procedures would ensure similar and synergistic responses to terror attack.
- It said that the policy aims to criminalise all terrorist acts and deny access to terrorists, their financiers and supporters access to funds, weapons and safe havens.

❖ Centre allocates ₹2,245.30 crore to Karnataka under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0

Context: The Union government has allocated ₹2,245.30 crore to Karnataka under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) 2.0, with ₹83.53 crore ready to be released once the State submits a detailed action plan.

- The information was given by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in response to an issue raised in the Lok Sabha by MP for Bengaluru Central P.C. Mohan.
- According to the Ministry, out of the total ₹2,245.30 crore allocation, ₹709.30 crore has been earmarked for solid waste management. So far, projects worth ₹625.77 crore have been approved, and the State government has claimed ₹87.82 crore. An additional ₹83.53 crore will be released after the State prepares and submits a detailed action plan, gets it cleared by the State Level Technical Committee, and sends it to the Ministry for approval. Once approved, the funds must be transferred by the State government to urban local bodies for implementation.
- For Bengaluru alone, projects worth ₹512.68 crore have already been cleared, of which the Centre's share is ₹128.16 crore. These projects include material recovery facilities with a combined capacity of 1,226.11 tonnes per day to sort and process waste, waste-to-energy plants capable of handling 460 tonnes per day, and sanitary landfills with a capacity of 800 tonnes per day.
- Plans also include transfer stations that can manage 6,081.74 tonnes per day, remediation of 100.49 lakh tonnes of legacy waste, and the procurement of 24 mechanical road sweepers.
- Mr. Mohan said substantial funds have already been allocated and approvals granted by the Centre, and that timely submission of the action plan by the State would ensure release of the remaining funds and speed up the development of modern waste management infrastructure in Bengaluru.

❖ President unveils bust of Rajaji, hails move to shed 'colonial mindset'

Context: President Droupadi Murmu unveiled the bust of C. Rajagopalachari at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, hailing it as a step towards "shedding the vestiges of colonial mindset".

- The bust of **Rajaji, the only Indian Governor-General of Independent India**, has been installed at the Grand Open Staircase near Ashok Mandap and replaces that of Edwin Lutyens, the British architect who designed New Delhi.
- "This initiative is part of a series of steps being taken towards shedding the vestiges of the colonial mindset and embracing, with pride, the richness of India's culture, heritage, timeless traditions and honouring those who served Bharat Mata with their extraordinary contributions," said a statement from the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- Ms. Murmu visited the venue of Rajaji Utsav that will be open to the public from February 24 to March 1. Speaking on the occasion, she said that when Rajaji arrived at the Government House (now known as Rashtrapati Bhavan), he placed portraits of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Mahatma Gandhi in his room.

- “Rajaji sent a clear message that while India was formally still a dominion, Swaraj had been fully established in the hearts of Indians. **Thus, Rajaji set an inspiring example of mental decolonisation.** His ideals are reflected in the national campaign adopted by the people of India to take pride in India’s heritage... Indian consciousness and connection with all Indians, especially the weaker sections, are reflected in Rajaji’s thoughts and actions,” she said.
- The President said that while India moved towards “Viksit Bharat”, icons such as Rajaji would inspire people with their ideas and ideals. She called for promoting the spirit of enterprise to fulfil his dreams.

❖ WhatsApp tells SC it does not share data with Meta

Context: Will fully comply with National Company Law Appellate Tribunal directions on user consent for sharing data with parent company, it says as both challenge imposition of penalty of ₹213.14 crore

- The instant messaging platform WhatsApp maintained in the Supreme Court on Monday that it was not “quite right” to say the online entity was sharing data with other Meta platforms.
- Appearing before a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for WhatsApp and its parent company, Meta, said its technology was very clear and put a premium on privacy. “There is no question of violating the law,” Mr. Sibal submitted.
- He said the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, comprehensively addressed the privacy concerns raised in the Supreme Court.**
- The court was hearing petitions filed by Meta and WhatsApp against a National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) decision to uphold a ₹213.14-crore penalty imposed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI).
- **The CCI had found WhatsApp’s “take-it-or-leave-it” approach in its 2021 privacy policy an abuse of its market dominance.** It found the prior consent sought from users to share their data with Meta “manufactured”. It had concluded that users were forced to share data for continued access to WhatsApp messaging services.
- In an appeal last year, the **NCLAT concluded that the “core principle is to remove exploitation by restoring user choice”.**
- **“The users can be given choice if users retain the right to decide what data is collected from them, for which purposes, and for how long.** We had also stated in our findings that any non-essential collection or cross-use (like advertising etc.) can occur only with the concerned user’s express and revocable consent,” the NCLAT had observed.

Privacy message

WhatsApp submits its view before SC on user consent and sharing of data with Meta



■ WhatsApp and Meta challenge NCLAT order upholding ₹213.14-crore penalty imposed by CCI

■ Case arises from CCI findings on WhatsApp’s 2021 privacy policy

KEY ALLEGATION

■ CCI found WhatsApp’s 2021 privacy policy a ‘take-it-or-leave-it’ practice

■ Regulator said users were forced to share data with Meta to keep using the app

■ Tribunal stressed user choice and consent for non-essential data use

DEFENDING STATEMENTS

■ WhatsApp denies improper sharing, cites encryption and DPDP Act

■ Company says it will follow NCLAT directions by March 16, 2026

■ CCI argued the matter also involves competition law and consumer protection

- **WhatsApp said it would fully comply with the NCLAT directions relating to user consent for sharing data with Meta under its controversial 2021 privacy policy by March 16, 2026.** The tribunal had, however, found the CCI's five-year ban on sharing data for advertisement purposes "redundant", considering that the user had already been given a choice to opt in or out.
- WhatsApp has filed a comprehensive affidavit explaining its technology of end-to-end encryption, following scathing oral remarks from the Bench in the previous hearing on February 3.
- The Bench had cautioned that it would not permit the platform and Meta to breach the right to privacy of millions of their "silent consumers" in India through the sharing and commercial exploitation of personal data. It had even compared sharing of private data to a "decent way of committing theft". Though WhatsApp and Meta had protested that users could "opt out" of the data-sharing provision, the court had persisted in its criticism.
- Senior advocate Madhavi Goradia Divan, for CCI, said there was also a **competition law concern attached to the case.**
- "Data-sharing has many facets. One may be privacy and data protection. But there is another aspect, protecting market and consumer, which stands on a totally different footing," Ms. Divan submitted.

❖ **India amends tax treaty with France, cuts dividend tax**

- India has revised its three-decade-old tax treaty with France, which will help major French firms save millions of dollars in dividend levies, while it also broadens New Delhi's powers to tax certain transactions, the finance ministry said.
- French firms holding at least 10% in an Indian entity will now pay a 5% tax on dividends, down from 10% earlier.
- For minority French shareholdings of under 10% in Indian companies, however, dividend tax will rise from 10% to 15%.reuters

❖ **RODTEP rates cut**

- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade has amended the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products Scheme so that the rate applicable for all products shall be limited to 50% of existing rates and, where applicable, 50% of the notified value caps, with immediate effect.

❖ **What happens to India's Russian oil imports, \$500-bn U.S. import goal?**

Context: The Indian trade delegation's last-minute postponement of trip to Washington to finalise an Interim Agreement with the U.S., and the U.S. Supreme Court's order on tariffs both have implications for India's imports from Russia as well as the U.S.

- The Indian delegation was to be in the U.S. on February 23-25 to finalise the Interim Agreement, which Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said could be implemented between mid-March and early April. However, sources in the Commerce Ministry on February 22 said that the meeting will be rescheduled “at a mutually convenient date”.
- “The two sides are of the view that the proposed visit of the Indian chief negotiator and the team be scheduled after each side has had the time to evaluate the latest developments and its implications,” the official said.
- Mr. Goyal had earlier said India would be able to remove or lower tariffs for American imports only after a deal is signed. The U.S., on the other hand, could so far modify tariffs through executive orders.

No Russian oil threats

- Trade and legal experts, said U.S. SC order meant President Trump no longer had any law enabling him to levy tariffs on India if it continues buying Russian oil in large quantities.
- Without the tariff threat, India can once again reduce its purchase of the relatively expensive American oil and sour Venezuelan oil.
- “With reciprocal tariffs gone, the U.S. now does not have any law under which it can penalise India for buying Russian oil,” Ajay Srivastava, founder of the Global Trade Research Initiative and former Director General of Foreign Trade said. “Even if we were to continue our oil imports from the U.S., which have nearly doubled in the last few months, we should refrain from buying oil from Venezuela.”
- It is important to note Mr. Trump had, on February 6 itself, removed the tariffs linked to India’s import of Russian oil. As per Ramesh K. Vaidyanathan, managing partner at law firm BTG Advaya, tariffs could theoretically return, but they would need the backing of U.S. Congress.

Multiple mechanisms

- “There are multiple legal mechanisms under which he can do this, but I think what is coming to the fore is that he cannot do these through executive orders and will have to do it under legislative backing for the purpose for which they are designed.” In other words, if Mr. Trump can convince the U.S. Congress that tariffs linked to Russian oil imports are necessary, then they could return.
- An analysis by The Hindu found the value of India’s crude oil imports from Russia fell to a 38-month low in December 2025 with Russia’s share falling to less than a quarter from 34% a month ago. However, oil imports from the U.S. rose almost 31% over December 2024.
- The analysis showed India imported oil from the U.S. at an average price of \$506.7 per tonne in December 2025 or almost 8% higher than the average price of Russian oil imported that month.

Uncertainty over deal

- “India should follow a wait-and-watch approach and should see how other countries that have signed deals with the U.S. are reacting,” said Pankaj Chadha, chairman of exporter body EEPC India.

- Mr. Srivastava says the decision to postpone the Indian team’s visit to Washington could simply be an “administrative delay”.
- “There is a possibility that this delay in the Indian team’s visit to the U.S. could have been at the request of the U.S. since their officials would be under fire trying to figure out the way forward.”

Impact on imports

- A delayed Interim Agreement will also push back the date from which India will have to reduce tariffs for imports from the U.S. This can have a dual effect.
- On the one hand, local manufacturers can breathe a bit easier since they will not have to compete with duty-free U.S. imports.
- On the other several items India imports will continue to face import tariffs, thereby making them more expensive than they would have been had the deal gone through.
- Mr. Goyal had previously told The Hindu there were several items such as oil, LPG, LNG, aircraft and parts, parts for data centres and quantum computing that India needs but does not manufacture, and so would need to import.
- India’s imports of electronic parts grew 117% year-on-year to about \$2.1 billion in April-December 2025. Similarly, the import of telecom instruments rose 25% and organic chemicals by almost 34%.
- A joint statement said India intends to import \$500 billion worth of energy products, aircraft and aircraft parts, precious metals, technology products, and coking coal from the U.S. over the next 5 years.
- The European Union (EU) also said the U.S. must provide more clarity before EU Parliament can ratify the U.S.-EU deal.
- Meanwhile, Japanese officials said they won’t immediately be revisiting the deal adding, the crux of Japan’s deal with U.S. was on lowering auto-related tariffs, which stay unaffected by the U.S. SC decision.

Kpsc SADHANA
 ONE COURSE MANY KARNATAKA STATE GOVT EXAMS

ADMISSIONS OPEN

AND MANY MORE EXAMS!

RTO/MVI, CTI, PSI, REVENUE INSPECTOR, ASST. ENGINEER, SUB-REGISTRAR, EXCISE SI, AO/AAO, STASTICAL INSPECTOR, ACCOUNTS ASST., FDA/SDA, PDO

General Studies
 DON'T MISS OUT! SECURE YOUR SPOT TODAY!

Communication Paper
 GENERAL KANNADA, GENERAL ENGLISH, COMPUTER AWARENESS

PSI Paper 1
 ESSAY, TRANSLATION, PRECISE WRITING

WALK-IN FOR FREE COUNSELING TODAY!

❖ Govt. to roll out free HPV vaccination programme

Context: The Union Health Ministry is set to launch a nation-wide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme targeting girls aged 14.

- The vaccination will be **voluntary and free of cost**, ensuring equitable access across socio-economic groups.
- **India will use Gardasil, a quadrivalent HPV vaccine, for protection from HPV types 16 and 18, which cause cervical cancer, and types 6 and 11.**
- “Global and Indian scientific evidence confirms that a single dose provides robust and durable protection when administered to girls in the recommended age group,” a senior Health Ministry official said.
- “The nation-wide programme will target girls aged 14 years, an age at which the HPV vaccine offers maximum preventive benefit, well before potential exposure to the virus,” the official said.
- To ensure uninterrupted availability and quality, India has secured HPV vaccine supplies through a transparent, globally supported procurement mechanism.
- “Under India’s partnership with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Gardasil vaccines, which are approved by India’s drug regulator and widely used internationally, have been made available for the national programme. The procurement follows stringent quality and cold chain standards, enabling the government to provide the vaccine free of cost to eligible girls across all States and Union Territories,” the official said.
- **HPV vaccination under the national programme** will be conducted exclusively at designated government health facilities, including the Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (Primary Health Centres), Community Health Centres, Sub-District and District Hospitals, and Government Medical Colleges.
- Each vaccination session will be carried out in the presence of trained medical officers, supported by skilled healthcare teams, and equipped for post-vaccination observation and management of any rare adverse events.
- Cervical cancer remains the second most common cancer among women in India, with nearly 80,000 new cases reported annually.

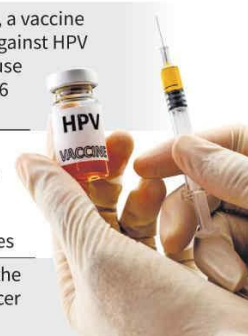
Safety shot

The Centre’s nation-wide HPV vaccination programme targeting girls aged 14 will begin soon

■ A single-shot of Gardasil, a vaccine that provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18, which cause cervical cancer, and types 6 and 11 will be used

■ The vaccination will be voluntary and free of cost. It will be administered exclusively at designated government health facilities

■ Cervical cancer remains the second most common cancer among women in India



❖ Asha Kirana initiative reaches 1.4 cr. people across Karnataka

Context: 393 permanent vision centres have been established across district hospitals, taluk hospitals, and community health centres as part of the initiative to strengthen institutional services.

- The State Health Department’s flagship eye-care initiative, Asha Kirana, redesigned with the objective of eliminating preventable visual impairment, has facilitated free eye screenings for 1.4 crore people through ASHA workers since its launch in July last year.

393 vision centres

- To tackle preventable blindness, the Health Department expanded and restructured the Asha Kirana programme under the National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment (NPCBVI).
- As part of this initiative to strengthen institutional services, 393 permanent Asha Kirana vision centres have been established across district hospitals, taluk hospitals, and community health centres.

Cataract surgeries

- Launched simultaneously on July 3, 2025, the centres provide comprehensive eye-care services, including vision screening, free distribution of spectacles, free cataract surgeries, and eye donation and collection services.
- While 1.4 crore people have been screened in these centres so far, over 2.91 lakh people have been provided free spectacles. A total of 4,19,972 cataract surgeries have been performed till January 2026, of which 58,582 were conducted in government hospitals and 3,61,390 in private hospitals, according to data.
- Aimed at increasing awareness and access to eye health services, particularly targeting cataracts and uncorrected refractive errors — the two major causes of vision impairment in the country — the programme was earlier carried out through doorstep screenings by ASHA workers and field staff from the department on a campaign mode. However, under the redesigned programme, people can visit the vision centres in public health facilities at their convenience and get screened for eye problems.
- This ensures continuous and accessible services, officials said.

WHO recognition

- Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said the initiative has emerged as a source of hope for economically disadvantaged individuals who have lost vision due to various health conditions.
- “The **World Health Organisation (WHO) has commended the programme, granting it global recognition.** The WHO has also expressed interest in documenting the Asha Kirana model to examine the possibility of replicating the comprehensive eye-care framework in other States and countries,”.

❖ Now, khata changes for farmlands can be done through mobile phones

Context: The Karnataka government launched an auto-mutation system that facilitates farmland owners to effect changes in khatas from their mobiles without visiting Revenue offices.

- Though this method was in force since 2024, it was confined to only instances where there was no need to issue notices. The new initiative would now allow changes in all instances to be made to khatas online.
- Launching the system, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said applications under this facility could be made through the Bhoomi portal. There will be a notice period of seven days for general cases, during which objections could be filed by anyone through this portal. The khata would be changed automatically on the eight day if no objections were filed.

- However, the notice period would stretch for 15 days for cases that seek changes in khata owing to reasons other than registration. Even in these cases, the change would be automatically effected on the 16th day if there are no objections, he noted.
- The Minister pointed out that people had to face a lot of inconvenience earlier during the process of effecting changes to khatas as they had to physically visit Revenue offices. The indifferent attitude of some officials and the role of middlemen too had complicated the process, he noted. However, the new system would make the process very easy and simple. This would also help Revenue inspectors as their workload would also reduce, he explained.
- The Revenue Minister appealed to people to link their Aadhaar with the RTCs (Records of Rights, Tenancy and Crops) to strengthen their ownership rights by preventing the illegal transaction of their properties.
- He explained that linking Aadhaar with RTCs would help landowners as they would get alert messages if there are any changes in the RTCs. The owners would also get alerts if any court order is mentioned in their RTCs or other names are added to the records. This would help prevent illegal transactions, he said.

❖ Union Cabinet nod for 'Kerala' to become 'Keralam'

Context: The Kerala Assembly passed a resolution seeking name change on June 2024. The Union Cabinet approved the Kerala government's proposal to change the State's name from 'Kerala' to 'Keralam', the name used in the Malayalam language.

- The President will now refer the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026, to the Kerala Legislative Assembly to express its views, under the proviso to Article 3 of the Constitution of India, a government statement said.
- Once these views are received, the Union government will take further action to obtain the President's recommendation to introduce the name change legislation in Parliament.
- The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at its first gathering at Seva Teerth, the new complex housing the Prime Minister's Office.
- The move comes almost two years after the Kerala Assembly passed a resolution seeking the name change.
- The resolution, dated June 24, 2024, said: "The name of our State is 'Keralam' in Malayalam Language. States were formed on the basis of language on the 1st day of November, 1956. The Kerala Piravi Day is also on the 1st day of November. Since the time of national independence struggle, there has been a strong demand for the formation of United Kerala for the people speaking Malayalam language.
- But in the First Schedule to the Constitution the name of our State is recorded as 'Kerala'. This Assembly unanimously appeal to the Central Government to take urgent steps as per Article 3 of the Constitution for modifying the name as 'Keralam'."
- The matter was considered in the Ministry of Home Affairs and, with the approval of Minister Amit Shah, the draft note was circulated to the Department of Legal Affairs and the Legislative Department of the Ministry of Law and Justice, for their comments. These departments concurred with the proposal to change the name.

❖ Amid DoT push, WhatsApp appears to test SIM-binding

Context: The online messaging platform WhatsApp appears to be preparing to comply with the SIM-binding directive of the Department of Telecommunications issued late last year.

- The directive requires messaging platforms to ensure that a user's registered SIM card is provisioned on the handset used to access the service, and to disable access if it is not. It also includes a potentially disruptive requirement that web-based instances, such as WhatsApp Web, be logged out every six hours.
- The directions were issued on November 28, 2025, by the DoT's AI & Digital Intelligence Unit, under its expanded authority to regulate Telecommunication Identifier User Entity (TIUE) — defined as any online service that uses a phone number as an identifier.
- Meta, WhatsApp's parent company, had pushed back through industry bodies it is a part of, including the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), arguing that the measures could cause “hurdles to the modern communication habits such as use of international numbers during travel [or] secondary devices”.

Beta version

- In the latest beta versions of WhatsApp, code references to the SIM-binding directions have been detected. A Meta spokesperson declined to comment on the development, while a DoT spokesperson did not immediately respond to queries on whether the direction would come into force this month as originally ordered.
- The new code, discovered by WABetaInfo — an independent blog which tracks changes in WhatsApp's code often much before public rollout — includes a prompt on the sign-in screen saying, “Due to regulatory requirements in India, WhatsApp needs to check that your SIM card is in your device.”

❖ SC declines plea to remove Aadhaar from SIR document list, cites RP Act

Context: The Supreme Court refused to alter a September 2025 order to use Aadhaar in the special intensive revision (SIR) process, saying the Representation of the People Act continues to endorse the 12-digit unique identity number as an identity proof for citizens.

- A Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi said petitioner-advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay should take his apprehensions that fake Aadhaar cards were manufactured on an “industrial scale” in the border areas to the Union government.
- The top court made it clear that as long as the Representation of the People Act included Aadhaar as a proof of identity, the court had no choice but to follow the law.
- Section 23 of the Representation of the People Act of 1950 notes that a person could furnish his Aadhaar number to the Electoral Registration Officer for the purpose of establishing identity.

- “You make a representation to the Union government to amend the Representation of the People Act... This cannot be a discussion before our forum always. If, as you say, Aadhaar has been fraudulently procured on an industrial scale, then it requires to be statutorily regulated...” Justice Bagchi addressed Mr. Upadhyay.
- Mr. Upadhyay said that “whenever there are Bangladeshis or Rohingya captured by the police, the Aadhaar cards found on them are from Bengal”.
- Chief Justice Kant said the issue was serious, though it was pressed before the wrong forum, the court, instead of the government.
- Earlier, too, the court had objected to an argument that Aadhaar must be dropped from the list of documents that electors were allowed to use for the purpose of identity verification during the SIR.
- Mr. Upadhyay, on that occasion, had argued that Aadhaar was easily forged and could be sourced through private agencies.
- “Do you know that a passport is also outsourced to a private agency under the auspices of the Government of India? These private service centres [through which Aadhaar enrolments and updates may be done] operate under the statutory authorities or the government itself. Aadhaar is a public document. Any document can be forged. Even a passport can be forged...,” Justice Bagchi had remarked.

❖ Centre approves construction of 5,000 houses for people displaced by Manipur violence

Context: The Union government has approved the construction of 5,000 houses for the rehabilitation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Manipur.

- These houses will be built according to the framework of implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin, the office of Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh.
- The Manipur government had earlier submitted a proposal seeking a special project under PMAY-G for IDPs affected by the recent law and order crisis. The ethnic conflict in Manipur began on May 3, 2023. According to government estimates, nearly 62,000 persons have been displaced from their homes with many of them living in relief camps.
- The proposal was approved for the financial year 2025-26 after the Chief Minister met with Union Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at his residence in New Delhi on February 23.
- The Union Rural Development Ministry also approved a special window of the Awaas+ 2024 household survey to capture the details of eligible affected households. The Awaas+ survey is a digital initiative to identify and include eligible rural households for housing assistance that were missed in the previous Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011.

❖ Modi's Israel visit faces headwinds

Context: Netanyahu's plans to announce a 'hexagonal alliance' with India, Greece, Cyprus, and some unnamed countries against 'both radical Sunni and Shia axes' will be watched closely by those likely to feel targeted, including Iran, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, all of which have complex ties with India.

- As Prime Minister Narendra Modi prepares for a standalone visit to Israel to upgrade bilateral relations, its timing faces geopolitical headwinds.
- While defence and security, labour and trade, AI and technology, and IMEC project connectivity will be at the top of the agenda for his meetings with Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the outcomes will go beyond bilateral agreements to their symbolism and the message they send to the wider West Asian region.
- Over the course of the 24-hour visit from Wednesday, most of the engagements planned will see the leaders together. Mr. Netanyahu will receive Mr. Modi at the airport in Tel Aviv, and they are expected to travel together to Jerusalem.
- Apart from bilateral talks and press statements, they will attend a private dinner, an innovation event, a visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial museum, and possibly a meeting with the diaspora in Israel, billed as an interaction with the “Indian-Jewish” community settled there. Mr. Modi will address the Knesset.

‘Hexagonal alliance’

- In particular, Mr. Netanyahu’s plans to announce a “hexagonal alliance” with India, Greece and Cyprus, and some unnamed Arab, African and Asian countries against “both radical Sunni and Shia axes”, will be watched closely by those countries seen to be targeted, including Iran, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, each of which has historical and complex ties with India.
- Any announcements on trilateral cooperation between India, the UAE and Israel during the visit will also have an impact in the region, where UAE-Saudi tensions are rising.
- “The intention here is to create an axis of nations that see eye-to-eye on the reality, challenges, and goals against the radical axes, both the radical Shia axis, which we have struck very hard, and the emerging radical Sunni axis,” Mr. Netanyahu told his cabinet while announcing Mr. Modi’s visit.
- The comments came just as U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee said in an interview that it “would be fine” if Israel were to take control of most of the biblical Middle-East or West Asia, leading commentators to draw a link between the remarks.
- To travel to Tel Aviv, Mr. Modi will also have to navigate U.S. President Donald Trump’s threats to attack Iran, both literally and figuratively, amid a U.S. military build-up and withdrawal of personnel from key bases across West Asia.
- While attacks do not appear likely this week, given Iran-U.S. talks, it must be remembered that U.S. strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities in June 2025 took place even as negotiations were ongoing. Facing questions over India’s travel advisory asking citizens in Iran to leave the country, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said that the Prime Minister’s security would be ensured in the event of bombardment of Iran.
- However, New Delhi would also have to consider the optics of being caught in the crossfire between Iran and Israel, just as Mr. Modi will be standing shoulder to shoulder with Mr. Netanyahu.
- The visit could affect India’s ties with Iran directly, a country that borders South Asia and has long offered India energy and connectivity options. In deference to Mr. Trump’s sanctions, the Modi government stopped importing Iranian oil in 2017.

- Trade and investment declined subsequently, and more recently development of the Chabahar port terminal has been curtailed. In January, New Delhi put off the scheduled visit of Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. Later this year, New Delhi is expected to host the BRICS summit, where Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian will be invited.
- Mr. Modi's visit, the first since the two-year Israeli war on Gaza in which more than 70,000 were killed, also coincides with Israel's plans to extend control over more territories under the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, which has sparked international condemnation.
- India was hesitant to join a statement at the United Nations, eventually signed by 100 countries criticising Israel's violations of international law over the plans, and the Indian mission signed it a day after it was announced at a joint press conference by dozens of diplomats.
- When asked last week, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson blamed the Palestinian mission and others for proceeding too early with a statement that was not "jointly negotiated".
- However, the government did not explain why it delayed, while many countries signed immediately. Mr. Modi's talks with Mr. Netanyahu will also be crucial, given the U.S. "Board of Peace" plans for reconstruction, administration and peacekeeping of the Gaza Strip, and India's decision to participate as an observer.

❖ **Committee to probe repeated failures of PSLV, says ISRO**

Context: The panel members consist of experts who are external to the ISRO, and they will submit their findings to ISRO Chairman; the panel will look into the process of manufacture, procurement.

- A committee that includes K. Vijay Raghavan, former Principal Scientific Adviser, and S. Somanath, former Chairman, India Space Research Organisation (ISRO), will probe "systemic issues" underlying the successive failures of the ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).
- While technical committees probe and submit 'failure analysis reports' when mishaps occur, this committee, The Hindu has reliably learnt, will investigate questions on whether "organisational" problems may have played a role in the debacles involving the PSLV.
- On January 12, the PSLV-C62 failed in its mission to deliver 16 satellites into orbit, and crashed into the sea after the third stage of the rocket failed to ignite. This was similar to the May 18, 2025 failure of the PSLV-C61, in which, too, the third stage failed to fire, destroying as a result the EOS-09 satellite intended for the government's strategic needs.
- The committee members consist of experts who are external to the ISRO, and are expected to table their findings to ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan before April. On February 3, The Hindu reported that National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, who is also a member of India's Space Commission, visited the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, reportedly in connection with the failure of the PSLV-C62 mission.

- “A national-level expert committee has been constituted and is reviewing the reason for the anomaly in the PSLV vehicle,” the ISRO said in a statement to The Hindu.
- The PSLV’s failures would be the core focus of the report, and the committee would be looking into the processes in the manufacture, procurement, and assembling of various components of the rocket.

Report in a week

- India’s space ecosystem now involves several private companies and, therefore, the probe will not only be about which part or component failed, and who was responsible, but also whether there is a process in place to fix accountability, and how it may be improved. A technical committee of the ISRO will first table a report on the PSLV-C62 incident this week, The Hindu has learnt through reliable sources.
- The ISRO’s historical response to rocket failures has been to have a Failure Analysis Committee probe the reasons, and publicise its findings. This, however, has not taken place in the case of both the PSLV-C61 and PSLV-C62.
- The Failure Analysis Committee report of the May 18 mishap was sent to the Prime Minister’s Office before the PSLV-C62 launch, but its details have not been made public.
- The Failure Analysis Committee, constituted by the ISRO Chairman, is a body of experts within ISRO to lead in the event of a major incident. It is expected to reconstruct the chain of events leading up to a failure, and recommend corrective action before the rocket is cleared to fly again. The committee members include experts within ISRO as well as relevant experts from academia.
- At a press conference on February 2, the Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, and Earth Sciences, Jitendra Singh, said that a “third party appraisal” was ongoing.

❖ ₹9,072 cr. for three railway projects for various States

Context: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved three multi-tracking railway projects at a cost of ₹9,072 crore.

- The projects include the construction of a second line on the Gondia (Maharashtra)-Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh) section and the addition of third and fourth lines between Punarakh and Kiul in Bihar, and between Gamharia and Chandil in Jharkhand.
- Spanning a total length of 307 km, the three projects are aimed at decongesting these busy sections. The proposed works are expected to enhance connectivity to nearly 5,407 villages, and improve rail connectivity to several prominent tourist destinations, including Kachnar Shiv Temple, Kanha National Park (Balaghat), and Pench National Park, among others.
- According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, the projects are being undertaken under the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan and aims to enhance multi-modal connectivity and logistics efficiency through integrated planning.

Context: Prime Minister addresses the Israeli parliament as he begins visit to the West Asian country; India has an uncompromising policy of zero tolerance for terrorism with no double standard, he adds

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his address to the Knesset on Wednesday, extended a firm hand of friendship to Israel and condemned the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023 as a “barbaric terrorist attack”.
- Speaking at the Israeli parliament, the Prime Minister supported the Gaza Peace Initiative saying it was necessary to “sustain” the process of peace building in the region.
- “The Gaza Peace Initiative that was endorsed by the UN Security Council offers a pathway. India has expressed its firm support for the initiative... We believe that it holds the promise of a just and durable peace for all the people of the region, including by addressing the Palestine issue,” he said.

Bilateral relations

- Mr. Modi said India and Israel were working to enhance bilateral relations across sectors such as water management, agriculture, and talent partnership, adding that he had discussed “key developments” in the region with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.
- “I also carry with me the deepest condolences of the people of India for every life lost and for every family whose world was shattered in the barbaric terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7,” said Mr. Modi, adding that India stands with Israel “firmly, with full conviction”.
- In his second visit to Israel as Prime Minister, Mr. Modi reminded the members of the Knesset about India’s own struggle against terrorism and cited the 26/11 terror attack in Mumbai that killed citizens of India as well as multiple other countries, including Israel.
- “Like you, we have a consistent and uncompromising policy of zero tolerance for terrorism, with no double standard,” the Prime Minister said.
- Mr. Modi said India had supported Israel’s attempts to build friendly ties with the countries in West Asia and North Africa and said Israeli moves to build relationships with Arab countries under the Abraham Accords, showed “courage and vision”.
- “Since then, the situation has changed significantly. The path is even more challenging. Yet it is important to sustain that hope,” he said.
- Mr. Modi referred to India’s ties with the Jewish community as rooted in ancient trade and movement of people, and said there is “great admiration of Israel’s resolve, courage and achievements” in India. He also talked about the absence of discrimination against the Jewish community in India and specifically referred to the historic Jewish communities in Kerala, West Bengal, and Maharashtra.
- The Prime Minister said India is committed to expanding trade with Israel and informed that both sides are working on it through “cross-border financial linkages” using “Digital Public Infrastructure”. He said the two sides are also working on an ambitious Free Trade Agreement and said this will “unlock the vast untapped potential in our trade relationship”.

- Earlier, welcoming the Prime Minister to the Knesset, Mr. Netanyahu said Mr. Modi “did not flinch” and that under his leadership India provided support to Israel in the challenging times over the recent past. “You stood for Israel. You stood for the Jews. Thank you,” said Mr. Netanyahu.

❖ Gruha Arogya scheme to be expanded to GBA areas soon

Context: With the proposed rollout, the Health Department aims to replicate the rural model in urban areas, The State government will soon expand Gruha Arogya to Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) areas, marking a major step towards strengthening urban public health delivery.

- Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao and Principal Secretary (Health) Harsh Gupta on Wednesday discussed the expansion at a meeting with Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar. The deliberations focused on strategies to adapt and scale up the successful rural healthcare initiative to urban settings.
- Gruha Arogya has recorded significant success in rural Karnataka, with dedicated health workers reaching over 35 lakh families and screening more than 1 crore people for 14 major non-communicable diseases. The programme has emerged as a model for doorstep preventive healthcare, with officials citing encouraging public response and measurable improvements in early detection. With the proposed rollout of Gruha Arogya 2.0 in GBA regions, the Health Department aims to replicate the rural model in urban areas, ensuring systematic household outreach, timely screening, and continuity of care. It seeks to shift the focus of public health from reactive treatment to proactive prevention, Mr. Rao said.

❖ State launches free prophylaxis treatment for haemophilia patients

Context: In a significant step toward improving the quality of life for those with rare genetic blood disorders, the Karnataka government launched the ‘Kusuma Sanjeevini’ programme. Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao inaugurated the programme.

- The initiative is aimed at providing high-end prophylactic treatment and emergency transport services free of cost to haemophilia patients across the State.

Treatment protocol

- Haemophilia, a rare inherited disorder where blood fails to clot normally due to a deficiency in coagulation factors VIII or IX, has long forced patients into a gruelling treatment cycle. Traditionally, patients required intravenous factor replacement therapy two-three times a week for life – a process that is particularly painful for children with difficult venous access.
- Under the new scheme, the State is introducing Emicizumab, a non-factor monoclonal antibody. Unlike traditional infusions, this drug is administered subcutaneously (under the skin) just once a month. Results from a pilot group of 200 patients showed “zero bleeds” over a year, suggesting the drug could effectively prevent the joint deformities and physical disabilities common in chronic cases.

- With this rollout, Karnataka becomes the first large State in South India, after Kerala, to implement a prophylactic programme of this scale. “By moving to a monthly subcutaneous dose, we are helping these patients, especially children, return to the mainstream of society, allowing them to attend school and play like their peers,” the Health Minister said during the launch.
- The State has sanctioned ₹42.55 crore for the programme, with ₹17 crore specifically dedicated to the procurement of the new drug. While the annual cost of treatment for a single patient can reach ₹5 lakh, the government will provide it entirely free of charge. Currently, 2,621 haemophilia cases are registered in Karnataka, including 2,089 with Haemophilia-A. The State has identified 1,000 high-risk patients to be transitioned to this new prophylactic regimen immediately.

Free transport

To further ease the burden on families, the government launched a dedicated 108 ambulance “pick-up and drop” service. Given that bleeding episodes can quickly become life-threatening, these ambulances will ensure rapid transport to any of the 36 Integrated Treatment Centres for Hemoglobinopathies and Haemophilia (ICHH) located across the State.

❖ U.S. slaps 126% levy on Indian solar imports

Context: Tariffs were slapped on India, Indonesia and Laos following an ongoing probe; In FY23, India exported \$1 billion worth photovoltaics to the U.S.

- The Trump administration slapped 126% levy on solar cell imports from India following a ‘preliminary’ determination that subsidised exports from Indian firms were hurting the competitiveness of U.S. solar firms and contravened World Trade Organization agreements on subsidies.
- The tariffs were collectively imposed on February 24 on India, Indonesia and Laos following a probe by the U.S. Department of Commerce on a complaint by the Alliance for American Solar Manufacturing and Trade, a coalition of leading U.S. solar firms.
- Indian firms under the U.S. Commerce Ministry’s radar included Mundra Solar Energy Pvt. Ltd. and Mundra Solar PV Ltd. — both part of Adani Group — Premier Energies Photovoltaic Private Ltd., Waaree Energies Ltd. and Waaree Solar Americas. The department set initial rates of 86%-143% for Indonesia and 81% for Laos.

Framework deal

- This levy comes after New Delhi and Washington agreed on a framework for the India-U.S. trade deal to cut tariffs on India’s exports to 18% from 50% earlier. After this, the U.S. Supreme Court quashed Trump tariffs, calling them unconstitutional. President Trump then came up with a new 15% baseline duty on several imports.
- On February 24, per a notice on the U.S. Commerce Ministry site, it was Adani firms that were specifically named with a duty rates of 125.87% though these rates, as of now, apply to all Indian exporters.

May be impacted

- The Hindu didn't receive comments from the firms as of press time. However, given the U.S. is the biggest export destination for solar parts, Indian exports could likely be 'impacted.'
- The implications of the order were still being studied, a spokesperson for Solex Energy Ltd., a Surat-based solar firm told The Hindu.
- "There will be an impact as the U.S. is a major export destination. How much... still needs to be determined. Some months sees a surge in exports and less in others, so it could well be, we won't see an impact beyond the immediate quarter," the person explained.
- Currently duties of up to 40% are imposed on such export of solar cells.
- These duties are additional to existing tariffs. The final determination in the CVD investigations are now scheduled to be issued on July 6, 2026. The U.S. Commerce Department is conducting concurrent anti-dumping duty probe of solar cells from India, Indonesia and Laos.
- According to data cited by U.S. authorities, Indian firms in 2022 exported 232 mega watts (MW) worth of solar cells which rose to 2049 MW in 2023 and 2297 MW in 2024.
- In 2022-23 \$1,000 million worth photovoltaics were exported and that rose to \$1,939.92 million in 2023-24. Exports stood at \$954 million in April-December 2025.

❖ What are carbon capture and utilisation technologies?

Context: How can such technologies reduce carbon dioxide emissions? What is the EU Bioeconomy Strategy and Circular Economy Action Plan? How can India scale-up CCU technology?

- Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) refers to a set of technologies that capture carbon dioxide emissions from industrial sources or directly from the air and convert them into useful products.
- This process removes carbon from the atmosphere and puts it into the economy as inputs for fuels, chemicals, building materials, or polymers. Unlike carbon capture and storage, where captured CO₂ is permanently stored underground rather than reused, CCU uses up the captured carbon.

Why does India need CCU?

- India has consistently been the world's third-largest emitter of CO₂, with emissions driven largely by power generation, cement, steel, and chemicals. While renewable energy may reduce future emissions, many industrial processes are inherently carbon-intensive and difficult to decarbonise.
- CCU offers a pathway to reduce emissions from these "hard-to-abate" sectors while simultaneously creating new industrial value chains. It also aligns with India's net-zero target for 2070 and its push to build a circular, low-carbon economy.

Where does India stand today?

- India has begun supporting CCU through research funding from the Department of Science and Technology which has created a specific research and development roadmap for these technologies.

- The draft 2030 roadmap for Carbon Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) presented by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural gas has identified projects that can be used for CCUS purposes. In the private sector, Ambuja Cements (Adani Group) is working on an Indo-Swedish CCU pilot with IIT Bombay to convert captured CO₂ into fuels and materials.
- JK Cement is collaborating on a CCU testbed to capture CO₂ for applications such as lightweight concrete blocks and olefins. Beyond cement, Organic Recycling Systems Limited (ORSL) is leading India's first pilot-scale Bio-CCU platform, valorising CO₂ from biogas streams into bio-alcohols and specialty chemicals.

What are other countries doing?

- The EU Bioeconomy Strategy and Circular Economy Action Plan explicitly supports CCU as a way to turn CO₂ into feedstocks for chemicals, fuels, and materials, linking it to circularity and sustainability targets.
- ArcelorMittal and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. are working with a climate tech company, D-CRBN, to trial a new technology to convert CO₂ captured at ArcelorMittal's plant in Gent, Belgium into carbon monoxide which can be used in steel and chemical production.
- The U.S. uses a combination of tax credits and funding to scale CCUs, particularly for CO₂-derived fuels and chemicals. The UAE's Al Reyadah project and planned CO₂-to-chemicals hubs leverage CCU with green hydrogen.

What are the risks ahead?

- The foremost risk in scaling CCU in India is cost competitiveness. Capturing, purifying, and converting CO₂ is energy-intensive and expensive. Without policy incentives, CCU-derived products will struggle to compete with cheaper, fossil-based alternatives.
- A second risk lies in infrastructure readiness. CCU requires co-located industrial clusters, reliable transport of CO₂, and integration with downstream manufacturing, all of which are unevenly developed across Indian industrial regions.
- Finally, the absence of clear standards, certification, and market signals creates uncertainty for investors and limits demand for CO₂-derived products.
- India has taken positive steps through the development of roadmaps to achieving CCU, and their appropriate implementation will be necessary for achieving India's goals.

❖ IIA uses radio telescope, Aditya-L1 satellite payload to make key solar observation

Context: Astronomers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have made observations of shocks driven by coronal mass ejections (CMEs) from the Sun by using its Gauribidanur radio telescope and Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC) payload onboard Aditya-L1 satellite.

Thunder-like noise

- A **sonic boom** is a thunder-like noise that occurs when the speed of an aircraft traveling through the air faster than the speed of sound.
- Similarly, fast CMEs from the Sun drive shocks near the Earth leading to space weather disturbances. “These shocks are primarily driven by the same set of CMEs, all the way from near the Sun through the interplanetary space. Shocks near the Sun are the birth stage of the shocks observed near Earth. The characteristic signatures of the shocks near the Sun are intense transient emission observed primarily with ground-based radio telescopes at low frequencies, typically <150 MHz,” the IIA team said.
- The IIA operates a radio telescope in the above frequency range, at the Gauribidanur radio observatory, located about 100 km north of Bengaluru. It is presently the only low-frequency radio telescope for dedicated observations of the Sun.
- The team said that with the launch of VELC, built by IIA, it has become possible to identify the CMEs that give rise to the shocks, particularly near the Sun and in the visible wavelength range. Combining data obtained with the Gauribidanur radio facility and VELC, the VELC team at IIA has precisely estimated the onset distance of the shock due to the CME that occurred on May 27, 2024. It is approximately 130,000 km from the Sun. The shock driven by the CME propagated at a speed of approximately 1,700 km per second near the Sun.
- Prof. R. Ramesh, senior professor at IIA and principal investigator of the VELC project, said that this is the closest distance from the Sun at which a CME driven shock and the associated radio transient have been observed unambiguously as on date.
- Prof. Ramesh, who is handling the operations in the Gauribidanur facility, added that the present result would not have been possible but for the unique low-frequency observing capability of the Gauribidanur radio telescope and the possibility to observe the near-Sun solar corona with the VELC. The results will appear soon in the Journal of Astrophysics and Astronomy, a leading international journal.
- Dr. C. Kathiravan, lead author of the publication, said continuous and coordinated observations of the Sun with Gauribidanur facilities and VELC during the current maximum phase of the ongoing sunspot cycle 25, as well as beyond, are expected to identify CME driven shocks as close as thirty thousand kilometers from the Sun.

Context: The Karnataka Policy and Planning Commission and the Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission have argued against 'automatic' replacement of retiring staff; their reports were submitted to the government in recent months.

- The protest by aspirants for public employment in Dharwad seems to have put the ruling dispensation under pressure, while about 36% of the sanctioned posts in the State government are currently lying vacant. The Opposition has been quick to seize the opportunity and extend support to the protesting candidates.
- While the State government's current predicament comes around the confusion and judicial intervention in the internal reservation issue that has stalled recruitment for nearly a year now, two key commissions — reports of which were submitted to the government in recent months — have cautioned the government against "automatic" replacement of retiring staff.

Planning panel report

- The Karnataka Policy and Planning Commission, headed by B.R. Patil, which submitted its report recently, is learnt to have cautioned the government against filling up existing vacancies on "as-is" basis, especially in the faculty recruitment for Karnataka's higher education system. Of the 24,788 posts in higher education, 13,599 are currently vacant and the government has sanctioned filling up of 2,000 posts.
- The education sub-committee in the commission is learnt to have pointed out that hiring without re-thinking higher education's future runs the risk of misalignment with rapidly evolving economy, which is being driven by Artificial Intelligence, automation, and emerging industries. The sub-committee, sources said, was not against recruitment and also acknowledged significant shortage of teaching staff across government degree colleges and State universities.
- "Technological shifts such as AI, digitisation, and new labour models, have reduced the market's reliance on generic degrees. Many traditional degree programmes across social sciences, humanities, and general sciences were historically valued for symbolic degree capital rather than job-linked competence," the source explained.
- Further, the source said: "Sanctioned faculty posts reflect older disciplinary boundaries, curriculum modes, and staffing patterns. A blind recruitment exercise has the risk of locking public resources into outdated programme architecture that may no longer serve societal or economic priorities."

Automatic replacement

- Meanwhile, though the second Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission headed by R.V. Deshpande identified 2.94 lakh vacant posts as against the sanctioned strength of 8.16 lakh in the State, it also cautioned against automatic replacement of retiring staff and has called for periodic review of sanctioned posts, besides abolition of redundant and obsolete posts.

- Interestingly, in the Backward Classes Welfare Department, the ARC identified 240 BE graduates, 180 MTech graduates, and about 2,000 MCA/BBA/BCA graduates working as kitchen and allied staff, revealing the desperation for government job. A significant number of BE/ MTech/MCA graduates are working as first division and second division clerks or junior assistants.
- Though it has recommended recruitment in a time-bound manner, the ARC also asked the government to review posts to justify afresh with current relevance and necessity.

❖ India's security interests linked to stability in West Asia: Modi

Context: India and Israel to work closely for the implementation of IMEC, I2U2 projects; PM's visit concluded with a joint statement that described bilateral ties as 'special strategic partnership'; tensions between Iran, U.S. came up for discussion, Misri says.

- India's security interests are "directly linked" to peace and stability in the West Asian region and that is why India has consistently sought a resolution of West Asian regional tensions through peaceful means, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in Israel.
- After holding talks with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem, Mr. Modi said the two sides had decided to work closely for the implementation of the India Middle East Economic Corridor (IMEC) and the I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA) projects.
- "Peace and stability in West Asia are directly linked to India's security interests. Therefore, from the very beginning, we have supported dialogue and a peaceful resolution of issues. This is the call of the Global South and of humanity as a whole," said Mr. Modi in his speech laying out India's position on the tense situation that is prevailing in the Gulf region because of growing tension between Iran and Israel-U.S. coalition.
- Regarding India's position on terrorism, Mr. Modi said, "Terrorism has no place in the world. In any form, and in any manifestation, terrorism cannot be accepted."
- In a special briefing for the media towards the end of the visit, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said the "ongoing" tension between Iran and the U.S. came up for discussion between the two Prime Ministers. "The regional situation and these tensions did come up for discussion between the two Prime Ministers. The Prime Minister made his point stating India's firm belief in the value of dialogue and the value of pursuing peaceful solutions to all such issues and also reiterated his readiness to offer India's support if there is any way in which India's support is required towards a peaceful solution," he said.
- The External Affairs Ministry said the two Prime Ministers discussed possibilities of close cooperation "across all domains". The two sides sealed multiple MoUs including one on cooperation in the field of "geophysical exploration" that will enhance bilateral cooperation in "mineral exploration using advanced geophysical and AI technologies" and include "sustainable resource development".

'Will move ahead'

- Mr. Modi further said India and Israel will move ahead with “renewed momentum” on IMEC and I2U2 projects that aim to increase cooperation on connectivity, digital public infrastructure and food production. Mr. Misri, in response to a question from the Israeli media, clarified that the “regional situation does weigh on the progress of the initiative”. He, however, said “there are countries” that are taking steps in their “national capacities” for advancing the components of the IMEC project.
- Mr. Misri’s statement came in response to a question on how Israel’s relation with Saudi Arabia, which is stuck because of a lack of progress on the issue of Palestinian statehood, could impact the IMEC project.
- Mr. Modi’s visit to Israel concluded with the two sides bringing out a joint statement that described the bilateral relation as a “special strategic partnership”.
- The statement said the two leaders have instructed the respective negotiating teams to prepare for an “early signing of a Free Trade Agreement”.
- Earlier, Mr. Modi visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem.

❖ New GDP data set to capture economy more accurately

Context: The new series of national accounts to be released on Friday is the culmination of a wide consultative process, spanning multiple sub-committees, and incorporating many changes

- The new series of national accounts data to be released on Friday will incorporate several methodological and statistical upgrades that will make India’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross Value Added (GVA) data more accurate and granular, an analysis of the various changes being implemented shows.
- Over the last week, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has made public the reports of various sub-committees tasked with looking at specific ways to upgrade the national accounts data. These upgrades include better methodologies, and the inclusion of new data sets, such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST) data.
- The most visible of the changes in the national accounts data is that the base year will be updated from 2011-12 to 2022-23, making both the GDP and GVA data more accurate representations of the current economy, while also improving comparisons over time periods. The Sub-Committee on Methodological Improvements proposed several sector-wise improvements that have been implemented.
- For instance, for the non-financial private corporate sector, the currently-used 2011-12 series of data deals with companies that operate across sectors by allocating that entire company’s GVA to the sector in which the bulk of its activity is. In the new series, the activity-wise revenue share for a company is being used to calculate the value added in each business activity. This will help capture all the activity in each sector.

New avatar

The upgrades include better methodologies, and the inclusion of new data sets, such as the GST data



- Most visible change in national accounts data is the base year’s update from 2011-12 to 2022-23
- Activity-wise revenue share for a company used to calculate the value added in each business activity
- New series to also include value of the housing services provided by governments to their employees

- Another improvement, to do with the general government sector, is that the new series will also include the value of the housing services provided by governments to their employees. This will mean that the value of services provided is more accurately captured when measuring the output of the general government. Further, the coverage of autonomous institutes and local bodies has also been enhanced.

For households, the new series will use the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE) and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) on an annual basis instead of extrapolating data as was done in the 2011-12 series. This will mean that the household sector, which has a significant contribution to the economy, is directly estimated each year.

Another major component of the economy — private final consumption expenditure, or basically consumption spending by the people — will also be measured in a more granular manner through the enhanced use of Household Consumer Expenditure Surveys and direct estimation based on production and other data sources.

New data sources

- The new series of national accounts data will also include new data sources and will use existing sources better. For example, GST data was so far being used in the quarterly accounts of GDP and GVA, and only for some sectors in the annual data.
- In the new series, GST data will be used to better estimate the regional output of private corporations, and will also be used to more accurately determine the contribution of the value added by private companies to the GDP of the country. The GST data will also be used to identify active private companies to improve the accuracy of estimating the value added by non-reporting companies. This will ensure that output and value added data more accurately captures what is happening on the ground.
- The Sub-Committee on Incorporation for New Data Sources, Rates and Ratios also noted that States have enhanced their reporting of data from local bodies and state autonomous bodies, which will increase the amount of data that can be directly estimated rather than imputed.
- The new series will use the Statistical Table Related to Banks in India (STRBI) published by the Reserve Bank of India to estimate the activity of both public sector banks as well as private sector banks. Further, the earlier proxy-based approach to estimate the activity of private Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) is being replaced by the use of actual financial data of NBFCs from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- Overall, the ASUSE data has been used more effectively to capture aspects that were earlier not being included accurately.

Context: The government Published the State Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming to tackle snakebite cases.

- Karnataka launches State Action Plan on snakebite and rabies
- The objective is to ensure that no life is lost due to delay in treatment or lack of access to medicines, says Minister
- The Karnataka government published the State Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming (SAPSE), becoming the first State in the country to release a comprehensive roadmap dedicated exclusively to tackling snakebite.
- The government simultaneously launched the State Action Plan for Rabies Elimination (SAPRE), reiterating its target of achieving zero human deaths due to dog-mediated rabies by 2030.
- Launching the plans under the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said the objective was to ensure that “no life is lost due to delay in treatment or lack of access to medicines.”
- **Snakebite, classified by the World Health Organisation as a Neglected Tropical Disease, continues to pose a significant public health challenge. In India,** estimates suggest around 50,000 deaths each year, besides a large number of survivors left with amputations or permanent disabilities. Public health experts have pointed out that the actual burden is likely higher, as many victims do not reach formal healthcare facilities.
- **In Karnataka,** recorded cases of snakebite envenoming and deaths have seen a sharp rise from 6,596 bite cases and 19 deaths in 2023 to 13,235 bite cases and 100 deaths in 2024 and 16,805 bite cases and 154 deaths in 2025.

Availability of ASV

- Attributing the increase in number of cases recorded to increased surveillance, Padma M.R., Deputy Director (State Surveillance Unit) said this follows Karnataka declaring snakebite envenoming cases and deaths notifiable under the Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020, in February 2024.
- The State Action Plan seeks to address these gaps through strengthened surveillance, assured availability of anti-snake venom (ASV), early referral and transport, capacity building of healthcare personnel, and sustained public awareness campaigns. Karnataka had earlier declared snakebite a notifiable disease, mandating reporting of all cases and deaths to improve data collection and guide policy response, Dr. Padma said.
- **The plan aligns with the National Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming (NAPSE), launched by the Union government in March 2024, and aims to reduce snakebite deaths and disabilities by half by 2030.** It envisages coordinated action by multiple departments, including Health, Animal Husbandry, Agriculture, Forest, Panchayat Raj, Education, Labour, Finance and Home.

Key strategies

- The Health Minister said key strategies include promoting behavioural change through Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities, encouraging rural communities to seek treatment at the nearest health facility instead of traditional healers, ensuring early transport of victims, prompt administration of ASV, management of complications and rehabilitation of those left disabled.
- The Health Department has identified designated snakebite treatment centres, supplied ASV stocks and circulated standard treatment guidelines. Free treatment will be provided in government facilities. Private hospitals have been directed to administer immediate life-saving care without insisting on advance payment, he said.
- Alongside SAPSE, the State rolled out SAPRE under the National Rabies Control Programme. Rabies was declared a notifiable disease in Karnataka in December 2022. The government has mandated the availability of Anti-Rabies Vaccine (ARV) and Rabies Immunoglobulin (RIG) in all Primary Health Centres, Community Health Centres, taluk and district hospitals, with instructions to maintain adequate stocks.
- Private hospitals have also been directed to stock ARV and RIG and provide emergency treatment without demanding advance payment.
- State- and district-level joint committees have been constituted to oversee implementation, in coordination with various government departments and non-governmental organisations.
- A “Rabies-Free Cities Initiative” is being implemented in 11 major cities, including Bengaluru, Mysuru, Mangaluru and Hubballi-Dharwad. City-specific action plans focus on mass dog vaccination, dog population management, strengthened surveillance and improved waste management.

❖ New GDP series upgrades FY26 growth to 7.6% in second advance estimates

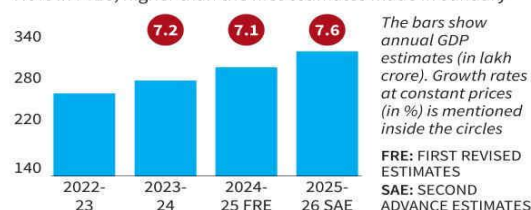
Context: India’s economic growth is expected to touch 7.6% in the current financial year 2025-26, showed the second advance estimates of gross domestic product (GDP) based on the new and updated series released by the government. This is faster than the 7.4% predicted in the first advance estimates for 2025-26 released in January, which was based on the older series.

- The new series of data, released by Statistics Secretary Saurabh Garg and Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran, has incorporated several improvements, including an updated base year of 2022-23 from the earlier 2011-12, as well as several new data sets to improve the representativeness and granularity of the data.

- The series has revised downward the growth for 2023-24 to 7.2% from the 9.2% estimated in the old series and has revised upward the growth for 2024-25 to 7.1% from the earlier estimate of 6.5%.

Stronger outlook

The second advance estimates peg India's economic growth at 7.6% in FY26, higher than the first estimates made in January



- According to the data, India's nominal GDP — which is essentially the size of the economy — has been revised downward for the three years spanning 2023-26, which will have a negative impact on several fiscal ratios pegged to these numbers, such as the fiscal deficit-to-GDP ratio and the debt-to-GDP ratio.
- The government also released the GDP growth data for the third quarter of 2025-26 based on the new series, which stood at 7.8% as compared to 8.4% in the second quarter and 6.7% in the first quarter.

Growth in the current year

- According to the second advance estimates for 2025-26, the secondary sector is expected to grow at 9.5%, up from 7.3% in 2024-25. This growth is to largely be driven by the manufacturing sector, which is estimated to grow 12.5% in 2025-26 as compared to 8.3% in the previous year. The construction sector is set to grow at 6.9%, down from 7.1% over the same period.
- Notably, the primary sector is expected to see a significant slowdown, with growth expected to be 2.8% in 2025-26 as compared to 5% in the previous year.
- This is due to growth in the agriculture sector being expected to slow to 2.5% in 2025-26 from 4.3% in 2024-25, and in the mining and quarrying sector to 5% from 11.2% over the same period.
- The tertiary sector, comprising the services sector, is expected to see growth quicken to 8.9% in FY26, up from 8.3% in the previous year. This is a result of double-digit growth in the trade, hotels, transport and communication grouping (10.3%), and the financial, real estate, IT, and professional services grouping (10%).

❖ Navy boosts anti-submarine capability with INS Anjadip

Context: In a move to sharpen its anti-submarine warfare capabilities, the Indian Navy on Friday commissioned its fourth indigenously designed and built anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft INS Anjadip at the Chennai Port.

- It was commissioned by the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi. Senior naval officials were present.
- The vessel, which is 77 metres long, has been designed to detect, track, and neutralise enemy submarines in coastal waters.
- It has been named 'Anjadip' to carry forward the valour of the historic island off the coast of Karwar.
- The ship is equipped with indigenous anti-submarine warfare weapons and sensor package.
- The INS Anjadip was constructed at Kattupalli by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers, Kolkata, and will mainly address the challenges of the littoral combat environment.
- "Anjadip is equipped with modern shallow-water sonars, lightweight torpedoes, anti-submarine rockets, and combat management system. It is engineered for agility, precision and combat effectiveness," Admiral Tripathi said at the commissioning ceremony. "The ship and her systems distinctly reflect the growing strength of India's indigenous design and industrial ecosystem. Aatmanirbharta, today, is moving beyond Make in India to Trust in India," he added.

- It is equipped to undertake coastal surveillance, low-intensity maritime operations, and search and rescue operations.

❖ Fiscal deficit at 63% of full-year target: CGA

Context: The Centre's fiscal deficit at the end of January stood at ₹9.8 lakh crore, or 63% of the annual budget target for 2025-26, compared with 74.5% in the year-ago period, government data released showed.

- The Centre estimates the fiscal deficit during 2025-26 at 4.4% of GDP, or ₹15.58 lakh crore.

❖ FDI rises 18% to \$47.87 bn

- Foreign direct investments (FDI) in India rose 18% to \$47.87 billion during April-December 2025-26, according to government data. Investments from overseas during the nine-month period of the previous fiscal stood at \$40.67 billion.

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

Why choose Dr. Rajkumar IAS/KAS Academy?

