



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Coverage of

7th May - 13th May, 2025

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

OPERATION SINDHUR



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7th MAY 2025

Human Development Report 2025

- **Context:** Recently, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released the Human Development Report (HDR) for 2025, highlighting India's progress in life expectancy, education, and income levels.

Key Highlights

- Human Development Report (HDR) is titled as 'A Matter of Choice: People and Possibilities in the Age of AI', and explores AI's role in shaping future development.
- Iceland (HDI value of 0.972), ranked at the top of the Index, followed by Norway and Switzerland. South Sudan was at the bottom at 193 with 0.388.
- India improved its HDI value from 0.676 in 2022 (133th) to 0.685 in 2023 (130th), remaining in the medium human development category.
- India's HDI value has increased by over 53% since 1990, growing faster than both the global and South Asian averages.
- Among India's neighbours, China (75th), Sri Lanka (78th) and Bhutan (127th) are ranked above India, while Bangladesh (130th) is ranked at par. Nepal (145th), Myanmar (149th), Pakistan (168th) are ranked below India.
- India's life expectancy has risen from 58.6 years in 1990 to 72 years in 2023, marking its highest level since the index began.
- The average years of schooling in India have increased from 8.2 years in 1990 to 13 years in 2023.
- India's Gross National Income (GNI) per capita has risen over four times, from \$2,167 in 1990 to \$9,046 in 2023.
- 135 million Indians escaped multidimensional poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21.

About Human Development Index (HDI)

- Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq created the HDI in 1990 and was further used by UNDP in creating a report on the nation's socio-economic achievement.
- It evaluates three key dimensions and is calculated using a geometric mean of these three indices:
 1. Health is measured by life expectancy at birth (SDG-3).
 2. Education is assessed through mean years of schooling for adults (SDG-4.4) and expected years of schooling for children (SDG-4.3).
 3. Standard of Living is evaluated using Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (SDG-8.5), adjusted for income distribution.

Operation Sindoor

- **Context:** The Indian Armed Forces launched 'OPERATION SINDOOR', hitting terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and military installations in Pakistan.

Key Facts

- Touted as the Indian military's biggest and deepest strike yet, 'Operation Sindoor' marks the first full-scale tri-service operation since the 1971 war.
- The name — Operation Sindoor — given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is a symbolic tribute to the Pahalgam victims, avenging those killed for their faith while their sindoor-wearing wives were spared.
- The strategic operation targeted and destroyed Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hizbul Mujahideen training bases, with India deploying some of its most advanced weaponry.
- Indian strikes successfully eliminated more than 100 terrorists and destroyed 11 air bases within Pakistan.

- The strikes marked a shift in India's strategy by targeting deep into Pakistani territory, including critical radar installations in Lahore and Gurjanwala.
- Additionally, coordinated missile attacks were carried out on terror hubs in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), including Muzaffarabad and Kotli.
- Military bases housing Pakistan's F-16 and JF-17 fighter jets at Sargodha and Bholari were hit, leading to the destruction of nearly 20 percent of Pakistan's air force infrastructure.

Gaganyaan Mission

- **Context:** India's first human spaceflight under the Gaganyaan programme is expected to take place in the first quarter of 2027.

About Gaganyaan Mission

- **Purpose:** To demonstrate the capability to launch human beings (three crew members) to low earth orbit and bring them back safely to earth by landing.
- **Launch vehicle:** The Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3).
- **Crew Escape System (CES):** LVM3 consists of CES powered by a set of quick acting, high burn rate solid motors which ensures that Crew Module along with the crew is taken to a safe distance in case of any emergency either at launch pad or during ascent phase.
- The Orbiter Module will orbit the Earth, and it consists of Crew Module (CM) and Service Module (SM). It is designed to keep the crew safe during ascent, orbital phase, and re-entry.
 - The Crew Module (CM) is the habitable space with the Earth-like environment in space for the crew.
 - **Service Module (SM):** It will be used to provide the necessary support to CM while in orbit. It is an unpressurized structure containing thermal system, propulsion system, power systems, avionics systems and deployment mechanisms.

- This manned mission will be the first of ISRO's human spaceflight missions. The US, Russia and China are the only three countries to have conducted human spaceflights yet.

8th MAY 2025

UK-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

- **Context:** India and the United Kingdom have signed a landmark Free Trade Agreement (FTA) after nearly three years of negotiations.

About Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

- FTAs are arrangements between two or more countries or trading blocs that primarily agree to reduce or eliminate customs tariff and non-tariff barriers on substantial trade between them. They can cover both goods and services.
- FTAs also address issues such as investment, mobility of professionals, and regulatory cooperation.
- The India-UK FTA negotiations were formally launched in 2022, as part of efforts to deepen economic cooperation and boost bilateral trade.

Key Highlights of FTA

- **Tariff Elimination:** Nearly 99% of Indian exports to the UK will now be tariff-free.
 - Key sectors to benefit include: textiles, marine products, leather, footwear, sports goods, toys, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, auto components, and organic chemicals.
- **Services Sector Gains:** UK has offered its most ambitious market access commitments for Indian service providers.
- Indian professionals in the UK will be exempt from paying UK social security contributions for up to three years, reducing employment costs and increasing competitiveness.

Enhanced Mobility:

- Simplified visa and mobility norms for Indian professionals and intra-corporate transferees.
- Special quotas for Indian workers in select UK sectors.

Trade and Economic Impact

- India was Britain's 11th largest trade partner in 2024 and accounted for 2.4% of total UK trade.
- India's exports to the UK were worth \$34 billion (£25.5 billion) in 2024, and UK exports to India amounted to \$22.8 billion (£17.1 billion) in 2024.

Kartarpur Corridor

- **Context:** Kartarpur Corridor, the only open surface link from India to Pakistan, was closed after Operation Sindoor.

Key Facts

- The agreement was signed in 2019 and was operationalised for the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism and the first of the ten Sikh Gurus.
- It provides for visa-free travel of Indian pilgrims, as well as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders, from India on a daily basis, throughout the year, however, all pilgrims are required to return the same day.

About Kartarpur Corridor

- It serves as a visa-free border crossing and religious corridor, linking the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Pakistan to Gurdwara Dera Baba Nanak in Punjab.
- The Indian part of the corridor involves a 4.1 km long, four-lane highway from Dera Baba Nanak to the international border.
- Pakistani Sikhs cannot visit Dera Baba Nanak in India without first obtaining an Indian visa.

9th MAY 2025

Kozhikode: WHO Age-Friendly City

- **Context:** Kozhikode city has received global recognition by becoming a member of the World Health Organization's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC).

About Age-Friendly City

- An age-friendly city ensures that urban environments, infrastructure, and services are accessible and inclusive for older adults. It addresses challenges related to:
 - Accessible public spaces (parks, transportation, buildings),
 - Affordable and suitable housing, healthcare access and social support,
 - Age-friendly communication tools,
 - Participation in community activities.

About WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC)

- It was established in 2010.
- The mission of the Network is to stimulate and enable cities and communities around the world to become increasingly age-friendly.
- The Network seeks to do this by:
 - Inspiring change by showing what can be done and how it can be done;
 - Connecting cities and communities worldwide to facilitate the exchange of information, knowledge and experience
 - Supporting cities and communities to find appropriate innovative and evidence-based solutions.

NOTE:

- Kozhikode was inducted into the UNESCO Creative Cities Network under the Literature category in **2022**.
- It became the **first Indian city** under the UNESCO "City of Literature".

BrahMos Missile Manufacturing Unit

- **Context:** The production of supersonic cruise missile, BrahMos, is set to begin in Lucknow, with the inauguration of the BrahMos missile manufacturing unit.

Key Facts

- The BrahMos missile manufacturing unit will be officially inaugurated on May 11, marking a historic milestone in India's defence manufacturing journey.
- The facility is being set up by BrahMos Aerospace with a ₹ 300 crore investment.
- The unit has been completed—from construction to production—within 3.5 years.
- It will also be the first-of-its-kind hi-tech unit in the state.

Significance

- **Strategic Impact:** Enhances India's defence capabilities.
- **Industrial Impact:** Brings modern manufacturing technologies to the state, stimulating growth of allied industries.
- **Employment Generation:**
 - 500 direct jobs (engineers & technicians).
 - Thousands of indirect jobs across skill levels.

About BrahMos

- BrahMos is a joint venture between India's DRDO (50.5%) and Russia's NPOM (49.5%).
- **Etymology:** BrahMos = Brahmaputra (India) + Moskva (Russia), symbolizing strength and peace.
- BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles are known for their speed, precision, and versatility.

INS Arnala

- **Context:** The Indian Navy took delivery of a new shallow-water vessel designed for anti-submarine warfare (ASW).

Key Highlights

- INS Arnala is the lead ship of the Arnala-class anti-submarine warfare (ASW) corvette, it is named after Arnala Island, which is located off the coast of Maharashtra.
- Indigenously designed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata.
- **Role:** The ship has been designed for underwater surveillance, search & rescue operations and Low Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO).
- **Features:**
 - The ship is capable of full-scale sub-surface surveillance of coastal waters as well as search and attack. It can also carry out ASW operations in coordination with aircraft.
 - Arnala also boasts a combat management system and armament consisting of lightweight torpedoes and ASW rockets.

10th MAY 2025

Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)

- **Context:** India's latest Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) data was released by the Registrar-General of India.

Recent Findings

- Maternal Mortality Ratio in India dropped to 93 per 100,000 live births in 2019–21, down from 97 (2018–20) and 103 (2017–19).
- The highest MMR occurs in the 20-29 age group, and the second highest in the 30-34 age group.
- Several States, including Madhya Pradesh (175), Assam (167), Uttar Pradesh (151), Odisha (135), Chhattisgarh (132), West Bengal (109), and Haryana (106), have high MMRs.
- One of the key indicators of maternal mortality is the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) which is defined as the number of maternal deaths during a given time period per 100,000 live births during the same time period.

- The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim at reducing global MMR to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.

World Press Freedom Index

- **Context:** Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has released the World Press Freedom Index.

Key Facts

- The Index is based on a score ranging from 0 to 100 that is assigned to each country or territory, with 100 being the best possible score (the highest possible level of press freedom) and 0 the worst.
- It is to compare the level of freedom enjoyed by journalists and media in 180 countries and territories.

Key Findings

- India ranked 151st with a total score of 32.96 in 2025, moving up 8 places from 159th last year.
- **Top-ranked:** Norway retained the 1st position, followed by other Scandinavian and European nations, benefiting from strong legal protections and diverse media ecosystems.
- **Bottom-ranked:** Eritrea ranked 180th (last), followed by countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia.

11th MAY 2025

National Technological Day

- **Context:** May 11 marked the 27th National Technological Day of India.

Key Facts

- This year's theme is "YANTRA", which signifies transformation through advanced research and technological acceleration.
- Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee designated May 11 as National Technology Day in India to commemorate the Pokhran nuclear tests conducted by the Indian Army in 1998.

- On May 11, 1998, two other special technological advances were showcased by India's scientists and engineers.
- The successful test firing of Trishul missile; and the first test flight of the indigenously developed aircraft Hansa.
- This observance aims to cultivate a scientific mindset and inspire the younger generation to pursue careers in technology, engineering, and mathematics.

India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR)

- **Context:** The Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report 2021, released by the Registrar General of India (RGI), highlights that India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has remained constant at 2.0 in 2021, the same as in 2020.

Key Findings of The Report

- The survey was conducted in 8,842 sample units across all States, covering about 84 lakh sample population.
- Bihar has reported the highest TFR at 3.0, while Delhi and West Bengal reported the lowest TFR of 1.4.
- Demographic Shifts (1971–2021):
 - 0–14 age group: Declined from 41.2% to 24.8%, indicating a falling young population.
 - 15–59 age group (working age): Increased from 53.4% to 66.2%, representing a demographic dividend window.
 - The elderly population has gone up from 5.3% to 5.9% for the 65+ age group and 6% to 9% for the 60+ age group during the same period. Kerala reported the highest elderly population at 14.4%.
- The mean age at effective marriage for females has increased from 19.3 years in 1990 to 22.5 years in 2021.

About Sample Registration System (SRS)

- The Sample Registration System (SRS) is a large-scale demographic survey in India used to collect data on births and deaths, providing annual estimates of vital rates like birth rate, death rate, and infant mortality rate.
- The system uses two sources of information: continuous enumeration by part-time enumerators and six-monthly retrospective surveys by supervisors.
- SRS operates on a sample of villages and urban blocks, making it cost-effective and efficient.

NOTE:

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is the average number of children born to a woman during her childbearing years.

12th MAY 2025

Extended Fund Facility (EFF)

- **Context:** The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) decided to allow for “an immediate disbursement” of \$1 billion (around ₹ 8,500 crore) to Pakistan. This disbursal was done as part of IMF’s Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to Pakistan.

About Extended Fund Facility (EFF)

- The Extended Fund Facility is a loan-based support mechanism provided by the IMF to countries that suffer from medium-term balance of payments problems, particularly due to structural deficiencies in their economies.
- Unlike short-term bailouts, the EFF is designed to assist countries in implementing structural reforms that take time to yield results.
- According to the IMF, EFF loans:
 - Offer longer repayment periods
 - Support reforms in fiscal governance, banking, taxation, etc.

- Target countries with long-standing issues such as poor infrastructure, financial instability, or chronic budget deficits
- It is not financial aid or a grant—countries are expected to repay these funds along with agreed interest.

About International Monetary Fund (IMF)

- The IMF is a specialised agency of the United Nations, founded in 1944 at the Bretton Woods Conference. It was created to ensure global monetary stability after the disruptions caused by the Great Depression and World War II.
- **Objectives:**
 1. Promote international monetary cooperation.
 2. Ensure exchange rate stability and orderly currency arrangements.
 3. Facilitate balanced growth of international trade.
- **Functions:**
 - **Economic Surveillance:** Monitors global and country-specific economic trends and provides policy advice.
 - **Financial Assistance:** Offers loans to countries with balance of payments problems.
 - **Technical Assistance and Capacity Development:** Provides training and expertise in public finance, monetary policy, statistics, etc.
 - **Conditionality:** Loans are tied to economic reform programmes to ensure fiscal discipline and long-term stability.
- **Membership and Voting Power:**

It comprises 190 member countries. Each member contributes a quota (based on GDP and economic indicators), which determines:

 - (a) Voting power (formula: 1 vote per 100,000 SDRs + basic votes). (US has the highest share)
 - (b) Access to financial resources.
- **SDRs (Special Drawing Rights):** An international reserve asset created by the IMF. Not a currency but can be exchanged for freely usable currencies like USD, EUR, JPY, GBP, and CNY.

India-Pakistan Ceasefire Declaration

- **Context:** India and Pakistan have agreed to a ceasefire after the military escalations.

Key Facts

- A ceasefire is an agreement between nations involved in a conflict that seeks to regulate the termination of all military activity for a given length of time in a given area.
- A ceasefire does not represent an end to hostilities.
- It represents a truce, that is, "a temporary suspension of hostilities," in both international as well as non-international armed conflicts.
- The remedies for a breach of a ceasefire are detailed in the Regulations Respecting the Law and Customs of War on Land, also called the Hague Regulations, that were formulated in 1910.
 - A serious breach of a truce by one of the involved parties gives the other a right to denounce it, and in urgent cases, to recommence hostilities immediately.
 - It authorises the "injured party to demand the punishment of the offenders or, if necessary, compensation for the losses sustained.

India-Pakistan Ceasefire Agreements

- **Simla Agreement (1972):** Between India and Pakistan (after the 1971 India-Pakistan war that led to the creation of Bangladesh).
 - Both countries agreed to resolve issues bilaterally, without external intervention.
 - The Line of Control (LoC) was established in Jammu and Kashmir, replacing the former Ceasefire Line.
- **2003 Ceasefire Understanding:** Applied to the entire LoC and other agreed sectors. It was a mutual but informal understanding rather than a formal treaty.

13th MAY 2025

India's New Security Doctrine

- **Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a new anti-terror doctrine, redefining India's national security approach. He emphasized that while India is peace-loving, it would now follow a path of "peace through strength."

India's New Doctrines

- **Decisive retaliation on India's terms:** India will take strict action at every place from where the roots of terrorism emerge.
- **No tolerance for nuclear blackmail:** The doctrine dismisses the long-standing strategy of Pakistan's "nuclear shield" as a deterrent against Indian action.
 - India signaled that it can and will respond even under the shadow of nuclear threats, relying on precision weaponry and credible deterrence.
- **No distinction between terrorists and their sponsors:** India will not differentiate between the government sponsoring terrorism and the masterminds of terrorism.

Quantum Key Distribution Technology

- **Context:** The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), under Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Synergy Quantum India Private Limited.

Key Facts

- **Objective:** The MoU aims to formalize cooperation between C-DOT and Synergy Quantum in the development of Drone-based Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) systems.
- **Partnership Structure:** A blend of public sector R&D strength (C-DOT) and private sector innovation (Synergy Quantum).

- **Strategic Alignment:** Supports India's Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) mission, specifically in the emerging quantum communication and secure telecom domain.
- **Deployment Focus:** Emphasis on drone-based platforms, enabling flexible and rapid deployment for **secure communications**, especially in critical or remote environments.

Most Favoured Nation (MFN)

- **Context:** The United States President Donald Trump signed an executive order to lower the prices of prescription drugs describing the move as the "most favored nation's policy."

About Most Favoured Status (MFN)

- The MFN principle was designed to prevent countries from giving different treatment to one partner over the other.
 - Each member treats all the other members equally as "most-favoured" trading partners.
- If a country improves the benefits that it gives to one trading partner, it has to give the same "best" treatment to all the other World Trade Organization (WTO) members so that they all remain "most-favoured".
- It seeks to replace the frictions and distortions of power-based (bilateral) policies with the guarantees of a rules-based framework where trading rights do not depend on the individual participants' economic or political clout.
- Countries such as Russia, Iran, North Korea, Syria and Belarus are not a part of WTO & WTO members can impose whatever trade measures they wish without flouting global trading rules.
- There can be exceptions to allow for preferential treatment of developing countries, regional free trade areas and customs unions.
- There is no formal procedure for suspending MFN treatment, it does formally allow the members to increase import tariffs or impose quotas on goods, or even ban them.
- In 2019 India suspended Pakistan's MFN status following Pakistan's terror attack on Pulwama in Jammu & Kashmir.

