



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Coverage of

13th Aug. - 19th Aug., 2025

★★ Useful for ★★

**UPSC ESE, PSUs,
RRB, SSC, Banking &
State Services Exams**

Trump-Putin Alaska Summit, 2025

Deadlock over **Russia-Ukraine** War continues,
with some 'progress'



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13th AUGUST 2025

National Sports Governance Bill

- **Context:** Recently, the Parliament of India has passed the National Sports Governance Bill, aiming to overhaul India's sports administration.

Key Provisions

- Creation of a National Sports Board (NSB) to regulate and recognize sports federations;
- Establishment of a National Sports Tribunal to resolve disputes;
- Mandatory compliance with international charters and ethical standards;
- Inclusion of sports bodies under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, but with a caveat.
- BCCI falls under the provisions of the National Sports Governance Bill, except Right to Information (RTI) Act, such as:
 - Forming an Ethics Commission;
 - Implementing a Safe Sports Policy;
 - Complying with governance norms if it receives any form of government assistance (e.g., use of public infrastructure).
- The Original Draft of the National Sports Governance Bill (Clause 15(2)) stated that all recognised sports bodies would be considered public authorities under RTI.
- However, the original clause was tweaked to apply only to bodies receiving government financial assistance.
- BCCI is legally an autonomous charitable society under the Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act, 1975.
- It claims financial and organisational independence, operating outside the government's regulatory framework. It has consistently resisted being labeled a 'public authority' under the RTI Act.
- Despite no direct grants, the BCCI has historically benefited from:

- Tax exemptions as a charitable institution.
- Land allocations at nominal rates (e.g., Re 1/month stadium lease in Himachal Pradesh).
- Use of national symbols and monopoly over cricket with tacit government approval.

UNDP Equator Initiative Award

- **Context:** The Bibi Fatima Women's Self-Help Group (SHG) from Teertha village in Dharwad district, Karnataka, has won the Equator Prize 2025, awarded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

About Equator Initiative Award

- **Launched:** In 2002
- The award is presented annually to honor nature-based solutions led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities that promote sustainable development and ecological resilience.
- The award is also referred to as the Nobel Prize for Biodiversity Conservation.

About Bibi Fathima Swa Sahaya Sangha

- Founded in Karnataka, this women-led initiative supports over 5,000 farmers across 30 villages through millet-based multi-cropping, seed banks, and solar-powered processing.
- Combining traditional knowledge with regenerative agriculture and renewable energy, it restores biodiversity, boosts food security, and empowers marginalized women and youth as agripreneurs, advancing climate resilience and equity.

Retail Inflation

- **Context:** Retail inflation in India fell to 1.55% in July 2025, the lowest since June 2017 and below the RBI's 2-6% target band, driven by a sharp decline in food prices.

About Consumer Price Index (CPI)

- It measures changes over time in the general level of prices of goods and services that households acquire for the purpose of consumption.

- It is widely used as a macroeconomic indicator of inflation, as a tool by governments and central banks for inflation targeting and for monitoring price stability, and as deflators in the national accounts.
- It is also used for indexing dearness allowance to employees for increase in prices.
- The Central Statistics Office (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has revised the Base Year of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from 2010 = 100 to 2012 = 100 with effect from the release of indices for the month of January, 2015.

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)

- **Context:** The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, hosted "Mega Tinkering Day 2025," bringing together over 10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) from all 35 states and Union Territories.

About Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)

- AIM is an initiative under NITI Aayog launched in 2016.
- **Aim:** To foster innovation at the grassroots level by providing support to students, startups, and entrepreneurs.
- AIM 2.0 is a step towards Viksit Bharat that aims to expand, strengthen, and deepen India's already vibrant innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.
- It aims to break the language barrier through the Language Inclusive Program of Innovation (LIPI) and 30 vernacular innovation centres.

14th AUGUST 2025

Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2025

- **Context:** The Lok Sabha has passed the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2025 and the Income Tax Bill, 2025.

Key Highlights of Income Tax Bill, 2025

- The Bill seeks to replace the Income-tax Act, 1961.

It simplifies tax language, clarifies deductions, and strengthens cross-referencing across provisions.

- Tax rates and regimes for individuals and corporations remain unchanged. There are no changes in offences and penalties.
- The Act provided specific provisions for a faceless mechanism in areas such as inquiries, valuations, revision of orders, and tax recovery.
- The Bill grants general powers to the central government to frame schemes for; Eliminating interface with taxpayers via technology and Optimising resource use through economies of scale and functional specialisation.
- The Act allows income tax authorities to enter and search buildings and break open locks. The Act also empowers the authorities to inspect electronic documents.
- Authorities can now also gain access to virtual digital spaces, including by overriding access codes, during search and seizure operations.
- The Bill defines virtual digital space as an environment, area, or realm that is constructed and experienced through computer technology. It includes email servers, social media accounts, online investment and trading accounts, and websites for storing details of asset ownership.
- The Act allows the central government to enter into agreements with other countries to provide relief in cases of double taxation.
- The Bill retains these provisions and adds that if a term is not defined in the treaty, the Act, or a notification by the central government, its meaning will be as assigned in any other central law.
- The Act allows certain eligible assesses to refer draft orders passed by assessing officers to a dispute resolution panel.
- The Bill retains these provisions and adds that the panel must issue directions along with the points of determination and the reasons for arriving at the decision.

Key Highlights of Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2025

- The Bill seeks to amend the Income-Tax Act, 1961 and the Finance Act, 2025. The 1961 Act provides for the framework to levy income tax on individuals and companies.
- **Exemptions for the Unified Pension Scheme:** The 1961 Act specifies income categories which are exempt from income tax.
- The Bill adds exemptions for;
 - payments under the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) upon superannuation, voluntary retirement, or retirement (up to 60% of the pension corpus), and
 - lump sum amounts received under UPS.
- The transfers from individual corpus to pool corpus will not be treated as income and will not be taxed.
- **Saudi Arabia Public Investment Fund (PIF) Exemption:** Tax exemption extended to PIF of Saudi Arabia and its wholly owned subsidiaries investing funds of the Saudi government in India.
- The 1961 Act specifies a procedure for the assessment of total undisclosed income as a result of a search. It provides for assessment for a block period.
- The Bill adds that if a notice for such an assessment is issued after a search has begun but before the search is completed, that assessment will stop on the date of the notice.

India's First Commercial Earth Observation Satellite Constellation

- **Context:** Recently, India launched its first fully indigenous commercial Earth Observation (EO) satellite constellation. It is the first time a private Indian consortium, led by PixxelSpace, will design, build, launch, and operate under a PPP model.

Key Highlights

- This commercial Earth Observation (EO) satellite constellation aims to feature cutting-edge sensors

like Panchromatic, Multispectral, Hyperspectral and Microwave Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR).

- It aims to deliver Analysis Ready Data (ARD) and Value-Added Services (VAS).
- **Key Applications:** Climate change monitoring, Disaster management, Agriculture and infrastructure planning, Marine surveillance, Urban development, and National security.
- **Strategic Significance:** Reduce India's reliance on foreign satellite data, ensure national data sovereignty, and position India as a global leader in Geospatial intelligence.

About Earth Observation (EO) Satellites

- EO satellites work by capturing electromagnetic radiation reflected or emitted from Earth's surface.
- They use specialized sensors to detect and record data across various spectral bands — visible, infrared, microwave, and more.
- These satellites orbit the Earth in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) or Sun-Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO), allowing them to revisit the same location at regular intervals and capture high-resolution imagery.

State Health Regulatory Excellence Index (SHRESTH)

- **Context:** The Union Health Ministry launched the State Health Regulatory Excellence Index (SHRESTH).

About State Health Regulatory Excellence Index (SHRESTH)

- It is an initiative aimed at benchmarking and strengthening state drug regulatory systems through a transparent, data-driven framework.
- It will assess states on parameters such as lab testing capacity, digitisation of approvals, inspection rigour, and responsiveness to public grievances.
- It is developed by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).

- It will rank manufacturing states (on 27 parameters) and distribution states/UTs (on 23 parameters) across themes like licensing, surveillance, and responsiveness.
- States will submit monthly data, and best practices will be shared to promote uniform standards.

15th AUGUST 2025

Goods and Services Tax (GST) Regime

- **Context:** Recently, the Prime Minister of India has unveiled a new vision for India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime aimed at simplifying tax structures benefiting the poor, middle class, entrepreneurs, traders, and business owners.

Proposed Reforms:

- **Simplified Tax Structure & Rate Rationalization:** Two Main Slabs: 5% (merit rate) and 18% (standard rate);
 - 99% of items in the 12% slab to move to 5%;
 - 90% of items in the 28% slab to shift to 18%;**Special 40% Slab:** For 'sin goods' like tobacco, pan masala, and online gaming;
- **Structural and Process Reforms:**
 - Correction of inverted duty structures (especially in textiles and MSMEs);
 - Resolution of classification disputes to reduce litigation;
 - Pre-filled returns to ease compliance and reduce manual errors;
 - Automated refunds for exporters and businesses with inverted duty structures
- **End of Compensation Cess:**
 - Compensation cess (previously levied on luxury/sin goods) to be phased out by November–December 2025;
 - Fiscal space created will allow for smoother rate alignment.

About Goods and Services Tax (GST)

- It was launched on July 1, 2017, designed to unify the country's fragmented tax system, GST replaced multiple central and state levies with a single, destination-based tax regime.
- It continues to evolve through reforms aimed at simplification, compliance, and inclusive growth.
- Before GST, India's indirect tax system was riddled with overlapping taxes such as Value Added Tax (VAT), Central Excise Duty, Service Tax, and Entry Tax etc.
- GST merged these into a unified structure comprising Central GST (CGST), State GST (SGST), & Integrated GST for inter-state transactions (IGST).
- Its objectives included:
 1. Eliminating the cascading effect of taxes;
 2. Creating a common national market;
 3. Enhancing ease of doing business;
 4. Increasing transparency and compliance.

Mission Sudarshan Chakra

- **Context:** PM Modi announced the launch of Mission Sudarshan Chakra, an ambitious indigenous air defence system to be fully developed by 2035.

Key Highlights

- The mission, named after Lord Krishna's mythological weapon, is a comprehensive air defence initiative to build a robust indigenous shield against aerial threats.
- It seeks to ensure that all public places in India are protected under a nationwide security shield by 2035.

Key Air-Defence Systems of other countries

- **Russia:** S-400 Triumph, S-300VM, S-350 Vityaz, S-500 Prometheus
- **USA:** THAAD, Patriot (PAC-3 MSE), Golden Dome (in development)
- **Israel:** Iron Dome, David's Sling, Iron Beam
- **China:** HQ-9, HQ-22, HQ-16
- **European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI):** Skyranger, IRIS-T SLM

16th AUGUST 2025

Putin-Trump Meet in Alaska

- **Context:** Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump, the Presidents of Russia and United States met at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richartson in Anchorage, Alaska, to discuss the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

About Alaska

- Alaska is the largest and one of the most northern states in the United States.
- Alaska used to be known as "Seward's Folly," named after Secretary of State William H. Seward, who negotiated the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867 for 7.2 million dollars as per Alaska Treaty 1867.
- It is separated from the United States by Canada and is bordered by the Arctic Ocean (north), Pacific Ocean (south), Bering Strait (west), and Canada (east).
- The Aleutian Range, a volcanic mountain range, runs along the peninsula, and the region contains numerous active and dormant volcanoes.
- It is part of the Pacific Ring of Fire and is seismically active, with frequent earthquakes and volcanoes.
- Alaska's population density is the lowest among U.S. states.

Operation Sadbhavana

- **Context:** In Arunachal Pradesh, under Indian Army's Operation Sadbhavana initiative, an 'Arogyam Health and Wellness Centre' was inaugurated at DahJhong in Tawang district.

About Operation Sadbhavana

- Operation Sadbhavana (Goodwill) is a welfare initiative launched by the Indian Army in 1998 to win the "hearts and minds" of people affected by terrorism, insurgency, and slow development primarily in Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, and select parts of Northeast India.

- The programme aims to address aspirations of local people through holistic societal development: education (Army Goodwill Schools), health camps, women's empowerment, employment generation, and infrastructure development.

PM Viksit Bharat Rojgar Yojana

- **Context:** Recently, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi announced the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana on Independence Day with an outlay of ₹1 lakh crore.

About PM Viksit Bharat Rojgar Yojana

- It will provide incentive of up to ₹15,000 in two instalments to newly employed youth and upto 3000 per month per new employee to employers for creating new job opportunities.
- Payments will be made via DBT and PAN-linked accounts.

Features

- The scheme has two parts:

Part A (Support to First-Time Employees): Targets 1.92 crore new employees registered with EPFO, offering up to ₹15,000 in two installments (after 6 and 12 months), with a portion kept in a savings account.

- Employees with salaries up to ₹1 lakh will be eligible for the incentives.

Part B (Incentives for Employers): It will encourage generation of additional employment in all sectors, with a special focus on the manufacturing sector.

- The employers will get incentives in respect of new employees with salaries up to ₹1 lakh.
- The Government will incentivize employers, up to Rs 3000 per month, for two years, for each additional employment, sustained for at least six months.
- For the manufacturing sector, incentives will be extended to the 3rd and 4th years as well.

- It is expected to incentivize employers for the creation of additional employment of nearly 2.60 crore persons.
- All payments to the First Time Employees under Part A of the Scheme will be made through DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) mode using Aadhar Bridge Payment System (ABPS).
- Payments to the Employers under Part B will be made directly into their PAN-linked Accounts.

17th AUGUST 2025

Samudrayaan Project

- **Context:** Recently, two Indian aquanauts successfully conducted deep-sea dives in the Atlantic Ocean, part of Samudrayaan Project, under the Deep Ocean Mission.

About Deep Ocean Mission

- It was launched by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) with an investment of ₹4,077 crore over five years on September 7, 2021.
- It aims to develop technologies for exploring and sustainably utilizing deep ocean resources, and to support India's Blue Economy and scientific leadership.
- Blue Economy is a core growth dimension, with potential to push India's maritime economy beyond ₹100 billion.
- It is being implemented in phases and aligns with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).
- **Key Components**
 - **Samudrayaan Project (Deep-Sea Mining & Manned Submersible):** Development of a manned submersible to carry three people up to 6,000 metres depth.
Creation of an Integrated Mining System for extracting polymetallic nodules in the Central Indian Ocean.

- **Ocean Climate Change Advisory Services:** Building observations and model suites to forecast climate variables from seasonal to decadal scales.
Supports better planning for coastal communities and tourism.
- **Biodiversity Exploration & Conservation:** Bio-prospecting of deep-sea flora, fauna, and microbes.
Promotes sustainable use of marine biological resources for fisheries and allied sectors.
- **Deep Ocean Survey and Exploration:** Identification of multi-metal hydrothermal sulphide sites along the mid-ocean ridges.
Expands India's access to deep-sea mineral reserves.
- **Energy and Freshwater from the Ocean:** Proof-of-concept for Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) powered desalination plants.
Advances offshore renewable energy and water security.
- **Advanced Marine Station for Ocean Biology:** Establishment of a research hub for ocean biology and engineering.
Facilitates innovation, incubation, and industrial applications of marine science.

Sovereign Credit Rating

- **Context:** S&P Global Ratings has upgraded India's long-term sovereign credit rating from 'BBB-' to 'BBB' with a Stable Outlook.

Key Facts

- This is the first upgrade of India's sovereign rating by S&P in 18 years.
- S&P's decision reflects India's sustained high economic growth, successful fiscal consolidation, and improved policy predictability.
- India's projected GDP growth remains strong at 6.5% for FY26, and the country's external position is considered robust.

About Sovereign Credit Ratings (SCR)

- Sovereign Credit Ratings are independent assessments provided by credit rating agencies (like S&P, Moody's, Fitch) of a country's ability to meet its financial obligations.
- They indicate the creditworthiness of a government and the risk associated with lending to it.
- Ratings range from 'AAA' (highest safety) with 'BBB' and above considered 'investment grade', below that 'speculative' or 'junk'.
- They affect a country's ability to access international financial markets, its cost of borrowing, and overall investor sentiment.

18th AUGUST 2025

20% Ethanol Blending in Petrol (E20)

- **Context:** India achieved 20% ethanol blending in petrol (E20) in 2025, five years earlier than the 2030 target set under the National Policy on Biofuels (2018).

Key Facts

- The government highlights significant benefits including reduced oil imports, enhanced farmer incomes, and lower carbon dioxide emissions. However, concerns remain over consumer dissatisfaction regarding mileage drop, agricultural sustainability issues etc.

About EBP

- **Launched:** Pilot in 2003; expanded under the National Policy on Biofuels (2018).
- **Target:** Achieve 20% ethanol blending (E20) by 2030, achieved in 2025.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
- **Objectives:**
 - Reduce India's heavy reliance (~85%) on crude oil imports.
 - Provide assured markets and improve farmer incomes.
 - Lower greenhouse gas emissions by substituting fossil fuels.

- **Feedstock:** Sugarcane (molasses and juice), rice, maize/corn, damaged food grains.

Key Concerns

- **Consumer Issues:**
 - **Drop in Mileage:** LocalCircles survey found 67% of petrol vehicle owners opposed E20, citing lower fuel efficiency and increased maintenance costs.
 - **Limited Price Benefit:** Despite a 65% fall in global crude oil prices since 2022-23, petrol prices have been cut by only about 2%, raising doubts about cost savings passed to consumers.
- **Agricultural Sustainability:**
 - **Water-Intensive Crop:** Sugarcane consumes 60-70 tonnes of water per tonne, contributing to groundwater depletion, particularly in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.
 - **Land Degradation:** Nearly 30% of India's land area is degraded, partly due to unsustainable agricultural practices.
 - **Food vs Fuel Dilemma:** Diverting rice and corn for ethanol (34% of corn output used for ethanol in 2024-25, along with record rice allocation) has led to increased corn imports, affecting food security.

SLINEX-25

- **Context:** The 12th edition of the Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise, SLINEX-25, saw the arrival of Indian Naval ships INS Rana (Guided Missile Destroyer) and INS Jyoti (Fleet Tanker) at Colombo.

About SLINEX-25

- SLINEX is a bilateral naval exercise conceptualised in 2005 to strengthen maritime cooperation between India and Sri Lanka.
- The previous edition of SLINEX was conducted at Visakhapatnam, India from 17 to 20 Dec 2024.
- **Structure of SLINEX-25:**
 - **Harbour Phase:** Conducted in Colombo
 - **Sea Phase:** Joint operations at sea

- SLINEX aligns with India's policy of MAHASAGAR — Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions.

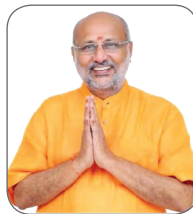
19th AUGUST 2025

C.P. Radhakrishnan

- **Context:** The ruling party BJP announced Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan, a former president of the party's Tamil Nadu unit and RSS veteran, as the ruling NDA's candidate for the Vice-Presidential election to be held on September 9.

Key Facts

- A former Lok Sabha MP who previously served as the Governor of Jharkhand, Radhakrishnan is credited for "laying the foundation of the party in the south" during his tenure as the Tamil Nadu BJP president from 2004 to 2007.
- In addition to his experience in organisational as well as gubernatorial duties in southern states, including Kerala, Telangana and Puducherry, the BJP top brass had "more or less zeroed in" on him as the successor of Jagdeep Dhankhar — who stepped down last month citing health reasons.
- Meanwhile, the INDIA opposition bloc has chosen Justice (retired) B. Sudershan Reddy, former Supreme Court judge and the first Lokayukta of Goa, as its candidate for the September 9 Vice Presidential election.



Primary Amebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM)

- **Context:** The Health department in Kozhikode, Kerala, has issued an alert against primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM) in the district in view of cases of the infection and a death.

About Primary Amebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM)

- Primary Amebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM) is a rare brain infection caused by *Naegleria fowleri*.
- *N. fowleri* is a free-living amoeba found in warm freshwater and soil.
- An amoeba is a single-celled living organism that is too small to be seen without a microscope.
- **Transmission:** Infection typically occurs when contaminated water enters the nose during activities like swimming, nasal cleansing in religious rituals, or sinus irrigation.
- It does not spread through drinking water or person-to-person contact.
- It travels to the brain, destroying tissue and causing brain swelling.
- **Treatment and Precautions:** To reduce risk, limit water entering the nose during water activities.
- Though some drugs work against *N. fowleri* in labs, they have limited success in treating infections, which are almost always fatal.