



# WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

*Coverage of*

**05<sup>th</sup> Dec. - 11<sup>th</sup> Dec., 2025**

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

## Vladimir Putin's visit to India

India-Russia marked **25 years** of their  
strategic partnership



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5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025

## Pradhan Mantri Jaiv Indhan – Vatavaran Anukool Fasal Awashesh Nivaran (JI-VAN) Scheme

- **Context:** Recently, the Union Government has expanded the scope and timeline of the Pradhan Mantri Jaiv Indhan–Vatavaran Anukool Fasal Awashesh Nivaran (JI-VAN) Yojana, reaffirming its commitment to sustainable development and energy security.

### About PM JI-VAN

- It was launched in 2019 under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoP&NG). It is implemented by the Centre for High Technology (CHT) that operated under the MoP&NG.
- **Financial Outlay:** ₹1,950 crore (Total Allocation)
  - ₹1,800 crore for 12 commercial-scale projects
  - ₹150 crore for 10 demonstration-scale projects
- **Support Mechanism:** Viability gap funding and capital assistance to make projects commercially viable.
- **Objectives:**
  - Establishment of commercial and demonstration-scale advanced biofuel projects using lignocellulosic biomass and other renewable feedstocks.
  - Providing remunerative income to farmers for agricultural residues that would otherwise go to waste.
  - Creating employment opportunities in rural and urban areas.
  - Addressing air pollution caused by stubble burning and reducing soil and water pollution from municipal solid waste.
  - Contributing to the Swachh Bharat Mission and supporting the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme.
  - Reducing India's dependency on crude oil imports and supporting the nation's climate goals.

### Key Biofuel Projects under PM JI-VAN

- **Second Generation (2G) Bio-Ethanol Projects:** Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL) has set up a 2G paddy straw-based feedstock bio-ethanol project at Panipat, Haryana.
- A 2G bamboo-based biorefinery has been established at Numaligarh, Assam by Numaligarh Refinery Ltd., through Assam Bio-Ethanol Private Limited (ABEPL).
- **Third Generation (3G) Ethanol Project:** IOCL has commissioned a 3G ethanol plant at Panipat, utilizing refinery off-gas as feedstock — marking a leap towards innovative carbon utilization.

## RELOS Agreement

- **Context:** Russia's lower house of parliament has ratified the Reciprocal Exchange of Logistic Support (Relos) Agreement with India.

### About India–Russia Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Support (RELOS) Agreement

- It is a bilateral military logistics pact that enables both countries' military aircraft, ships, and personnel to use each other's bases for refueling, maintenance, spare parts, training, joint exercises, humanitarian missions, and disaster relief.
- It streamlines logistics by reducing paperwork, ensuring quicker support, and allowing rolling settlement of costs.
- It also grants mutual access to each other's airspace and ports, which will provide India with strategic entry to the Arctic region along the Northern Sea Route, where Russia has an extensive military presence.
- For Russia, Relos offers access to Indian Ocean facilities, helping it maintain global reach despite Western sanctions and allowing power projection in Asia without costly overseas bases.
- Relos is similar to logistics agreements India has signed with countries like the US, UK, Japan, Australia, France, Singapore, South Korea, and Vietnam.

## Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address (DHRUVA)

- **Context:** The Department of Posts (DoP) under the Ministry of Communications has proposed Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address (DHRUVA), an interoperable, standardized and user-centric Digital Address System for India.

### About DHRUVA

- A national framework to create virtual, UPI-like address labels such as "name@entity" that serve as proxies for physical locations.
- The system is built as a part of its Digital Public Infrastructure initiatives and will allow private firms to participate.
- At its core is the concept of Address-as-a-Service (AaaS) — the array of services associated with address data management to support secure, consent-driven sharing of location information.

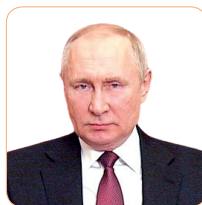
6<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025

## Putin's Visit to India: 23<sup>rd</sup> India-Russia Annual Bilateral Summit

- **Context:** India and Russia held their 23<sup>rd</sup> annual bilateral summit, marking a major milestone — 25 years of the Declaration on Strategic Partnership (2000).

### Key Outcomes

- The Leaders welcomed the adoption of the Programme for the Development of Strategic Areas of India – Russia Economic Cooperation till 2030 (Programme 2030).
- Both Sides emphasised that addressing tariff and non-tariff trade barriers, for timely achievement of the revised bilateral trade target of USD 100 billion by 2030.



- India and Russia exchanged sixteen agreements in areas related to defence, trade, economy, healthcare, academics, culture and media.
- Both sides are working towards the early conclusion of a Free Trade Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union.
- India will soon be launching a free 30-day e-tourist visa and a 30-day Group Tourist Visa for Russian citizens.
- The Russian side has decided to adopt the Framework Agreement to join the International Big Cat Alliance.
- Both reiterated cooperation in BRICS, SCO, G20 etc

### Significance of the Visit

- **Strategic Autonomy of India:** The visit underscores India's unwavering commitment to independent decision-making in foreign policy. By hosting the Russian President despite Western pressure, India signals its own geopolitical alignment independent of external pressure.
- **Defence Cooperation:** Russia still provides 60-70% of India's defence inventory, making the partnership vital for India's military readiness. Both sides agreed to reformulate defence cooperation by advancing joint R&D, co-development, and Make in India manufacturing of next-generation systems.
- **Economic and Trade Transformation:** Due to India's defence and energy imports from Russia there has been a massive trade deficit that has prompted both governments to diversify cooperation. A 2030 Economic Cooperation Plan was adopted to expand collaboration in technology, manufacturing, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and investment.
- **Energy Security and Strategic Supply Chains:** Russia remains India's leading crude oil supplier, providing substantial discounts despite Western sanctions. During the visit, President Putin assured India of consistent fuel supplies, though India exercised caution, noting that energy procurement decisions are based on changing market dynamics.

- **Long-Term Resilience and Adaptability:** Marking 25 years of the 2000 Strategic Partnership Declaration, the visit reflects continuity through global shifts — from the post-Cold War era to Russia's current isolation. This resilience suggests the relationship is not transactional but fundamentally grounded in mutual strategic interest.

## Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025

- **Context:** A private member bill "Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025", reintroduced in the Lok Sabha.

### About Right to Disconnect

- The Right to Disconnect refers to an employee's right to not engage in work-related communications — such as calls, emails, or messages — outside official working hours.
- It aims to protect workers from excessive digital connectivity and ensure a healthy work-life balance.



### Key Features of the Bill

- The draft legislation proposes giving workers the legal right to ignore official communication outside designated working hours without facing disciplinary action.
- **The Bill mandates following Rights:**
  - Right to refuse after-hours calls, messages and e-mails without repercussions.
  - Setting up an Employees' Welfare Authority to implement and monitor the right to disconnect.
  - A national baseline study to assess digital communication burdens on employees outside work hours.
  - Mandatory negotiations between companies with more than 10 workers and employees/unions to frame work rules performed beyond office hours, which would qualify for overtime at normal wages.

- Counselling services and digital detox centres to be established in coordination with the government.
- Penalties for companies that violate the provisions, up to 1% of their total employee remuneration.

### Do you Know?

- A Private Member's Bill is a proposal introduced by MPs who are not ministers.
- Parliament debates these only on Fridays, and they are rarely enacted.
- Since Independence, just 14 Private Members' Bills have become law, with the most recent passed in 1970.

## Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs)

- **Context:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has granted in-principle approval for the registration of the Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust (RIIT) as a Public Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT).

### About Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs)

- An InvIT works like a mutual fund, but instead of investing in equities, it invests in revenue-generating infrastructure assets (e.g., toll roads).
- InvITs are created by sponsors, usually infrastructure companies or private equity firms.
  - Sponsors transfer ownership of eligible infrastructure assets to a Trust.
- InvITs are governed by SEBI (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014.

## Exercise Harimau Shakti

- **Context:** India and Malaysia have commenced the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Exercise Harimau Shakti 2025 at the Mahajan Field Firing Range, Rajasthan.

### Key Facts

- It is a bilateral military exercise between the Indian Army and the Malaysian Army.



- The exercise aimed at training both forces in jungle warfare, counter-insurgency operations, semi-urban combat and enabling smoother cooperation in future missions.



- The exercise began in 2012 and is conducted regularly, strengthening defence ties.

7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025

## Export Promotion Mission (EPM)

- Context:** The Government has approved the Export Promotion Mission (EPM) with ₹25,060 crore to boost exports, especially for MSMEs and labour-intensive sectors.

### About Export Promotion Mission

- In the Union Budget for 2025-26, the Finance Minister announced an Export Promotion Mission. It would facilitate easy access to export credit, cross-border factoring support, and support to MSMEs to tackle non-tariff measures in overseas markets.
- EPM will span six years covering FY 2025-26 to FY 2030-31.
- The Department of Commerce, Ministry of MSME, Ministry of Finance, Export Promotion Councils, Commodity Boards, financial institutions, industry associations and state governments.
- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), as the implementing agency via a dedicated digital platform integrated with existing trade systems.
- Two Integrated Sub-Schemes:** Niryat Protsahan and Niryat Disha.

- Under EPM, priority support will be extended to sectors impacted by recent global tariff escalations, such as textiles, leather, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, and marine products.

## Major Components of EPM

### Financial Support (Niryat Protsahan)

- Credit Guarantee Scheme for Exporters (CGSE):** Provides 100% coverage by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd (NCGTC).
- Additional credit facilities up to ₹20,000 crore to eligible exporters (including MSMEs).
- Enables collateral-free credit, improving liquidity and competitiveness.

### Non-Financial Support (Niryat Disha)

- Addressing Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs):** Funding for compliance, certifications, and technical standards.
- Market Acquisition and Branding:** Assistance for international exhibitions, packaging, and branding.
- Logistics Cost Reduction:** Support for supply chain efficiency and trade facilitation.

## 11<sup>th</sup> India International Science Festival (IISF)

- Context:** The 11<sup>th</sup> India International Science Festival (IISF) commenced in Panchkula, Haryana.



### About India International Science Festival (IISF)

- It was launched in 2015 and has established itself as a major platform for scientific exchange, innovation, outreach, and public engagement, consistently

expanding its scale through diverse programmes, wide participation, and landmark initiatives across each edition.

- **Theme:** The theme of IISF 2025 is Vigyan Se Samruddhi: for Aatmanirbhar Bharat.
- **IISF 2025 focus on five broad themes:**
  - Science, Technology and Ecology of North-West India and the Himalayan Region;
  - Science for Society and Education;
  - Atmanirbhar Bharat through Science and Technology;
  - Biotechnology and Bio-economy; and
  - Integration of Traditional Knowledge with Modern Science.

8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025

## Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025

- **Context:** The Parliament passed the Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025 with the Rajya Sabha approving and returning it to the Lok Sabha.

### Key Facts

- The Bill seeks to amend the Central Excise Act, 1944. The Act provides for the levy and collection of central excise duties on goods manufactured or produced in India.
- Central excise duties on many items were repealed with the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017, except for certain items such as tobacco and tobacco products.
- Tobacco and tobacco products continue to face a three-layered taxation structure comprising GST, GST compensation cess, and central excise duty.

### Key Provisions of the Bill

- The Bill increases central excise duty on unmanufactured tobacco, manufactured tobacco, tobacco products, and tobacco substitutes.
  - Unmanufactured tobacco (such as sun-cured tobacco leaves) from 64% to 70%.

- **Chewing tobacco:** From 25% to 100%.
- **Hookah or gudaku tobacco:** From 25% to 40%.
- **Smoking mixtures for pipes and cigarettes:** From 60% to 325%.
- **Cigarettes:** Current duty under the Act ranges from ₹200 to ₹735 per 1,000 cigarettes. The Bill proposes a significant increase to ₹2,700 to ₹11,000 per 1,000 cigarettes.

## UPI: World's Largest Real-Time Payment System

- **Context:** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) report on 'Growing Retail Digital Payments (The Value of Interoperability)' dated June 2025 had recognized Unified Payments Interface (UPI) as the world's largest retail fast-payment system (FPS) by transaction volume.



### About Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

- It is a system that empowers users to add multiple bank and other allowed accounts (of any participating bank) into a UPI App, merging several banking features, seamless fund routing & merchant payments under one hood.
- The pilot launch on UPI was done on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016 by Dr. Raghuram G Rajan, Governor, RBI at Mumbai.
- **Progress and Steps:**
  - UPI accounts for about 49% of global real-time payment transactions, far surpassing other international platforms.

- Digital transactions through RuPay and UPI are being expanded nationwide across multiple sectors, including public services, transportation, and e-commerce.
- **Countries with operational or planned interoperability include:** Singapore (PayNow), UAE, France, Nepal, Bhutan, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and others.

**9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025**

## International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- **Context:** The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change addressed a high-level meeting of the Collaborative Initiative for Big Cat Conservation under the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) in New Delhi.

### About International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- Launched by India in 2023 to facilitate global cooperation for conservation of seven big cat species: Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma.
- Out of the seven big cats under IBCA, five are found in India: Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Cheetah (reintroduced from Namibia, South Africa and Botswana since 2022).
- Open to 97 “range countries” where these big cats are found.
- It aims to mobilise global knowledge, resources, and best practices to protect big cats and their ecosystems.
- India has committed 2,000 crore (approx.) for initial funding over 5 years.

## ‘Your Money, Your Right’ Movement

- **Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged citizens to participate in the ‘Your Money, Your Right’ movement.

### About ‘Your Money, Your Right’ Movement

- It is an initiative, launched in October 2025, was designed to ensure citizens can reclaim their rightful assets.
- It aimed at helping people recover unclaimed deposits, insurance proceeds, dividends and other financial assets.
- It offers individuals a chance to convert forgotten financial assets into usable funds.

#### Various Steps

- Dedicated online portals have been created to enable easy tracking and claiming of funds:
  - RBI UDGM Portal for unclaimed bank deposits
  - IRDAI Bima Bharosa Portal for unclaimed insurance proceeds
  - SEBI MITRA Portal for unclaimed mutual fund amounts; and
  - IEPFA Portal for unpaid dividends and unclaimed shares.
- Facilitation camps have been held in 477 districts across the country, with a focus on rural and remote areas.

#### Do you Know?

Indian banks currently hold about ₹78,000 crore in unclaimed deposits. Insurance companies have nearly ₹14,000 crore lying unclaimed, mutual fund companies around ₹3,000 crore, and unclaimed dividends amount to roughly ₹9,000 crore.

**10<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025**

## UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

- **Context:** Deepavali has been inscribed on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Intergovernmental Committee, held in New Delhi.

### About Deepavali

- Deepavali, also known as Diwali, is celebrated on Kartik Amaavasya, which typically falls in October or November. Residences, thoroughfares, and temples are illuminated with numerous oil lamps.
- The festival opens with Dhanteras, when families purchase metalware or essentials as symbols of prosperity.
  - It is followed by Naraka Chaturdashi.
  - The third day is the highlight of Deepavali- the sacred Lakshmi-Ganesha Puja.



### About UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

- Intangible cultural heritage, includes the practices, knowledge, expressions, objects, and spaces that communities see as part of their cultural identity.
- For the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO adopted the 2003 Convention during its 32<sup>nd</sup> General Conference in Paris. India ratified the convention in 2005.
- To date, 16 Indian elements have been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List (including Deepavali) and India has served on the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for three terms.

### Human Rights Day

- **Context:** Human Rights Day is observed annually around the world on 10<sup>th</sup> December.

### About Human Rights Day

- The day marks the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.

- Human Rights Day has been observed every year since 1950.
- Theme for 2025: “Human Rights, Our Everyday Essentials”.

### About Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

- The document, consisting of a preamble and 30 articles setting out fundamental rights and freedoms.
- This landmark document enshrines the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being – regardless of race, color, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
- The declaration is not a treaty and is not legally binding in itself, but the principles it sets out have been incorporated into many countries’ laws and is viewed as the basis for international human rights law.

### About Human Rights

- Human rights are fundamental rights and freedoms that are inherent to all human beings, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, or any other status.
- These rights are considered universal, inalienable, and indivisible, forming the foundation for human dignity, equality, and justice.
- Human rights are different from the Civil rights that are created and defined by laws within a specific nation.
- Civil rights are legal rights granted and protected by a government, and they may change over time as laws are amended or updated.

### About National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

- It is a statutory body established in 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Act for promoting and protecting human rights in India.



- It consists of a Chairperson (a former CJI or Supreme Court judge), judicial members, human rights experts, and ex-officio members from national commissions.
- NHRC investigates human rights violations, issues recommendations, intervenes in court cases, reviews safeguards, promotes awareness, and advises the government on policy reforms. Although it has civil court powers, its recommendations are not binding.

**11<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025**

## World Inequality Report, 2025

- **Context:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the World Inequality Report highlights widening gaps in wealth, income, climate responsibility, and global financial flows, with India showing high levels of concentration at the top.

### Key Findings of Report

- **Global Inequality Trends:** The top 10% globally own three-quarters of all wealth;
  - The bottom 50% hold just 2%;
  - The top 1% control 37% of global wealth, 18 times more than the bottom half of the world combined.
- **Gender Inequality:** Women earn only 61% of men's income per working hour (excluding unpaid work).
  - It falls to 32% if it includes unpaid labor.
  - Globally, women capture just 26% of total labor income, a figure nearly unchanged since 1990.
- **Region-wise Inequality:** Middle East and North Africa (16%); South & Southeast Asia (20%); Sub-Saharan Africa (28%); East Asia (34%); Europe/North America/Oceania (around 40%)
- **Climate Inequality:** The report links economic inequality with environmental injustice:
  - The poorest 50% of the global population account for only 3% of carbon emissions tied to private capital.

- The top 10% are responsible for 77%, and the top 1% alone account for 41%, nearly double that of the bottom 90% combined.

- **Income Inequality in India:** The top 10% in India earn 58% of the national income, while bottom 50% receive only 15%.
  - Women earn just 18% of total labor income in India, below the global average of 34%.
- **Wealth Concentration in India:** Wealth inequality in India exceeds income inequality:
  - The richest 10% own 65% of total wealth;
  - The top 1% hold 40%;
  - The bottom 50% own less than 6%.

## GlowCas9

- **Context:** GlowCas9 is a newly engineered variant of the CRISPR Cas9 enzyme that emits light while editing DNA.

### Key Facts

- GlowCas9 is a bioluminescent Cas9 created at the Bose Institute, Kolkata, by fusing Cas9 with a split nano luciferase enzyme derived from deep sea shrimp proteins.
- CRISPR uses a guide RNA to direct the Cas9 enzyme to a specific DNA sequence.
  - Cas9 makes a precise cut, enabling gene correction.
- Bioluminescent Cas9 opens a new direction for "theratracking" – simultaneously performing therapy and tracking it at the molecular level.

## CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP20)

- **Context:** The 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP20) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) has concluded in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, marking the 50th anniversary of the Convention.

## About CITES

- CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments.
- It aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species.
- CITES was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of IUCN (The World Conservation Union). The text of the Convention was agreed in 1973, and came into force in 1975.
- CITES lists species in three appendices based on the level of protection required:
  - **Appendix I:** Species threatened with extinction and Commercial trade is strictly prohibited.
  - **Appendix II:** Species are not necessarily threatened with extinction but may become so if trade is not regulated. Trade is allowed but controlled through permits.
  - **Appendix III:** Species protected in at least one country which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling trade.
- CITES is legally binding on the Parties – in other words members have to implement the convention, however it does not take the place of national laws.
- The CITES Secretariat is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme and is located at Geneva, Switzerland.

