

COLONEL'S MILITARY & DEFENCE ARMOURY

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**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
WITH
SRI SRI
RAVI SHANKAR**

On Yoga, Inner Peace,
Well-being and Building
a Harmonious World



**FOREIGN COUNTRY FOCUS:
INDIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS – A
CIVILIZATIONAL CONNECT
STEEPED IN HISTORY**



**US-IRAN NUCLEAR
UNDERSTANDING: A
STRATEGIC RESET IN
WEST ASIAN GEOPOLITICS**



**G7 SUMMIT '26:
RECALIBRATING GLOBAL
GOVERNANCE AMID
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**GEN DHIRAJ SETH TAKES
OVER AS COAS-
GEN DWIVEDI RETIRES**



**INDIAN NAVY COMMISSIONS
3 WARSHIPS**



**DELHI-NCR SET TO DEVELOP
UNDER PLAN 2041**



**CHANDRAYAAN-2 DETECTS
ICE BENEATH MOON'S SURFACE**



**PADMA SHRI'26
AWARDS IN SPORTS
CONFERRED**

**SPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR ALL OF YOU PREPARING FOR
SSB AND CIVIL SERVICES INTERVIEWS**



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GLIMPSES OF INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY CELEBRATIONS BY THE INDIAN ARMY



FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S DESK



Here's saying a big Namaskar to all the wonderful readers of CMDA-the Current Affairs Newsmag for India's youth. With the monsoons having hit the Kerala coast on 4th of Jun, the country heaved a collective sigh of relief, as thus annual rainfall season is the life giver to many a people, with almost 40% of India being involved in agriculture, which is still rain-dependant. And this year is predicted to be a deficient rain one-El-Nino-and what all working against a normal monsoon. And, in the first gush of rain, our commercial

capital, Mumbai was flooded-with more than 250 mm rainfall recorded in just 24 hrs-such are the vagaries of nature. Nevertheless, our cities need to be fully prepared for the oncoming rains, especially the Delhi-NCR region, which witnesses overflowing drains & flooded streets even in a 2-hour downpour! Hope the Delhi CM and her team is listening & preparing!

As regards **world affairs**, the **West Asia war**, has finally seen a truce-though a precarious one- brought forth by the hectic negotiations by the **Qataris-Pakis**. Both the USA & Iran have agreed to a 60-day de-escalation roadmap in Switzerland to finalize a comprehensive deal ending the regional conflict. USA has issued a 60-day sanctions waiver on Iranian oil to help de-escalate tensions, while both nations work to ensure toll-free passage through the Strait of Hormuz. With this easing of tensions, the oil prices are back to normal, hovering around \$75 a barrel, and the world looks to lasting peace, hopefully. Read all about this and more, as reported by our **foreign affairs correspondent, Anjney Singh**, who also talks about **rebuilding supply chains globally-in an era of economic uncertainty**. He also reports on **the G7 Summit in France**, on the side-lines of which President Trump and PM Modi got a chance for an hour-long one-off meeting, where many bilateral issues were discussed. Next, he discusses the **new great game being played over, wherein Semi-conductor & critical mineral politics is deciding new equations & relations**.

Towards National news, Ms **Mahima** reports that the **NCR is set for a major transformation**, with the **approval of the Regional Plan 2041**; how the **North East region is being transformed and is now emerging as a powerhouse of growth**; She also reports that the **23rd instalment of PM-KISAN has been released**, with ₹18,880 crore transferred directly into bank accounts of over 9.44 crore farmers, and gives us an update on the **delayed Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project**; talks about **the delayed monsoon this year**, which is also likely to be deficient up to 15% as per current forecast, which might spell a water crisis for the country! She also reports **about CBSE being embroiled in on-screen marking controversy**, leading to top level sacking and changes, as also that a **Monkey Pox precautionary health alert has been sounded all over India**.



Ed-in-Chief presenting Jun issue of CMDA Magazine to Brig Iyengar, Cdr 25 Infantry Brigade

In Defence coverage by Yogesh Dixit, he updates us on the hierarchy changes at the top of Indian Army, with **Gen Dhiraj Seth taking over as COAS from Gen Dwivedi**, who superannuated on 30th Jun, after 42 years of glorious service to the nation. Next, he reports of operational trials of the indigenous **Divyastra Mk-1-a** loitering munition, developed by Lucknow-based startup **Hoverit**; Navy to acquire indigenous **Global Navigation Satellite System** jammers; Indian Coast Guard having

commissioned **H-561**, the first indigenously built **Air Cushion Vehicle (ACV or hovercraft)** in **Goa**. He also then talks of Navy having commissioned **3 Warships-INS Dunagiri, INS Sanshodhak, and INS Agray** at Kolkata in June 2026, and the multi-national **Ex PRAGATI**-which brought together over 400 military personnel from India 12 partner nations. He also reports about Naval sailors **Cdrs DilnaK & RoopaA** being awarded the prestigious **Shaurya Chakra**-for exceptional seamanship during the **Navika Sagar Parikrama II expedition**-aboard **INSV Tarini**, covering over 25,600 nautical miles, around the globe.

As regards **Science, Tech & Environment News**, **Yuvanshi Hooda** reports about **Chhari-Dhand Wetland in Gujarat**-where balancing clean energy with conservation has become a challenge. She also reports that **India's Chandrayaan-2** has detected ice moon's surface; and talks of **Arunachal's anti-dam protests highlighting indigenous concerns of locals**; talks of President of India recognising extraordinary service in healthcare, by conferring the **National Florence Nightingale Awards'26** upon **15 outstanding nurses**. She also tells us how **Assam plans to strengthen defences against Japanese Encephalitis ahead of peak season**; how **Odisha's Similipal Tiger Reserve** is witnessing a conservation success story & reports on **India's accelerated mission to eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia by 2047**.



Ed-in-Chief presenting Jun issue of CMDA Magazine to Principal & Vice Principal, KV No1, Bhatinda Cantt

Towards Economic News-Anand Srivastava talks of India launching **E85-** a fuel that costs ₹20 less per litre, but with a catch; talks of **India-US finally agreeing to a trade deal-with a 15 July deadline** to sign on the dotted lines; reports that **RBI held rates for the third time in a row, and why that is not a sign of confidence**; and lastly analyses how **India's Semiconductor push gets bigger & more ambitious**. Anand also gives us those **30 Quiz Questions** to rack your brain with, plus **5 CSE Mains Questions**, with one solved for

your comfort!

As regards **Sports News**, this desk, **under Yogesh Dixit**, reports that India delivered a dominant performance at the **U23 Asian Wrestling Championships 2026** in **Da Nang**,

Vietnam, finishing with 27 medals; talks of India securing 4 medals, including 2 gold; 2 silver, at the ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol Munich 2026 held in **Germany**. He also tells us that **India finished 2nd in medal standings at the 2026 Asian U20 Athletics Championships** held in Hong Kong, China, with 19 medals, including 10 gold; plus India's 17 medal haul at the Ulaanbaatar Open Wrestling; also of India winning the **SAFF Women's Football Championship'26** after defeating defending champions Bangladesh 3-1 in the final at **Goa**, as also the **Men's U18 Hockey Team** winning the **Men's U18 Asia Cup 2026** title by defeating hosts Japan. Continuing the story of sports glory, he reports that **India's top men's doubles pair, Satwik-Chirag won the Singapore Open 2026** title, our Grandmaster **R Praggnanandhaa** creating history by becoming the first Indian to win the prestigious **Norway Chess title'26** held in Oslo, plus reports of **Padma Shri'26** in Sports being awarded by the president

This month's **reader's page** features a poem and an article by two talented girls of **Army Public School, Sagar, MP**. Readers-we invite schools & colleges, to showcase their talented writers. Do get in touch with the Ed-in-Chief or our marketing men-**Anjaney Singh**, on anjneysingh0@gmail.com or **Anand** at shivastavaanand900@gmail.com.

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JAI HIND Col (Dr) Bhasker Gupta (ret'd), cmda.newsmag@gmail.com



Editors too deserve a break! Following this dictum, yours truly too a week off, to explore the salubrious chimes of Bir-Billing in Himachal's Kangra District, and spent some quality time with friends and Family at Virasat-E-Bir, a heritage resort there

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR-YOGA GURU, SPIRITUAL TEACHER, FOUNDER OF ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION



“I had begun travelling and teaching yoga and meditation. Still, I had been concerned about helping people lead a happy, healthy life. There was something amiss”-Gurudev

THE CHILD WHO KNEW: Providence had laid the tracks for the journey to infinity, as the whole world awaits... The entire family at Papanasam, a tiny village in Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur district, awaited the arrival of the

first child of Vishalakshi Amma and Acharya Ratnananda. It was the month of May and temperatures had soared. The midwife and the elder women were in and out of the delivery room and the men paced the central courtyard of the house. Suddenly, there was a gentle pitter-patter of raindrops and the beautiful smell the parched earth gives off when touched by the first few droplets of rain filled the air. A procession of a deity from the local Shiva temple passed by, chanting vedic mantras. The men stepped out to bow to the deity and the loud wail of a child filled the air. They rushed back in. “It's a boy,” announced Alamelu Perima, the child's maternal aunt.

Once Vishalakshi Amma took little Ravi for blessings to the Shankarcharya and he responded by saying, “You are blessed to be his mother.” As young as four, he would be found chanting and praying. On being asked what he prayed for, he would say, “For everyone to be happy.” The shlokas of the Bhagavad Gita came effortlessly to him...not learnt, just known.



Once, a priest from the tradition of Shri Muthuswami Dikshitar, a saint and musician from the 18th century, visited the city. Little Ravi was taken to him for his blessings. The priest placed a bowlful of objects before him. He instantly picked up an emerald green Shivalinga and placed a silver serpent on it. The priest was ecstatic. The reason? Muthuswami Dikshitar had predicted that the one who would uphold dharma in this yuga would pick up exactly these objects.



THE ART OF LIVING

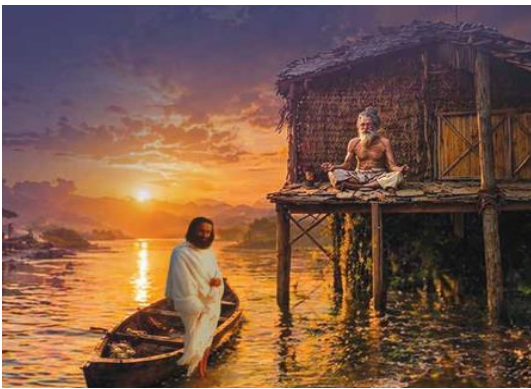
After school, young Ravi joined St Joseph's College and graduated in Physics and also Vedic studies. While still in college, an advertisement in the newspaper about Transcendental Meditation caught young Ravi's attention. He registered to attend & was soon invited to their teachers' training program. This led him to Rishikesh, where he attended some advanced programs.



A few months later, he returned to Rishikesh. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the founder of TM, was expected to arrive. Within weeks of meeting young Ravi, Maharishi asked him to accompany him to Switzerland. He had left in bell bottoms-shirt but returned in flowing white robes-long hair, till his shoulders. Thus, started his journey with the Maharishi, which took him around the world several times. But the visions of people waiting for him continued. It felt as if they were reminders, acting as a gentle pull towards an unknown path whose call was growing intense. Perhaps the time had come for a new beginning.

Before taking any decision, young Ravi decided to meet Devraha Baba, a saint who resided on the banks of the Ganga in Varanasi. A reluctant boatman ferried him across. On seeing him, the saint greeted him from the 'machan' he was sitting on and advised him, ***“Let knowledge flow and let Satsangs reach every corner of the world.”*** As a prasad, he threw him an entire watermelon! The message was clear. Time had come to step out on his own & carry knowledge to the world.

NOT EVERY JOURNEY BEGINS WITH A SEARCH



Some begin in stillness. In 1981, in a farmhouse in Kengeri, near Bangalore, during deep silence, the inspiring spark for a new technique was kindled in him. A few months later, in March 1982, in the quiet spaces of Shimoga, on the banks of the river Bhadravati, the breath found a rhythm and the technique revealed itself in its complete form.

Sudarshan Kriya was not created. It was revealed. The Master wanted to gift it to the world. A few gathered, then a few more. In small rooms, in ashrams, in homes-something intangible began to happen. People arrived with questions...and left with a smile. The first courses began in Shimoga, Ooty, and Delhi. No grand announcements. No design. A handful of participants...a quiet beginning, yet people saw life beginning to change.

Soon, two of India's most respected jurists, Justice P N Bhagwati and Justice VR Krishna Iyer, saw the need of the hour. Their encouragement gave form to the formless and the Art of Living was born. Gradually the sharing expanded. Those who experienced...began to carry it forward. Through Teachers' Training Programs, participants became teachers and a movement that had sprouted, soon began to grow over the years.

Across the world, millions began to experience moments of stillness, miracles of healing, and a return to oneself. Through Sudarshan Kriya, a billion lives have been touched and transformed in 182 countries - children, youth, corporates, actors, bureaucrats, housewives, spiritual leaders, businessmen, politicians, medical practitioners, sports personnel and many more. From Sri Sri Ravi Shankar...to Gurudev, for millions of hearts, he is a guru not only of wisdom, but of joy and celebration. Yet for Gurudev, inner transformation was an end in



itself. It came full circle when those whose lives had been touched naturally stepped forward to serve

Removing the Veils of Ignorance with Yoga

An article By Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

There is an ancient story about how the founder of yoga, Maharishi Patanjali, gave this deep knowledge in the form of simple Sutras. The Master said he was not going to discuss the yoga sutras unless a thousand people gathered together. And so—thousands of people gathered south of the Vindhya

Mountains to listen to him.

Patanjali had another condition: he would put a veil between himself and his students and tell them that nobody was to lift the veil or leave when the knowledge was being given. Everybody had to stay in the room till he finished. So Patanjali stayed behind the veil, and he shared the knowledge, and each of them absorbed it. It was an amazing phenomenon—they couldn't believe how they were receiving this knowledge from behind the veil, without words being uttered.

Each student experienced a blast of energy, a blast of enthusiasm, that they could not contain. Yet they still had to maintain discipline. But, one boy was desperate to go out to answer nature's call. He thought to himself that he would go and come back quietly.

Nobody will come to know. Yet another participant became curious. "What is the Master doing behind the veil? I want to see."

Why did the boy lift the veil? What do you understand from these two incidents?

There is a lot of depth in this story. What was the significance of the veil?

You know, everyone is a spark of light. Life is light itself. Yet we live in such darkness of suffering. Why is this so? This is because the light gets covered. If your nature is joy, if your nature is bliss, then why is there suffering in the world?

How come there is so much suffering? What is the root cause of this covering, this veil? Patanjali answers this very beautifully. Ignorance, ego, craving, hatred, and fear of the unknown; these are the five sources of suffering. And ignorance is the root cause of all of them.

Ignorance is considering the impermanent to be permanent and the permanent to be impermanent, a fundamental misunderstanding that distorts our perception of life. Experts say the blood changes every twenty-four hours, the stomach lining in five days, the skin in a month, and every cell in the body is new within a year. Your mind changes every moment, too. Yet, you hold on to a fixed idea of who you are, and you expect the people around you to remain the same as they were yesterday. A fixed idea about who you are stops your growth and limits your potential.

The next cause of suffering is described as *Asmita*, that is identifying our intellect as our self. Have you noticed that some people, stubbornly, stick to their opinion despite the facts being contrary to it? *Asmita* is the inability to see the Self and the *Buddhi* & the power of the organs of perception as separate entities.



Asmita means “me” or “I” is the second cause of suffering. Your idea of “me, mine,” not being one with existence, having a feeling of separation from existence, or having a superiority or inferiority complex gives you misery.

Then comes attachment or craving for pleasant experiences, repeated pleasures, which keeps the mind agitated and restless. The opposite of craving is an aversion to people or situations, that keeps the mind engaged in small and unwanted matters, and fills it with complaints.

The last cause is the deep-rooted fear of losing one's existence. Like salt in food, a little fear is essential for people to protect themselves. But when fear becomes too much, it leads to insecurity and suffering.

Now what can one do? How to recognise that life is joy? As we mark the International Day of Yoga this year, it is worth sitting with this ancient wisdom, because Yoga removes the root causes of suffering.

Through the practice of asana, pranayama, and meditation, the veil that covers the light gets lifted. As you awaken to this truth, you will not identify with your old fears and thoughts, with the old you. Your ignorance makes you hold on to your past, hold on to

your idea of who you are. People think it is a good quality to ‘know who you are’. But if you have an idea of who you are, you get stuck. The right attitude is to feel that you do not know who you are, because you are changing every moment.

Meditation is the way we wash out the misery. You become so light, hollow, and empty that you sing and dance and the veil on the Self begins to get thinner.

There is no more suffering for the one who is awakened in knowledge. The world appears completely different, filled with bliss, because it is no longer seen as separate from the Self. As the layers thin and finally dissolve, suffering simply falls away on its own. What remains is what was always there beneath the veil- peace, freedom, and joy.

SRI SRI: IN CONVERSATION WITH TEAM CMDA

Q1. Team CMDA: You’ve taught meditation to millions across 180+ countries. What’s the one misconception about meditation you wish people would stop believing?

Ans- Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: The biggest misconception is that meditation is concentration. Meditation is not concentration. Concentration is an action; meditation is a state of deep rest. When you meditate, you do not do something. You simply let go. Many people think they have to control the mind or stop thoughts. That is another misconception. The nature of the mind is to think. If thoughts come during meditation, don't fight them. The effort to stop thoughts creates more disturbance. I often say: don't try to meditate. If you try too hard, you will only get a headache. Meditation happens when you relax.

Q2. Team CMDA You've led peace dialogues in war zones like Iraq-Colombia. How do you even begin a conversation with people who see each other as enemies?

Ans-Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar:First, you don't begin with politics. You begin with humanity. When people are angry, hurt, or carrying years of mistrust, they are not able to listen to logic. Before dialogue can happen, emotions need to calm down. A stressed mind cannot think clearly. I have seen that whether it is Iraq, Colombia, Kashmir, or anywhere else, every human being wants the same things: a peaceful life, security for their children, dignity, and happiness. We start from that common ground.

When there is a conflict and two parties come to me asking for mediation, I usually give a simple example. Suppose two people come with a cake and ask me to divide it between them. If I divide the cake myself, there is often no trust. One person will say, “You gave a larger piece to the other person,” and the other may feel the same. The mediator is then blamed for being unfair.



Instead, I ask one person to cut the cake and give the other person the right to choose which piece they want. The moment you do that, the person cutting the cake becomes very careful. They know that if they make one piece larger than the other, the other person will simply choose the larger piece. So they naturally try to divide it as fairly as possible.

The same principle applies in conflict resolution. Usually, people come with their problems, but they have not thought about the solution. So, I ask each party, "What solution do you propose?" I ask them to come not only with their grievances but also with their own

ideas for resolving the situation.

Then I do not sit with the problems of both parties; I sit with the solutions offered by both parties. Just as one person cuts the cake and the other chooses, I create a process where fairness emerges naturally and people take responsibility for the outcome themselves. This approach has been useful in resolving land disputes and many other conflicts. I ask people, “What do you think is the solution? What agreement can we arrive at together?” When people move from defending their positions to creating solutions, the possibility of peace begins.

Q.3 Team CMDA: Thanks for your time & valuable insights, now before we part one profound message you wish to give, to the lakhs of young readers of CMDA.



Ans – Gurudev. My simple message is, “Instead of thinking ‘What about me?’ or ‘What can I gain from this world?’ think ‘What can I do for the world?’ When everyone comes from the point of contributing to society, you have a Divine society.”

G7 SUMMIT '26: RECALIBRATING GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AMID STRATEGIC FRAGMENTATION

The G7 Summit 2026, hosted by France in Évian-les-Bains, from ---- to, came at a pivotal moment in international politics. Against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Middle East instability, emerging technological rivalries, and shifting economic power centres, the summit reflected the evolving role of advanced democracies in shaping the global order. More than a diplomatic gathering, it has become a forum for strategic coordination in an increasingly multipolar world.

Historical Evolution: From Economic Coordination to Strategic Governance

Established in 1975 as the G6 and expanded to the G7 with Canada's inclusion in 1976, the grouping initially focused on economic cooperation among industrialized democracies. Over the decades, its agenda expanded to encompass security, climate governance, energy transitions, and technological regulation. The G7 emerged as a key pillar of the liberal international order, advocating rules-based multilateralism and democratic values.

Contemporary Geopolitical Landscape

This year, it unfolded amid heightened geopolitical turbulence. The prolonged Russia-Ukraine war continues to test Western unity, while instability in West Asia threatens global energy security. Simultaneously, strategic competition among major powers has accelerated discussions on supply-chain resilience, critical minerals, semiconductor security, and technological sovereignty. It also highlighted concerns regarding artificial intelligence governance, cyber security, and digital infrastructure. These issues indicate a transition from traditional security paradigms to a broader concept of comprehensive national power.

Strategic Concerns and Emerging Fault Lines-Several challenges confront the G7's effectiveness:

- **Erosion of Global Consensus:** Growing divergence between developed and developing nations on climate finance, trade, and technology access.
- **Rise of Alternative Platforms:** Expansion of groups such as BRICS reflects demands for a more representative global governance architecture.
- **Energy and Maritime Security Risks:** Uncertainty surrounding the Strait of Hormuz and Red Sea shipping routes threatens economic stability.
- **Technology Fragmentation:** Competing regulatory frameworks may create a fragmented digital ecosystem.
- **Credibility Gap:** Perceptions of selective intervention and unequal burden-sharing continue to challenge G7 legitimacy.

Future Trajectory: Towards Inclusive Strategic Leadership



The future relevance of the G7 will depend on its ability to adapt to a multipolar environment. Engagement with emerging economies, particularly India, is increasingly viewed as essential for addressing transnational challenges. The summit must move beyond crisis management toward building resilient institutions capable of responding to climate change, food insecurity, technological disruption, and geopolitical conflicts.

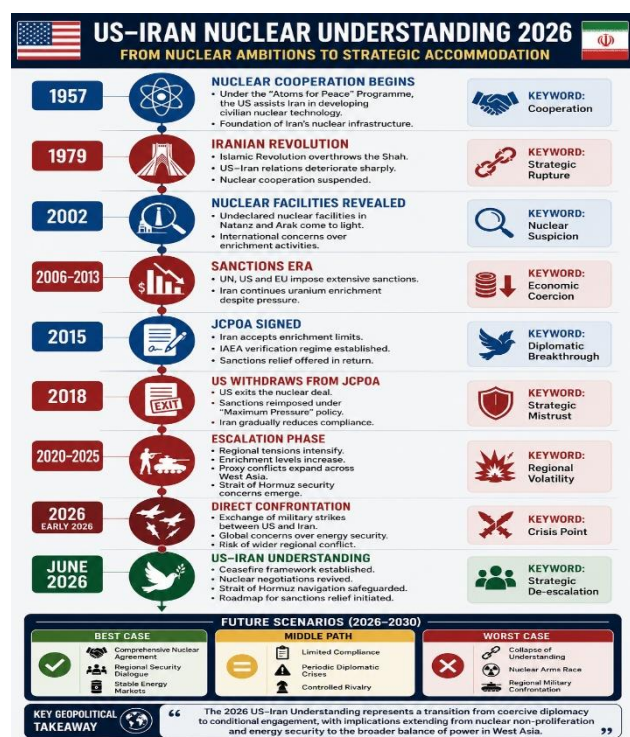
The Way Forward

- Strengthen **inclusive multilateralism** via a deeper engagement with Global South.
- Promote **responsible AI governance** and cyber norms.
- Enhance **energy diversification** and secure maritime corridors.
- Support reforms in global institutions-IMF, World Bank, and UN Security Council.
- Foster **strategic stability** through dialogue, deterrence, and diplomatic engagement.

Conclusion

The G7 Summit'26 represented a critical test of democratic leadership in an era defined by geopolitical fragmentation and strategic competition. Its success will be measured not merely by declarations, but by its capacity to bridge divides, reinforce global stability, and shape an inclusive and resilient international order for the decades ahead.

US-IRAN NUCLEAR UNDERSTANDING: A STRATEGIC RESET IN WEST ASIAN GEOPOLITICS



The emerging US-Iran Nuclear understanding of 2026 represents one of the most consequential geopolitical developments in West Asia in recent years. More than a bilateral agreement, it reflects a broader attempt to balance nuclear non-proliferation, regional security, energy stability, and great-power interests. At a time when the international system is witnessing increasing geopolitical fragmentation, the agreement has the potential to reshape the strategic architecture of the Middle East.

Historical Evolution: From Cooperation to Confrontation

Iran's nuclear programme dates back to the 1950s under the "Atoms for Peace" initiative. Over the decades, concerns regarding uranium enrichment and potential weaponisation brought Iran into conflict with Western powers. The 2015 Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) sought to address these concerns through stringent monitoring and sanctions relief.

However, US withdrawal from JCPOA in 2018 triggered a cycle of sanctions, counter-sanctions, and strategic mistrust. Subsequent years witnessed heightened tensions in the Persian Gulf, proxy conflicts & growing fears of nuclear escalation.

Strategic Significance of Current Understanding -Aims to establish a pathway towards:

- Limiting nuclear escalation and enhancing transparency.
- Gradual easing of economic sanctions.

- Ensuring freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.
- Reviving diplomatic engagement through multilateral mechanisms.

From a geopolitical standpoint, the understanding seeks to prevent a security dilemma in West Asia, where military actions by one state often trigger countermeasures by others, thereby increasing regional instability.

Strategic Opportunities and Emerging Challenges

Opportunities

- Reduction in regional tensions and military confrontation.
- Stabilisation of global energy markets.
- Revival of multilateral diplomacy and confidence-building measures.
- Enhanced maritime security in critical sea lanes.
- Strengthening of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Challenges

- Verification and compliance concerns regarding nuclear commitments.
- Divergent strategic objectives of Washington and Tehran.
- Opposition from regional actors with competing security interests.
- Continued influence of proxy groups across West Asia.
- Risk of political changes reversing diplomatic gains.

The agreement therefore represents a tactical de-escalation rather than a definitive resolution of longstanding disputes.

Future Outlook: Between Diplomacy and Deterrence

The future of the understanding will depend on sustained political commitment, robust verification mechanisms, and mutual confidence-building. Success could pave the way for a broader regional security framework, while failure may revive nuclear brinkmanship, arms races, and geopolitical competition.

Way Forward

- Strengthen international monitoring and verification mechanisms.
- Adopt a phased and reciprocal implementation framework.
- Institutionalise regional security dialogues involving Gulf countries.
- Promote maritime cooperation in strategic chokepoints.
- Address broader concerns including missile programmes and proxy conflicts.

To Conclude: This Understanding is not merely a nuclear agreement; it is a strategic test of diplomacy in an increasingly multipolar world. Its success could contribute to regional stability, energy security, and the preservation of the rules-based international order. Conversely, its failure could deepen geopolitical fault lines and reignite one of the world's most sensitive security challenges -thus it stands at the intersection of deterrence, diplomacy, and strategic stability.

FROM GLOBALIZATION TO GEOECONOMICS: REBUILDING SUPPLY CHAINS IN THE ERA OF ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY



The global economy in 2026 stands at a critical crossroads. While the immediate shocks of the pandemic have faded, a new era of geopolitical competition, technological rivalry, and strategic fragmentation is reshaping international trade. The focus is no longer merely on economic recovery but on building resilient supply chains capable of withstanding geopolitical disruptions. In this evolving landscape, supply chains have become instruments of national power, transforming geo-economics into a central pillar of global governance.

The End of the Hyper-Globalization Era

For three decades, globalization was driven by efficiency, cost minimization, and interconnected production networks.

Nations embraced global value chains under the assumption that economic interdependence would foster stability. However, events ranging from the pandemic and the Russia–Ukraine conflict to disruptions in the Red Sea and rising US–China strategic competition exposed the fragility of this model.

By 2026, the world is witnessing a shift from **"Just-in-Time"** production to **"Just-in-Case"** resilience. Economic security has become as important as economic efficiency.

Supply Chains as the New Geopolitical Battleground

Recent developments illustrate this transformation. The continuing instability around critical maritime chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb has reinforced concerns over energy and trade security. Simultaneously, competition over semiconductors, rare earth minerals, artificial intelligence infrastructure, and green technologies has intensified.

Major powers are increasingly pursuing:

- **Friend-shoring** to politically aligned partners.
- **Near-shoring** to geographically proximate economies.
- **Strategic decoupling** in sensitive technologies.
- **Economic de-risking** rather than complete disengagement.

As a result, supply chains have become central to strategic autonomy and national resilience.

Economic Recovery Amid Fragmentation



The paradox of 2026 is that global growth is recovering while economic fragmentation is deepening. Governments are investing heavily in logistics corridors, port modernization, critical mineral partnerships, and digital trade networks.

Initiatives such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), the European Union's economic security strategy, and Indo-Pacific connectivity frameworks reflect efforts to diversify trade routes and

reduce excessive dependence on single markets.

India, in particular, has emerged as a beneficiary of the "China Plus One" strategy, attracting investments in electronics, semiconductors, renewable energy, and manufacturing sectors.

Emerging Risks to Global Stability

Despite positive indicators, several structural concerns remain:

- Rising protectionism and industrial subsidies.
- Strategic competition between major powers.
- Climate-induced disruptions to transportation and agriculture.
- Vulnerabilities in critical mineral supply chains.
- Increasing weaponization of trade and technology.

If unmanaged, these trends could accelerate the formation of competing economic blocs, weakening multilateral trade architecture.

Towards a Resilient Economic Order

The future global economy will be shaped not by the most efficient supply chains, but by the most resilient ones. Nations must balance economic openness with strategic security. Strengthening multilateral institutions, diversifying sourcing networks, investing in digital infrastructure, and promoting sustainable logistics will be essential.

The defining challenge of 2026 is no longer globalization versus protectionism; it is resilience versus vulnerability. The countries that successfully navigate this transition will drive economic recovery & shape the emerging geopolitical order of 21st century.

THE NEW GREAT GAME: SEMICONDUCTOR AND CRITICAL MINERAL POLITICS

The geopolitical landscape of June 2026 highlights a growing reality: control over **semiconductors and critical minerals** is becoming as important as control over energy resources. Discussions at the G7 Summit, continuing US-China technology rivalry, and concerns over supply-chain disruptions amid Middle East tensions have reinforced the centrality of these resources in shaping global power.

From Energy to Technology Security

Semiconductors power AI machines, intelligence, telecom, defence systems, and digital infrastructure, while critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, and rare earths are essential for batteries, electric vehicles, and clean-energy technologies. What oil was to industrial economies, chips and critical minerals are to the emerging digital and green economy. Consequently, nations increasingly view their access through the prism of **national security, strategic autonomy, and economic resilience**.

The Emerging Geopolitical Contest: Contemporary strategic environment shows intense competition among major powers.

- The **USA** is expanding export controls and investing heavily in domestic semiconductor manufacturing.
- **China** seeks technological self-reliance while leveraging its dominance in rare-earth processing and mineral refining.
- **European Union**, Japan, and India are pursuing supply-chain diversification and “de-risking” strategies.
- Result is the emergence of a new era of **techno-geopolitics**, where economic tools increasingly serve strategic objectives.

Key Strategic Concerns

- **Supply Chain Vulnerability:** Advanced chip production remains concentrated in Taiwan, while China dominates processing of several critical minerals, creating strategic dependencies.
- **Resource Nationalism:** Mineral-rich countries Indonesia, Chile & Congo are seeking greater control over extraction and value addition.
- **Geo-economic Statecraft:** Export restrictions, sanctions, industrial subsidies, and investment screening have become instruments of geopolitical competition.
- **Conflict Risks:** Instability in key maritime chokepoints and geopolitical flashpoints can disrupt global technology and mineral supply chains.

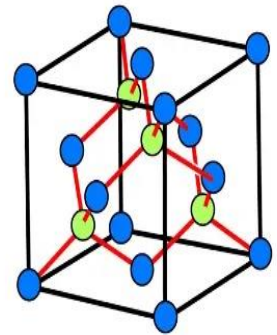
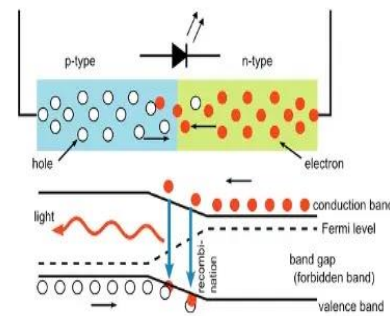
India’s Strategic Position

India is emerging as a significant player through semiconductor manufacturing initiatives, critical mineral partnerships, and participation in resilient supply-chain frameworks. These efforts aim to reduce import dependence while enhancing technological competitiveness.

Way Forward: A sustainable strategy requires:

- Diversified sourcing and processing networks.

What is Semiconductor Physics?



Electrical 4 U

- Strategic mineral reserves.
- Recycling and circular economy practices.
- Trusted technology partnerships.
- Environmentally responsible mining standards.

Conclusion: Semiconductors and critical minerals have become the foundation of economic power, technological leadership, and national security. The countries that secure resilient supply chains and technological capabilities will gain a decisive advantage in the evolving global order, making this one of the most consequential geopolitical contests of our time.



NATIONAL NEWS

DELHI-NCR SET TO DEVELOP UNDER PLAN 2041



Introduction-The National Capital Region (NCR) is set for a major transformation with the approval of the Regional Plan 2041 by the National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB). The long-term development blueprint proposes the creation of four new **"NaMo Cities"** and three specialized economic zones aimed at promoting balanced urban growth, reducing pressure on Delhi, and creating new opportunities for businesses and residents.

Further Insights

- **Four New NaMo Cities to Shape Future Urban Growth** - A key feature of the Regional Plan 2041 is the development of four New Model (NaMo) Cities-envisioned as modern urban centres with world-class infrastructure, affordable housing, employment-education, healthcare & efficient public services. The objective is to create self-sustaining cities that can accommodate future population growth while reducing dependence on Delhi.
- **Three Specialized Economic Zones to Boost Investments** - Proposes the establishment of three major economic zones focused on sectors such as manufacturing, logistics, services, and emerging industries. These zones are expected to **attract domestic and international investments**, generate large-scale employment opportunities, and strengthen the NCR's position as one of India's leading economic hubs.

- **No Expansion of Existing NCR Boundaries-** Despite the ambitious development agenda, authorities have decided not to expand the geographical boundaries of NCR. Instead, the focus will remain on improving infra, governance & planning within the existing region. This approach aims to ensure better coordination among states and more effective implementation of development projects.
- **Major Push for Connectivity-** Improved connectivity forms a central pillar Plan 2041. Authorities plan to strengthen transportation networks through highways, expressways, metro systems, rapid rail corridors & multimodal transport infra. Better connectivity will reduce travel times, improve access to jobs, and support economic activity across the region.



- **Focus on Sustainable Development-** The plan emphasizes environmentally responsible growth through better land-use planning, water conservation measures, climate-resilient infrastructure, and environmental protection initiatives.

Conclusion-The Regional Plan 2041 presents a forward-looking vision for the future of Delhi-NCR. If implemented effectively, it could ease pressure on Delhi, improve quality of life for millions of residents-transforming NCR into a network of modern, interconnected cities driving economic growth for decades to come.

INDIA'S NORTH-EAST IS EMERGING AS A POWERHOUSE OF GROWTH

Introduction - Over past 12 years, our North-East, popularly known as "Ashtalakshmi," has undergone a remarkable transformation. Comprising eight vibrant states **Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim**, the region is now witnessing rapid progress in connectivity, infrastructure, healthcare, education, energy, and agriculture. Once considered geographically isolated, the North-East is steadily becoming a key driver of India's economic growth and a crucial **gateway to Southeast Asia** under the **Act East Policy**.

Further Insights



Strong Policy Support Accelerating Development - The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) has played a major role in supporting the region's growth through dedicated schemes and funding. Thousands of development projects have been sanctioned and completed, helping improve infra, livelihoods, healthcare facilities & social services across all 8 states.

- **PM-DevINE Creating New Opportunities-** Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East

Region (PM-DevINE) has been launched to address critical infrastructure and social development needs. With an allocation of **₹6,600 crore**, the scheme supports projects related to roads, livelihoods, healthcare, tourism, and education, helping bridge developmental gaps in remote areas.

- **Connectivity Revolution Transforming the Region -** Significant investments in



roads, railways, airports, waterways, bridges, and tunnels have transformed transportation in the North-East. National highways have expanded substantially, rural roads now connect previously inaccessible villages, and modern railway projects are integrating the region with the national network. Landmark projects such as the Bogibeel Bridge, Bhupen Hazarika Setu, and Sela

Tunnel have improved mobility and reduced travel time.

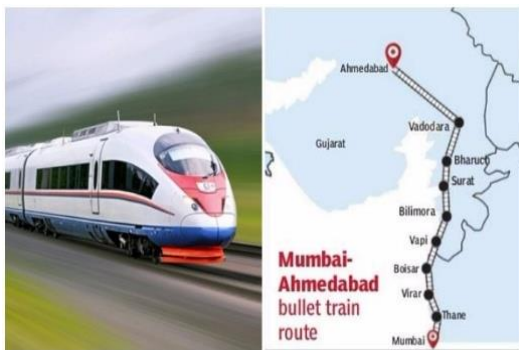
- **Air and Digital Connectivity Reaching New Heights-** Under the **UDAN scheme**, several new airports and regional routes have been introduced, making air travel more accessible. Simultaneously, high-speed internet connectivity has expanded through BharatNet and mobile tower installations, helping rural communities access digital services, education, and online opportunities.
- **Clean Energy and Sustainable Growth -** The North-East is emerging as a major contributor to India's clean energy goals. Large hydropower projects such as the **Dibang Multipurpose Project and Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project** are expected to generate substantial renewable energy. Solar energy initiatives, green hydrogen projects, and the North East Gas Grid are further strengthening energy security.
- **Improved Quality of Life Through Basic Services-** Government initiatives have significantly improved access to tap water, sanitation, housing, electricity, healthcare, and education. Millions of households now benefit from schemes such as Jal Jeevan Mission, Swachh Bharat Mission, PMAY, Ayushman Bharat, and Saubhagya, leading to healthier and more comfortable living conditions.

- **Agriculture and Rural Economy Gaining Momentum**-The region's agriculture sector has benefited from organic farming initiatives, fisheries development, dairy expansion, bamboo-based industries, and farmer support schemes. Geographical Indication products like Lakadong Turmeric, Queen Pineapple, and King Chilli are gaining national/international recognition, creating new incomes for farmers.

Conclusion - As the region continues to strengthen its links with the rest of the country and neighboring nations, it is well-positioned to play a central role in building a prosperous, connected, and developed India.

MUMBAI-AHMEDABAD BULLET TRAIN PROJECT

Introduction-India is taking a major leap towards modern transportation with the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) Project, popularly known as **the Bullet Train Project**. As India's first high-speed rail corridor, it aims to transform inter-city travel by providing faster, safer, and more comfortable transportation. Spanning **508 kilometres** across **Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli**, the project is also helping India build expertise in advanced railway technology and infrastructure development.



Further Insights

India's Fastest Train Corridor-Being developed using **Japan's renowned Shinkansen technology**. Bullet trains on this route will operate at speeds of up to **320 kmph**, reducing travel time to just **1 hour, 58 minutes**.

Modern Infrastructure on a Massive Scale-The corridor includes 12 stations, multiple bridges, tunnels, viaducts, power systems, and advanced signalling

infrastructure. Nearly 90% of the route is elevated, ensuring smooth and efficient operations.

India's First Undersea Rail Tunnel-One of the most remarkable features of the project is a 21-kilometre tunnel section in Maharashtra, including a 7-kilometre undersea tunnel beneath Thane Creek. This represents a major engineering achievement for the country.

Advanced Safety Systems-Incorporates earthquake detection systems, rainfall monitoring stations, and wind-speed monitoring technology to ensure safe train operations under all weather conditions.

Boost to Employment and Industry-Expected to create thousands of direct and indirect jobs. It is also supporting the Make in India initiative through technology transfer, skill development, and increased participation of Indian industries.

Conclusion- With cutting-edge technology, faster travel, enhanced safety, and significant economic benefits, the project is set to redefine rail transportation and pave the way for future high-speed rail corridors across the country.



PM-KISAN 23rd INSTALMENT RELEASED



Introduction-In a major boost for India's farming community, the government has released the 23rd instalment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme. Announced on **June 20, 2026, in Hooghly, West Bengal**, the latest instalment transferred more than ₹18,880 crore directly into the bank accounts of over 9.44 crore farmers. Among the beneficiaries are more than **2.18 crore women farmers**. The occasion was

celebrated nationwide as "**PM KISAN Utsav Diwas**".

Further Insights

- **Direct Financial Support to Farmers-**Provides eligible farmer families with ₹6,000 annually in three equal instalments of ₹2,000 each. The money is transferred directly to Aadhaar-linked bank accounts through the **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system**, ensuring transparency and eliminating middlemen.
- **One of the World's Largest DBT Schemes-** Since its launch in February 2019, the scheme has disbursed more than ₹4.46 lakh crore to farmers across India. The Union Budget 2026-27 has allocated ₹60,000 crore for the continued implementation of PM-KISAN.
- **Special Benefits for Women Farmers-**Women continue to play an important role here, with over 2.18 crore women farmers having received financial assistance, reflecting the government's focus on inclusive agricultural development.
- **New Agricultural Initiatives in West Bengal-**Alongside the fund release, several new initiatives were launched, including crop insurance under PMFBY, the Digital Agriculture Mission, Natural Farming clusters, and PM Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana. These programmes aim to improve productivity, sustainability, and farmers' access to modern agricultural services.

- **Technology Making Delivery Easier**-PM-KISAN uses digital platforms, Aadhaar verification, e-KYC, and the PM-KISAN mobile app to simplify registration and payment tracking. The AI-powered chatbot Kisan-eMitra also helps farmers access information in multiple Indian languages.

Conclusion-PM-KISAN has emerged as a lifeline for millions of farmers by providing regular income support and improving financial stability. Beyond direct cash assistance, the scheme encourages investment in better farming practices, enhances productivity, and reduces dependence on informal loans.

MONSOON DELAY IN INDIA-WATER CRISIS LOOMS



Introduction-In June 2026, Mumbai is facing growing water stress due to a delayed monsoon and rapidly falling reservoir levels. The BMC introduced stricter water conservation measures as storage in city-supplying lakes dropped to around 10.35% of capacity.

Further Insights

- To manage the shortage, BMC has implemented a 20% cut in water supply for industrial, commercial, and recreational users, along with a suspension of water connections for construction sites and swimming pools. These steps build on earlier restrictions imposed in May, reflecting the seriousness of the shortage.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has reported a delay in the southwest monsoon, now expected to reach Mumbai around late June 2026. Weak moisture-laden winds from the Arabian Sea have slowed the advance of rainfall along the western coast. This delay has intensified concerns not only in Mumbai but also across parts of Maharashtra and neighbouring states that depend on early monsoon showers for agriculture and water storage replenishment.
- Similar water stress conditions have also been reported in other urban centres such as Pune and Bengaluru, where growing populations and infrastructure demands are increasing pressure on existing water systems. In states like **Rajasthan and parts of Delhi-NCR**, heat conditions and uneven rainfall patterns have further highlighted the importance of water conservation and efficient urban planning.
- Simultaneously, Kerala and NE Region are expected to receive earlier and heavier rainfall once the monsoon fully strengthens, showing the uneven geographic distribution of seasonal rains across India.
- Experts suggest that while delayed monsoons create short-term stress, they do not necessarily indicate overall poor rainfall for the season. However, the current situation underscores the need for stronger water management strategies, including rainwater harvesting, wastewater reuse, and improved urban reservoir planning.

Conclusion- The 2026 water situation in Mumbai reflects a broader national challenge of balancing rapid urban growth with climate variability. While immediate restrictions are necessary to manage shortages, long-term resilience depends on sustainable water use, diversified supply systems, and improved infrastructure across states.

CBSE EMROILED IN ON-SCREEN MARKING CONTROVERSY

Introduction- The controversy surrounding the Central Board of Secondary Education's (CBSE) On-Screen Marking (OSM) system has raised serious concerns about the reliability of digital evaluation in India's education sector. While the system was introduced to modernize answer-sheet assessment and improve efficiency, allegations of evaluation discrepancies, technical glitches, and procurement irregularities have sparked widespread debate about transparency and accountability in examination reforms.



Further Insights

- The OSM system was introduced to digitize the evaluation process by scanning physical answer sheets and allowing examiners to assess them electronically. The initiative aimed to reduce delays, improve monitoring, and enhance efficiency.
- However, following the declaration of Class 12 results, several students alleged that the scanned answer sheets uploaded on the portal did not match their handwriting, raising concerns about possible mismatches and evaluation errors. Reports of technical glitches, payment failures, delays in re-evaluation & cybersecurity vulnerabilities, further intensified the controversy.
- As scrutiny increased, Govt of India transferred CBSE **Chairman Rahul Singh and Secretary Himanshu Gupta** and ordered an inquiry into the procurement and implementation of OSM services. **Senior IAS officer Lokhande Prashant Sitaram** was subsequently appointed **Chairperson**, with Varun Bhardwaj as Secretary, to oversee corrective measures and restore public confidence in the Board's functioning.
- The controversy highlights a broader challenge facing India's digital transformation efforts. Technology can improve efficiency, but when implemented without adequate testing, transparency, and oversight, it can create new risks that directly affect students and educational institutions.

Steps Needed for the Future- To prevent similar issues, India should:

- Conduct independent technical and cybersecurity audits of examination platforms.
- Ensure transparent procurement and contract monitoring.
- Introduce extensive pilot testing before nationwide implementation.
- Strengthen quality checks during scanning and evaluation.

- Establish faster and more transparent grievance redressal mechanisms.
- Improve training for evaluators and technical staff.
- Create stronger data protection and digital governance standards.

Conclusion- The OSM controversy demonstrates that successful digital reforms require more than technology alone. Transparency, accountability, cybersecurity & student-centric governance must remain at the core of educational modernization. The appointment of new leadership and the ongoing inquiry provide an opportunity to strengthen trust in India's examination system and ensure that future digital initiatives uphold the highest standards of fairness and reliability.

MONKEY-POX ALERT SOUNDED IN INDIA



Introduction- Health Ministry has issued an advisory to States & UTs following a suspected **Mpox case in Delhi**, underscoring the importance of proactive disease surveillance and public health preparedness. Although the risk of widespread transmission in India remains low, health authorities are taking precautionary measures to prevent the emergence of local outbreaks and ensure timely detection of cases.

Further Insights

- Mpox, formerly known as monkeypox, is a viral disease that spreads through close physical contact, including skin-to-skin interaction, respiratory secretions, contaminated materials, and in many recent cases, sexual contact. The current global outbreak has primarily affected individuals **between 18 and 44 years of age**, with a significant proportion of cases reported among people living with HIV.
- In response to the evolving situation, the Centre has directed States to enhance surveillance, screening, and testing of suspected cases. State AIDS Control Societies have also been instructed to remain vigilant and identify potential infections among vulnerable populations.
- Additionally, hospitals have been asked to establish isolation facilities and ensure that healthcare workers are trained to recognize symptoms such as skin rashes, lesions, fever, and swollen lymph nodes.
- A key concern is the emergence of the **Clade Ib variant** of the virus, which has demonstrated a greater ability to spread through sexual contact than previous strains. This changing pattern of transmission highlights the need for targeted awareness campaigns and stronger monitoring systems.
- The advisory also emphasizes contact tracing, rapid diagnosis, and community-level risk communication to prevent misinformation and panic. Lessons learned from previous public health emergencies have shown that early intervention is often the most effective strategy for containing infectious diseases.

Conclusion—While the current risk remains limited, continued vigilance, timely reporting, effective surveillance, and public awareness are critical to preventing future outbreaks. By strengthening health infrastructure and preparedness mechanisms, India can effectively respond to emerging infectious diseases, while safeguarding public health.

DEFENCE NEWS

EX PRAGATI 2026 WITH 12 PARTNER NATIONS



Introduction: Indian Army hosted **Exercise PRAGATI 2026 (Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region)** at Umroi Military Station, Meghalaya, bringing together over 400 military personnel from India and 12 partner nations.

- The multinational Exercise was aimed at enhancing interoperability, military cooperation & collective response capabilities among countries of IOR.
- Along with India, troops from 12 friendly nations, including **Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam**, participated in the exercise.
- The primary focus was on **counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations** in semi-mountainous and jungle terrain.
- Participating troops trained together in tactical drills such as **rock craft, jungle lane shooting, ambush/counter-ambush & IED detection and neutralisation**.
- The exercise promoted the exchange of operational experiences, best practices, and contemporary military tactics among participating armies.
- A major highlight was a **72-hour validation exercise**, where multinational teams jointly executed operational scenarios to test coordination & mission effectiveness.
- In collaboration with **FICCI & Army Design Bureau**, Army also showcased indigenous defence technologies under the **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** initiative.
- The event was attended by **40 senior military officials**, who also held bilateral interactions to strengthen defence partnerships and regional security cooperation.

Conclusion: Ex PRAGATI 2026 enhanced military interoperability, strengthened regional defence partnerships, and showcased India's commitment to collective security in the IOR. It also highlighted India's focus on defence diplomacy and indigenous military innovation.

DIVYASTRA MK-1 LOITERING MUNITION TEST

Introduction: Indian Army has successfully conducted operational trials of the indigenous **Divyastra Mk-1** loitering munition, developed by Lucknow-based start-up **Hoverit**,



demonstrating its surveillance and precision-strike capabilities in Jodhpur's harsh desert environment.

- **Divyastra Mk-1** is a long-range **loitering munition (kamikaze drone)** capable of conducting both **Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR)** missions and precision strikes.
- The system has a strike range of **500 km**, endurance of **up to 5 hours**, carries a **15 kg warhead**, and can attack targets at speeds of **300–400 km/h**.
- It is launched from a **vehicle-mounted mobile launcher**, enabling rapid deployment without requiring a runway or fixed infrastructure.
- Uses AI for autonomous navigation, target identification, tracking & engagement, while retaining effectiveness in electronic warfare and jamming environments.
- It also features **swarm-drone capability**, allowing multiple drones to coordinate attacks and overwhelm enemy air-defence systems.
- The platform can be fitted with **Electro-Optical/Infrared (EO/IR) sensors** for real-time reconnaissance and battlefield awareness.

Conclusion: The successful testing of Divyastra Mk-1 marks a major boost to India's indigenous defence capabilities. By combining long-range surveillance, precision-strike capability, AI-enabled operations, and high indigenous content, it enhances Indian Army's future battlefield effectiveness while advancing defence self-reliance.

MAJ ABHILASHA BARAK RECEIVES UN HONOUR



Major Abhilasha Barak, India's first woman combat aviator in the Army, was awarded the **2025 UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award** by UN Secretary-General António Guterres for her outstanding service with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Serving as Commander of the Female Engagement Team and Gender Focal Point, she led initiatives supporting more than 5,000 women and girls through health, education, and community outreach programmes, while also promoting gender-sensitive peacekeeping practices.

Commissioned into the Corps of Army Air Defence in 2018, Major Barak created history in 2022 by **becoming the Indian Army's first woman combat aviator after completing training at the Combat Army Aviation Training School, Nashik**. With this recognition, she **became the third Indian woman peacekeeper to receive the prestigious UN award**, following **Majors Suman Gawani & Radhika Sen**, further highlighting India's contribution to global peacekeeping efforts.

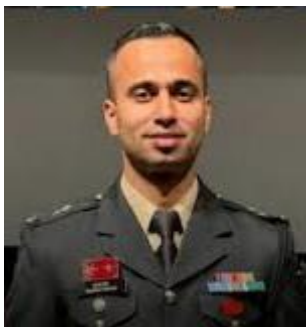
WOMEN OFFICERS RECEIVED SHAURYA CHAKRA

Lt Cdrs Dilna K & Roopa A became the first women officers of Indian Navy to receive the **Shaurya Chakra**. The honour was awarded for their exceptional courage and seamanship during the **Navika Sagar Parikrama II expedition**, in which the duo completed a double-handed global circumnavigation aboard INSV Tarini, covering over 25,600 nautical miles.



Braving severe storms, cyclones, and prolonged isolation at sea, they also **became the first Indians to sail to Point Nemo, the most remote location in the world's oceans**. President Droupadi Murmu conferred the award in recognition of their historic achievement and contribution to Indian maritime exploration.

MAJ P MISHRA WINS TOP HONOURS AT US CGSC



Major Prabhat Mishra of the 22 Kumaon Regiment earned international recognition at the **US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC)**, Fort Leavenworth, **by graduating among the top performers in a cohort of officers from 92 countries**. He received the prestigious Birrer-Brookes Award for the best Master of Military Arts and Science thesis, titled *“India's Pursuit of Military Strategic Autonomy in a Multipolar World,”* and the General Douglas MacArthur Military Leadership

Writing Award. Notably, he became the first Indian officer since 1948 to win the Birrer-Brookes Award and the **first ever to receive the MacArthur writing honour, highlighting the global academic and leadership standards of the Indian Army**.

NAVY TO ACQUIRE INDIGENOUS GNSS JAMMERS

The Ministry of Defence signed a ₹449 crore contract with **Accord Software and Systems** for the procurement of 20 Enhanced Capability Global Navigation Satellite System (ECGNSS) **Jammers for Indian Navy**. Designed and developed indigenously, these systems will enhance operational safety by disrupting hostile satellite-based navigation and positioning signals, strengthening the Navy's electronic warfare capabilities. The acquisition supports the Government's Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative while improving the survivability and operational effectiveness of naval platforms in contested maritime environments.



ICG's FIRST INDIGENOUS HOVERCRAFT H-561



Introduction: Indian Coast Guard has commissioned **H-561**, the first indigenously built **Air Cushion Vehicle (ACV)** or hovercraft, in **Goa**. Built under the 'Make in India' initiative, the hovercraft is the lead vessel of a six-hovercraft project aimed at strengthening coastal surveillance, search-and-rescue operations, and rapid-response capabilities.

- H-561 has been designed and built by **Chowgule & Company Pvt Ltd** at its Goa shipyard, marking a significant milestone in India's indigenous maritime manufacturing capabilities.
- Can achieve speeds of up to **45 knots** and remain operational for nearly **nine hours** without refueling, enabling rapid deployment during emergencies and coastal security missions. Carries an **8-tonne payload** and up to **42 personnel**.
- Unlike conventional patrol vessels, the hovercraft can operate seamlessly over **water, mudflats, marshes, sandbars, and shallow coastal areas**, giving it access to regions that are difficult for normal boats to reach.
- The vessel will enhance the Coast Guard's capability to conduct **coastal surveillance, anti-smuggling operations, maritime law enforcement, disaster response, and search-and-rescue missions** along India's vast coastline.
- H-561 is the first of **six indigenous hovercrafts** planned for induction, with the remaining vessels currently under construction and expected to further strengthen India's coastal security architecture.

Conclusion: The induction of H-561 marks a major step in India's maritime self-reliance and coastal defence modernisation. Its unique ability to operate across both land and water environments will significantly enhance the Indian Coast Guard's operational flexibility, surveillance reach, and rapid-response capability.

INDIAN NAVY COMMISSIONS 3 WARSHIPS



Introduction: Indian Navy commissioned three indigenously built platforms-**INS Dunagiri**, **INS Sanshodhak**, and **INS Agray** at Kolkata in June 2026. The induction strengthens India's maritime capabilities while showcasing the success of indigenous warship design & construction under **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** initiative.

- The three platforms represent different operational roles: **surface warfare, hydrographic surveying, and anti-submarine warfare**, enhancing the Navy's combat, surveillance, and maritime domain awareness capabilities.
- **INS Dunagiri** is the fifth **Project 17A Nilgiri-class stealth frigate** built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE). It is a multi-role warship capable of conducting anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine warfare missions.
- The frigate is equipped with **BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, Barak-8 Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missiles (MRSAM), advanced torpedoes, and modern AESA radar systems**, significantly boosting the Navy's blue-water combat capability.

- **INS Sanshodhak** is a Survey Vessel Large (SVL) designed to undertake hydrographic surveys, seabed mapping, and oceanographic data collection. It supports safe navigation, maritime ops & strategic planning in the IOR. Its fitted with advanced **multibeam sonar systems, Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs), and Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs)**, enabling precise underwater surveys and maritime data gathering.

- **INS Agray** is an **Arnala-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC)** specifically designed to detect, track, and neutralise enemy submarines operating in coastal and shallow waters. Equipped with the **DRDO-developed Abhay Hull-Mounted Sonar, Low-Frequency Variable Depth Sonar (LFVDS), RBU-6000 anti-submarine rocket launchers, lightweight torpedoes, and naval guns**, it is a potent littoral warfare platform.

Conclusion: The commissioning of INS Dunagiri, INS Sanshodhak, and INS Agray marks another major milestone in the Indian Navy's modernisation drive. Together, these platforms strengthen combat readiness, underwater warfare capability, and maritime surveillance while reinforcing India's vision of becoming a self-reliant naval power.

LT GEN DHIRAJ SETH APPOINTED AS NEXT COAS



Gen Seth, succeeds General Upendra Dwivedi, who retired on 30th Jun 26, after a glorious service of 42 years. Commissioned into the Armoured Corps in 1986, Gen Seth brings nearly four decades of operational, command, and strategic experience. His career includes command of an Armoured Regiment, an Armoured Brigade, a Counter-Insurgency Force in Jammu & Kashmir, the Sudarshan Chakra Corps, South Western Command, and Southern Command. Notably, he is among the rare officers to have commanded two operational Army Commands along the Western Front, reflecting his extensive experience in India's primary conventional theatre.

A recipient of the **PVSM, UYSM** and **AVSM**, Lt Gen Seth has also played a significant role in force modernisation and long-term capability development through key appointments in strategic planning and military transformation. He carries a distinguished **military legacy** as the son of retired **Lt Gen Krishna Mohan Seth**, making him one of the **few second-generation Army Chiefs in India**. His appointment will provide continuity in operational preparedness, military modernisation, and joint-service integration at a time of evolving security challenges.

SCIENCE – TECH, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT NEWS

CHHARI-DHAND WETLAND: BALANCING CLEAN ENERGY AND CONSERVATION



India's push towards renewable energy has brought the spotlight onto Gujarat's Banni grasslands, where NTPC's proposed solar project has triggered environmental concerns. At the heart of the debate lies the ecologically rich **Chhari-Dhand Wetland Conservation Reserve**.

A Unique Natural Treasure -Located in Kachchh district, Chhari-Dhand is a **seasonal saline wetland** where three ecosystems converge: The Banni Grasslands; Tropical Thorn Forests & the Little Rann landscape .It became Gujarat's **first Conservation Reserve** in **2008** and was later designated a **Ramsar Site**.

Rich Biodiversity- The wetland shelters:

- Rare Grey Hypocolius birds
- Thousands of Common Cranes
- Chinkaras and desert foxes
- Critically endangered Guggul trees

Conservation Challenges -Major threats include:

- Prosopis juliflora invasion
- Unregulated tourism
- Shrinking grazing land

Summing Up: Protecting Chhari-Dhand requires a careful balance between renewable energy ambitions and safeguarding both **biodiversity** and **Maldhari** livelihoods.

CHANDRAYAAN-2 DETECTS ICE BENEATH MOON'S SURFACE



India's Chandrayaan-2 mission continues to make scientific breakthroughs years after its launch. Researchers have now found evidence suggesting the presence of subsurface ice near the Moon's south pole.

How Was It Discovered?

The Chandrayaan-2 orbiter carries the **Dual Frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar (DFSAR)**, which studies lunar surfaces using microwave signals. Scientists examined permanently shadowed craters where temperatures can drop to nearly **25 Kelvin**.

Key Findings- The study revealed:

- Signs of possible ice beneath four craters.
- Strongest evidence inside **Faustini crater**.
- Radar indicators consistent with volumetric ice scattering.

Why Does It Matter? Subsurface ice could:

- Support future lunar missions.
- Provide drinking water.
- Produce rocket fuel.
- Enable long-term human presence on the Moon.

To Conclude: The findings strengthen India's role in advancing lunar science and future space exploration.

ARUNACHAL'S ANTI-DAM PROTESTS HIGHLIGHT INDIGENOUS CONCERNS



Opposition to hydropower projects is intensifying across **Arunachal Pradesh** as indigenous communities voice concerns over their land, culture, and environment.

Why Are Villagers Protesting?

Residents argue that mandatory consent from **Gram Sabhas** was not obtained before approving projects such as:

- Mihundo Hydroelectric Project
- Kalai-II Project
- Siang Upper Multipurpose Project

Cultural and Environmental Fears –Communities fear:

- Loss of ancestral lands.
- Submergence of sacred Mishmi sites.
- Damage to fragile Himalayan ecosystems.
- Increased seismic risks.

Development Versus Rights: While authorities cite energy security & strategic needs, local groups demand **meaningful consultation** and **respect for traditional rights**.

In Summation: The protests underscore the importance of balancing infrastructure development with environmental sustainability and indigenous participation.

NATIONAL FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE AWARDS HONOUR

INDIA'S NURSES



Recognising extraordinary service in healthcare, the President of India conferred the National Florence Nightingale Awards 2026 upon 15 outstanding nursing professionals.

Celebrating Compassion: Instituted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the award honours nurses who demonstrate:

- Dedication
- Resilience
- Professional excellence
- Community service

Award Highlights- Recipients include:

- Registered Nurses
- Midwives
- Auxiliary Nurse Midwives
- Lady Health Visitors

Each award carries: A Certificate of Merit; ₹1 lakh cash prize; A commemorative medal

Why Nurses Matter: Nurses often serve under challenging conditions while providing continuous patient care. These awards acknowledge that empowered nurses strengthen healthcare systems and improve community well-being, making them indispensable pillars of public health.

CAN CARROT EXTRACT HELP FAKE GHEE PASS QUALITY TESTS?



A recent study from IIT (BHU) has raised concerns about food authentication methods used to verify premium cow ghee.

The Surprising Discovery: Researchers found that beta-carotene extracted from carrots can be added to: Palm oil & Pig fat (lard). This combination mimicked the Raman signatures commonly used to identify authentic cow ghee.

Why Is This Important? Raman spectroscopy acts like a molecular fingerprint. However, the study showed that relying solely on it may be misleading.

Implications-The findings highlight concerns regarding:

- Food adulteration.
- Consumer protection.
- Regulatory practices.
- Market integrity.

In Conclusion: The study serves as a warning that advanced testing methods should be combined with complementary techniques to prevent sophisticated food fraud.

SIMILIPAL'S BLACK TIGERS GET A NEW LEASE OF LIFE



Odisha's Similipal Tiger Reserve is witnessing a conservation success story. **Zeenat**, a tigress brought from Maharashtra's Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, has given birth to four cubs.

Understanding the Challenge

Similipal's tigers are known for **pseudo-melanism**, a rare condition causing unusually dark stripes due to limited genetic diversity.

The Conservation Strategy -Wildlife managers introduced new tigers to:

- Improve genetic diversity.
- Reduce inbreeding.
- Strengthen the tiger population.

A Hopeful Future -Zeenat's cubs represent more than population growth. They symbolise the success of science-based conservation efforts.

To Sum Up: The initiative demonstrates how timely intervention can preserve unique wildlife while ensuring the long-term survival of one of India's most fascinating tiger populations.

ASSAM STRENGTHENS DEFENCES AGAINST JAPANESE ENCEPHALITIS AHEAD OF PEAK SEASON



Assam has reported 7 deaths from **Japanese Encephalitis (JE)** and **32 deaths from Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES)** so far this year, highlighting the continued public health challenge posed by mosquito-borne diseases in the State.

Understanding JE and AES: Health officials have clarified that:

- Japanese Encephalitis is one cause of AES.
- Not all AES cases are linked to JE.
- Both conditions cause inflammation of brain and require prompt medical attention.

Why Assam Remains Vulnerable- According to national data:

- Assam accounts for nearly 62% of JE-related deaths in India since 2018.
- The disease usually peaks between July and August.
- Mosquito breeding increases during the monsoon season.

Government's Preparedness Measures- To tackle the annual surge, the State has intensified:

- Disease surveillance
- Vaccination drives
- Hospital preparedness

- Case management systems
- Inter-departmental coordination

These efforts aim to reduce fatalities and improve early detection as Assam enters the high-risk transmission period.

INDIA ACCELERATES MISSION TO ELIMINATE SICKLE CELL ANEMIA BY 2047



President Droupadi Murmu has expressed confidence that India can eliminate sickle cell anaemia, well before the national target year of 2047. Speaking in Madhya Pradesh, she called for greater awareness and cooperation, particularly in tribal communities where the disease is more prevalent.

A Landmark Public Health Initiative [Launched in 2023, the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission has achieved significant milestones:

- Over 7 crore individuals screened.
- Nearly 2.5 lakh affected patients identified.
- More than 20 lakh carriers detected.

Why Awareness Matters- Sickle cell anaemia is an inherited genetic disorder that:

- Passes from one generation to another.
- Can lead to severe health complications.
- Requires early diagnosis and counselling.

A Collaborative National Effort- The mission integrates:

- Public health services
- Tribal welfare programmes
- Genetic screening
- Digital monitoring systems

In Conclusion: With active participation from 17 States, the campaign represents one of the world's largest genetic screening initiatives and offers hope for a healthier future free from sickle cell disease.

ECONOMIC NEWS

INDIA JUST LAUNCHED A FUEL THAT COSTS ₹20 LESS PER LITRE. BUT, WHAT'S THE CATCH?

It is called E85. And it might be the most important fuel story of 2026.



Introduction: On June 5, World Environment Day, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri walked into an Indian Oil outlet on Pusa Road in New Delhi and inaugurated something India has never had before. A petrol pump dispensing E85, a fuel blend containing 85% ethanol and just 15% conventional petrol, priced at ₹82.12 per litre in Delhi, exactly ₹20 cheaper than regular E20 petrol.

That price difference is the headline. But the story goes much deeper. To understand why this matters, let's back to 2014. India's ethanol blending in petrol stood at just 1.5% that year.

By 2025, it had climbed to 20%, a target the Govt had originally set for 2030, achieved 5 years ahead of schedule. That is genuinely impressive, as we beat the target it by half a decade.

The Ethanol Blending Program

Through the ethanol blending program, India saved foreign exchange worth ₹1.84 lakh crore by substituting 302 lakh metric tonnes of crude oil imports. **Real money. Kept inside India.** With crude at \$100 a barrel and the rupee at ₹94.9 to the dollar, every litre of imported crude avoided is a small but meaningful win for the current account. **E85 is the next leap in that logic.** The launch began at 48 retail outlets across the country, with plans to scale to 500 outlets by Dec'26 and an ambitious 5,000 pumps across major cities by end'27. Alongside the fuel, Govt unveiled E85-compatible variants of Hero MotoCorp motorcycles & aruti Suzuki Wagon R, signalling intent to build an entire transport ecosystem around higher ethanol use.

Now here is the catch.

E85 can only be used in flex-fuel vehicles, specifically designed to run on ethanol blends ranging from E20 all the way to E100. Your current car almost certainly cannot use it. The Wagon R is currently the only flex-fuel car in production in India, and even that is available only to commercial sector for now. Tata Motors' first flex-fuel passenger vehicle arrives end'26. Toyota has showcased flex-fuel prototypes of Innova Hycross, but nothing is in production yet.

So the fuel exists. The pumps are coming. The vehicles are not quite here yet.

This is the classic chicken-and-egg problem of new fuel technology. Consumers will not buy flex-fuel vehicles until E85 is widely available. Fuel companies will not invest in E85 infrastructure until there are enough compatible vehicles on the road. Govt is trying to crack both sides simultaneously, pushing automakers to launch compatible models while funding pump rollouts through public sector oil marketing companies.

The environmental case is strong. **E85 can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 61% compared with conventional petrol.** Energy security case is stronger. If 50% of new two-wheelers and four-wheelers become flex-fuel compliant, ethanol demand for fuel will increase by 400 crore litres from the existing 1,100 crore litres, cutting crude import dependency in a way no austerity appeal ever could. At ₹100 per litre & crude showing no signs of cooling, the timing of E85 couldn't be better. Whether vehicles follow the fuel fast enough is the only question that matters now.

INDIA-US FINALLY DOING A TRADE DEAL. HERE'S WHAT IS ACTUALLY IN IT.

And why it matters more than most trade news you have read this year.

For months, the word from both sides was the same. Talks are progressing. A deal is close. Stay tuned. Then on Feb 7, 26, both govts actually put something on paper. And on June 5, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said the first tranche could be formally executed by mid-July.

So what is in it, and why should you care?



Let us start from the beginning. When Trump returned to the White House, one of his first moves was to slap reciprocal tariffs on virtually every trading partner. India got hit with a 50% tariff initially, later revised to 26%. That is a serious number. India exports roughly \$77 billion worth of goods to the US annually, making America India's single largest export destination. A 26% tariff on all of that is not background noise. It is a structural threat to Indian exporters in textiles, pharmaceuticals, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, and IT hardware.

The deal that emerged changes that calculus significantly.

Under the framework, USA will bring tariffs on Indian goods down to 18%, from the earlier 50%. That is still not zero. But it is meaningfully better than what China, Vietnam, and Bangladesh are facing, which is precisely the point. The deal gives India preferential positioning over its regional competitors for access to the American market.

India gave things up too.

India has agreed to eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of American agricultural products. Sensitive sectors like dairy, wheat, rice, maize, and ethanol have been protected, which was a non-negotiable, given the political weight of the farm lobby. Generic pharmaceuticals, gems and diamonds, and aircraft parts will attract

zero duty going into the US, a direct boost to some of India's most competitive export industries.

There is also a geopolitical dimension that rarely makes it into the trade coverage.

India committed to stop purchasing Russian oil as part of the broader deal architecture. The US, in turn, removed a separate 25% tariff that had been imposed specifically as a penalty for India's continued Russian oil purchases. That is a significant strategic concession by India, and it has direct implications for the Hormuz situation, since India will now need to source crude from West Asian suppliers, even as that region remains unstable.

The final deal is not yet signed.

US Ambassador Sergio Gor has said 99% of the bilateral trade pact is in place, with negotiators working through final technical and legal issues in New Delhi. The US Supreme Court earlier struck down Trump's sweeping reciprocal tariffs imposed under emergency powers, forcing Washington to find alternative legal routes to implement the agreement. That is the remaining complexity being resolved.

But the direction is clear. A deal that gives India preferential tariff access to a \$30 trillion market, protects its sensitive agricultural sectors, and boosts export competitiveness in pharmaceuticals and gems, is not a small thing. At a moment when the rupee is weak, the current account is under pressure, and foreign exchange is precious, unlocking larger export flows to America is exactly the kind of structural support the economy needs.

The question now is whether mid-July holds. Given the track record of trade negotiations, that is never a given. But for once, both sides appear to want this done.

THE RBI JUST FROZE & THAT WILL WORRY US ALL

India's central bank held rates for the third time in a row. Here is why that is not a sign of confidence.



On June 5, RBI kept the repo rate unchanged at 5.25%. No cut. No hike. Governor Sanjay Malhotra called it prudent, saying the MPC would wait for greater clarity to emerge. When a central bank says it is waiting for clarity, it usually means the picture it is currently looking at is not a good one. The RBI then cut India's GDP growth forecast for FY27 to 6.6% from 6.9%, raising inflation forecast to 5.1% from 4.6%. Growth down.

Inflation up. Simultaneously.

That combination has a name. **Economists call it stagflation risk.** Raise rates to control inflation and you slow growth further. Cut rates to support growth and you pour fuel on inflation. The RBI is caught in this exact bind, which is why it is doing neither. The rupee has weakened over 6% against the dollar since January, now trading at 95.78. Every time it weakens, imported inflation rises automatically. The petrol hikes you felt last month were partly the oil shock, and partly the rupee quietly making everything more expensive.

Foreign investors have pulled \$13.7 billion out of Indian equity markets since January. GoI has responded with capital gains tax exemptions for FIIs and opened long-term government bonds to global indices. Sensible moves. But they take time. Goldman Sachs has marked down India's growth forecast to 5.9% from an earlier 7%. That is a significant revision from one of the most consistently bullish voices on the India story.

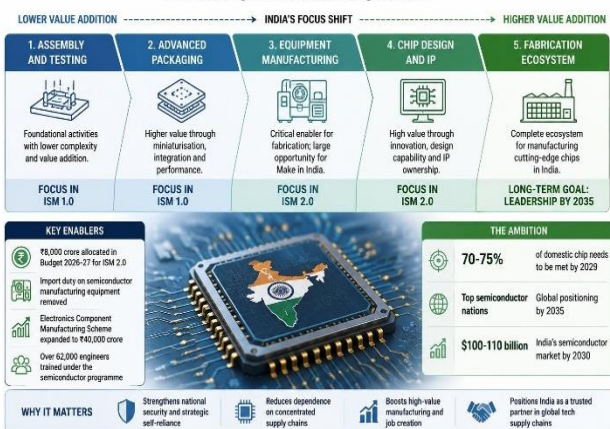
However, the fundamentals are not broken. GDP grew 7.2% in the Jan-March quarter. Domestic consumption holds. The US trade deal, once signed, will help. But the RBI's June meeting was a clear shift in tone. The same institution projecting 6.9% growth two months ago has now dialled back, raised inflation, frozen rates, and asked markets to wait.

In central bank language, that is a yellow flag. Not yet red. But worth watching.

INDIA'S SEMICONDUCTOR PUSH GETS BIGGER & MORE AMBITIOUS

INDIA'S SEMICONDUCTOR PUSH: MOVING UP THE VALUE CHAIN

From building the basics to building the future



In Budget 2026–27, India's semiconductor ambitions took a decisive step forward with launch of India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) 2.0, signalling a shift from building support infrastructure to developing deeper capabilities across manufacturing, design and technology ownership. Phase I of the programme focused largely on creating the foundation of the ecosystem through assembly, testing and packaging. That phase helped attract early investments and establish initial operating capacity. With those foundations in place, GoI is now attempting to move into higher value segments of the semiconductor

chain.

Backed by an allocation of ₹8,000 crore this year, ISM 2.0 aims to encourage equipment manufacturing, strengthen domestic chip design and develop semiconductor intellectual property within India. Alongside this, the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme has been expanded to ₹40,000 crore, reflecting stronger investment momentum than originally anticipated. Policy support is also becoming more targeted. Import duty on semiconductor manufacturing equipment has been removed, an important intervention in an industry where equipment forms a significant share of total project costs. The move is intended to improve India's competitiveness, as companies reconsider global supply chains.

India has set ambitious targets. We aim to manufacture chips for 70 to 75% of domestic applications by 2029 and position itself among the world's leading semiconductor ecosystems by 2035. Industry estimates also suggest that India's semiconductor market could expand substantially over the coming years.

The global context partly explains the urgency. Semiconductor production remains heavily concentrated geographically, while geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions have

prompted governments across major economies to prioritise technological resilience and domestic capability.

India believes it has favourable conditions to participate in this shift. A large engineering talent base, rising domestic demand across telecom, electric mobility and defence, and increasing strategic alignment with global partners provide an opportunity to scale the sector. The challenge, however, remains in execution-building capability is a long-term process that requires sustained investment, specialised expertise and deep industrial ecosystems. ISM 2.0 marks an important policy transition, but its success will depend on whether momentum can be sustained over the next decade.

SPORTS NEWS

U23 ASIAN WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2026



Introduction: India delivered a dominant performance at the U23 Asian Wrestling Championships 2026 in **Da Nang, Vietnam**, finishing with 27 medals, including seven gold, 11 silver and nine bronze. The Indian contingent emerged as the overall champion in both the Men's Freestyle and Women's Wrestling categories, underlining the country's growing strength in age-group wrestling across Asia.

The men's wrestlers played a major role in India's success, winning both individual medals and team honours. India secured the Men's Freestyle team title with four gold medals, while the Greco-Roman squad achieved its best-ever performance at the U23 Asian Championships, finishing with eight medals, including one gold, two silver and five bronze.

The women's team produced an outstanding campaign to claim the overall team title. Indian wrestlers won six gold medals across different weight categories, contributing significantly to the country's medal haul and showcasing the depth of talent in women's wrestling at the continental level.

PADMA SHRI 2026 IN SPORTS

Among the Padma Shri awardees in sports for 2026, **Harmanpreet Kaur** was honoured for her contribution to **Indian women's cricket** and leadership of the team to the 2025 Women's ODI World Cup title, while **Praveen Kumar** was recognised for his Paralympic gold medal-winning achievements in **para-athletics**. **K Pajanivel** received the award for preserving and promoting the **ancient martial art Silambam**, and **Baldev Singh** was honoured for his longstanding contribution to **Indian hockey coaching** and **talent development**. President Droupadi Murmu presented the awards during the first Civil Investiture Ceremony of 2026 at Rashtrapati Bhavan.



of

ISSF WORLD CUP AT MUNICH



Introduction: India secured four medals, including two gold and two silver, at the ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol Munich 2026 held in **Germany**. The competition featured more than 700 shooters from 85 countries and was one of the major rifle and pistol events on the ISSF calendar this year.

Esha Singh won gold in the women's 25m pistol event with a world record score of 43 hits out of 50, breaking both the senior and junior world records. She also claimed silver in the women's 10m air pistol event, where Suruchi Singh won gold to secure her first individual World Cup title of the season.

To see: In the 10m air pistol mixed team event, Manu Bhaker and S Rana won silver after narrowly losing to China's Yao Qianxun and Hu Kai in the gold medal match. The Indian pair finished just 0.3 points behind the Chinese team, while Esha Singh became the only Indian shooter to win multiple medals at the tournament.

ASIAN U20 ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS: INDIA EXCELS

Introduction: India finished second in the medal standings at the 2026 Asian U20 Athletics Championships held in **Hong Kong, China**. The Indian contingent won 19 medals, including 10 gold, 5 silver and 4 bronze, matching its best-ever performance at the championships. China topped the standings with 25 medals, including 14 gold.



Pooja Singh produced one of the standout performances of the competition by winning gold in the women's high jump with a clearance of 1.93m, breaking a 14-year-old Indian senior national record. Other Indian gold medallists included N Gupta, R Jakhar, Nikhil Chandrashekar and the women's 4x400m relay team, which set a new meet record of 3:38.07.

More: India also achieved a milestone in the women's 100m, where Nipam won bronze with a time of 11.62 seconds to become the first Indian woman in 25 years to win a medal in the event at the Asian U20 Championships.

SATWIK-CHIRAG WIN SINGAPORE OPEN TITLE



Introduction: India's top men's doubles pair, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, won the **Singapore Open 2026** title after defeating South Korea's Kim Won-ho and Seo Seung-jae in the final. The victory marked India's first title at the BWF Super 750 tournament.

The Indian duo produced a strong performance in the final, winning 21-18, 21-17 to claim their first title of 2026. The triumph also ended a title drought stretching back to 2024 and came after their runners-up finish at the Thailand Open earlier this season.

Conclusion: The victory reaffirmed Satwik and Chirag's position among the world's top men's doubles pairs. Following their success in Singapore, the duo withdrew from the Indonesia Open to manage their workload ahead of upcoming tournaments.

Conclusion: The results highlighted the strength of India's emerging table tennis talent on the international stage. With multiple titles and podium finishes across age groups, the tournament marked another encouraging step for the country's growing youth program.

FIRST INDIAN TO WIN NORWAY CHESS TITLE



Introduction: Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa created history by becoming the first Indian to win the prestigious **Norway Chess** title. The 2026 edition of the elite tournament was held in Oslo and featured some of the world's strongest players.

Praggnanandhaa produced a remarkable comeback during the closing stages of the tournament, registering four consecutive classical victories to clinch the title with 18 points. He secured the championship by defeating Germany's Vincent Keymer in the final round, finishing ahead of Wesley So and Alireza Firouzja in the standings.

In women's event, Kazakhstan's Bibisara Assaubayeva emerged champion after a dominant campaign, securing the title with a round to spare. China's Zhu Jiner came 2nd, while defending champion Anna Muzychuk claimed 3rd place. India's Koneru Humpy & Divya Deshmukh also competed-finishing 6th & 5th respectively.

INDIA WIN MEN'S U18 HOCKEY ASIA CUP TITLE

Introduction: The Indian Men's U18 Hockey Team won the Men's U18 Asia Cup 2026 title after defeating hosts Japan 4-1 in the final at **Kakamigahara, Japan**. The victory secured India's third U18 Asia Cup crown and reaffirmed the country's dominance in the continental age-group competition.



Ashish Tani Purti starred in India's title-winning campaign, scoring a hat-trick in the final and finishing as the tournament's top scorer with 13 goals. India had earlier defeated Pakistan 5-3 in the semi-finals, with Ashish netting four goals. Ketan Kushwaha also scored in the final as India completed an impressive run to the championship.

In the women's competition, India secured the bronze medal after defeating South Korea 3-0 in the third-place playoff. Following the successful performances of both teams, Hockey India announced cash rewards for the players and support staff in recognition of their achievements.

INDIA'S 6th SAFF WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE



Introduction: India won the SAFF Women's Championship 2026 after defeating defending champions Bangladesh 3-1 in the final at the **Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Margao, Goa**. The triumph marked the Blue Tigresses' record-extending sixth SAFF title and their first regional crown since 2019.

The final saw India take the lead through Pyari Xaxa before Bangladesh equalised just before halftime. Sanfida Nongrum restored India's advantage within a minute of the second half, and substitute Lynda Kom Serto sealed the victory with a late goal. India had also defeated Bangladesh 3-0 earlier in the group stage, underlining their dominance throughout the tournament.

Conclusion: India's successful campaign was reflected in the individual honours and the title victory, which also marked the end of an era as veteran winger and captain Dangmei Grace announced her retirement from international football after lifting the trophy.

RCB DEFENDS ITS IPL TITLE OF 2025



Introduction: Royal Challengers Bengaluru successfully defended their Indian Premier League title, defeating the GT by five wickets in the IPL 2026 final at the Narendra Modi Stadium in **Ahmedabad**. The victory secured RCB's second consecutive championship, with Virat Kohli playing a decisive role in the final and earning the Player of the Match award.

The 74-match season was one of the most high-scoring editions in IPL history, producing 27,450 runs, 65 totals of 200 or more, and 15 centuries. RRs' Vaibhav Sooryavanshi emerged as the standout performer, scoring 776 runs to win the Orange Cap while also claiming the Most Valuable Player, Emerging Player and Maximum Sixes awards. GT pacer Kagiso Rabada finished as the leading wicket-taker with 29 wickets to secure the Purple Cap.

Conclusion: IPL 2026 also set new commercial and viewership benchmarks, with the tournament attracting massive digital audiences and further strengthening its position as one of the world's most valuable sporting leagues. The season combined record-breaking individual performances, high-scoring contests and strong fan engagement, underlining the continued growth and popularity of the IPL.

INDIA'S 17 MEDAL HAUL AT ULAANBAATAR OPEN

Introduction: India concluded the Ulaanbaatar Open Senior Ranking Series 2026 in **Mongolia** with an impressive haul of **17 medals**, showcasing strong performances across

men's freestyle, Greco-Roman and women's wrestling. The contingent finished as runners-up in men's freestyle, won the Greco-Roman team title and secured a place among the top teams in the overall standings.

The men's wrestlers made a major contribution to the medal tally, with India winning 7 medals in freestyle wrestling. Three Indian wrestlers secured gold medals in their respective categories, helping the team finish second overall. In Greco-Roman wrestling, India topped the team rankings with 119 points, powered by two gold-medal performances and a consistent display across weight categories.



The women's team further strengthened India's campaign with 7 medals, including three golds. Their performances played a crucial role in India's overall success at the tournament, highlighting depth across all three wrestling disciplines and reinforcing India's growing stature on the international wrestling circuit.

SENIOR NATIONAL AQUATIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

Introduction: The 79th Senior National Aquatic Championships 2026, held in **Ahmedabad**, witnessed one of the finest editions in Indian swimming history, with multiple national records broken and several swimmers achieving qualification standards for upcoming international competitions.



A Nehra delivered one of the standout performances of the competition, becoming the first Indian swimmer to break the 8-minute barrier in the men's 800m freestyle with a national record time of 7:59.36. He also secured qualification for the Commonwealth Games in the 1500m freestyle. **B Rohit** rewrote the men's 50m butterfly national record twice, eventually lowering it to 23.63 seconds, while **R Shashidharan** set a new women's 50m freestyle national record of 26.23 seconds. **D Desinghu** also impressed by winning the women's 100m freestyle in a national record time of 56.57 seconds.

More to know: The championships saw several other record-breaking performances, with **T Shadakshari** setting a national record in the women's 400m individual medley, **V Vijay** establishing a new mark in the men's 200m individual medley, and **Tanishi** improving her own national record in the women's 100m butterfly. Karnataka's mixed 4x100m freestyle relay team also set a new national record, highlighting the growing depth and rising standards of Indian swimming ahead of major international competitions.

A QUIZ TO RATTLE YOUR BRAINS

International Issues

1. In June 2026, India proposed building a shared “Space Economy” approach within BRICS. The initiative mainly aims to:

- A. Create a military alliance for space operations B. Promote collaboration in space infrastructure and commercial opportunities
C. Establish a single BRICS space currency D. Restrict private space companies

2. Rising tensions around the Strait of Hormuz received global attention because disruption in this region could directly impact:

- A. Semiconductor supply chains. B. Global oil prices and maritime trade routes
C. International tourism D. Global wheat reserves only

3. India’s recent strategic engagement with France has increasingly focused on:

- A. Expanding defence tech cooperation. B. Replacing all domestic manufacturing
C. Joint currency arrangements D. Civil service exchanges

4. India’s growing interest in Baltic connectivity through European ports is primarily intended to:

- A. Build alternate trade access into Europe B. Shift all exports away from Asia
C. Reduce dependence on domestic ports D. Replace maritime trade with rail

5. Growing importance of the Indo-Pacific in global discussions is because:

- A. It contains major maritime trade routes and strategic competition B. It has the largest desert reserves.
C. It controls global food production D. It produces the most gold

National Issues

6. BRICS MSME Forum hosted by India in June 2026 mainly focused on:

- A. Agricultural subsidies B. Building cooperation among small businesses across member countries.
C. Creating a common currency D. Defence procurement

7. The “Ashtalakshmi Growth Model” discussed recently is linked with:

- A. Industrial development in NE India B. Expansion of urban metro systems
C. Coastal defence planning D. Digital taxation reforms

8. International Day of Yoga 2026 highlighted India’s effort to position yoga as:

- A. A competitive sport only B. A holistic approach to health and healthy ageing
C. A military training method D. A tourism product only

9. Proposal to create addl specialised defence manufacturing clusters is to:

- A. Increase domestic production capability & supply chains B. Replace existing industries.
C. Eliminate exports D. Centralise all defence factories

10. India's recent push for semiconductor development is mainly intended to:

- A. Reduce import dependence & strengthen tech capability B. Ban foreign investment. C.
Replace automobile manufacturing. D. Focus only on chip design

Defence

11. India's discussions regarding export of BrahMos missiles reflect:

- A. Growth of India's defence export ambitions B. Withdrawal from strategic
partnerships. C. Focus on domestic defence D. Reduction in indigenous capability

12. Akashteer system is designed to improve:

- A. Naval surveillance. B. Coordination and response in air defence operations
C. Border fencing D. Space launch systems

13. Participation at Eurosatory 2026 demonstrated India's:

- A. Expanding defence manufacturing ecosystem B. Agricultural exports
C. Consumer electronics sector D. Mining capability

14. Integrated Theatre Commands are being discussed primarily to:

- A. Improve coordination among different military services B. Merge armed forces into
one unit. C. Replace conventional warfare D. Increase recruitment

15. AI-enabled fighter concepts discussed globally in 2026 mainly seek to:

- A. Improve speed of military decision-making B. Replace all human control. C.
Remove aircraft systems. D. Eliminate pilot training

Economy

16. RBI's record surplus transfer to the government was made under:

- A. Economic Capital Framework B. GST Council mechanism
C. Fiscal Responsibility Act D. Monetary Committee rules

17. Some Indian companies reducing package size while maintaining price due to rising costs is known as:

- A. Stagflation B. Shrinkflation C. Deflation D. Monetisation

18. India's increasing focus on MSMEs reflects recognition that these enterprises:

- A. Contribute to employment and growth B. Replace agriculture completely
C. Operate only internationally D. Function outside regulation

19. The concept of a “Space Economy” broadly refers to:

- A. Economic activity linked to space technologies and services B. Space tourism only.
C. Defence spending only D. Satellite manufacturing only

20. One major objective of India’s semiconductor mission is to:

- A. Develop domestic manufacturing capacity B. Eliminate software services
C. Stop imports completely D. Restrict technology transfer

Science & Technology

21. India’s Ballistic Missile Defence capability is designed to:

- A. Intercept incoming missile threats B. Improve naval trade
C. Launch satellites D. Detect earthquakes

22. Chandrayaan-4 discussions indicate India’s intention to:

- A. Expand advanced lunar exploration capability B. Build submarines
C. Replace communication satellites D. Launch a space station immediately

23. Green hydrogen is considered important because it:

- A. Produces lower carbon emissions during production B. Replaces solar energy
C. Uses coal directly D. Eliminates electricity use

24. AI and maritime technology cooperation between India and partners reflects:

- A. Increasing strategic use of emerging technologies B. Reduced digital investment. C.
Focus on traditional industries D. Limiting innovation

25. Semiconductor fabrication plants are important because they:

- A. Enable production of advanced electronic chips B. Produce batteries only
C. Manufacture telecom towers D. Generate electricity

Sports

26. The World Apnea Pool Championships are related to which sport?

- (a) Swimming
(b) Freediving
(c) Water Polo
(d) Rowing

27. Who became the first Paralympic person to receive the Padma Shri in 2001?

- (a) Deepa Malik
(b) Malathi Holla
(c) Avani Lekhara
(d) Sudha Chandran

28. Gurbachan Singh Randhawa won a gold medal at the 1962 Asian Games in?

- (a) High Jump
- (b) 110m Hurdles
- (c) Decathlon
- (d) Long Jump

29. Which Indian football captain was rated in world's top 10 captains by English FA in 1953?

- (a) Sailendra Nath Manna
- (b) PK Banerjee
- (c) Chuni Goswami
- (d) Peter Thangaraj

30. Virtual Taekwondo will make its Asian Games debut at which edition of the Games?

- (a) Aichi-Nagoya 2026
- (b) Doha 2030
- (c) Incheon 2034
- (d) None of the above

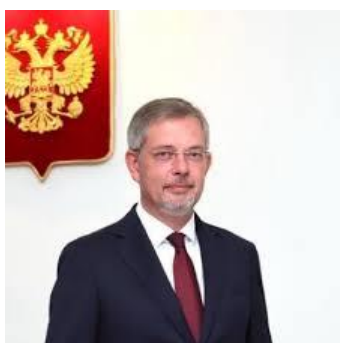
ANSWER KEY

1. b	2. b	3. a	4. a	5. a	6. b	7. a	8. b	9. a	10. a
11. a	12. b	13. a	14. a	15. a	16. a	17. b	18. a	19. a	20. a
21. a	22. a	23. a	24. a	25. a	26. b	27. b	28. c	29. a	30. b

NEW FEATURE FOREIGN COUNTRY FOCUS

INDIA–RUSSIA RELATIONS: STRATEGIC CONTINUITY IN A CHANGING WORLD ORDER

Revisiting a Time-Tested Partnership on Russia's National Day .



As Russia celebrates its National Day in June, India–Russia relations continue to represent one of the most enduring strategic partnerships in contemporary geopolitics. Despite rapid shifts in global power dynamics, sanctions, the Ukraine conflict, and the emergence of multipolarity, Delhi-Moscow have maintained a relationship rooted in trust, strategic autonomy & mutual interests.

India views Russia not merely as a partner of the past, but as an important pillar in shaping a balanced and inclusive world order.

Historical Foundation: From Friendship to Strategic Partnership

India-Russia share a legacy dating back to the Cold War period. The **1971 Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation** remains a landmark in bilateral relations. The

relationship then evolved from ideological proximity to a pragmatic partnership based on national interests.

Key Features

- Consistent political support during critical periods.
- Soviet assistance in industrialization and infrastructure.
- Cooperation in defense, science, and technology.
- Shared commitment to sovereignty and non-interference.

Political and Diplomatic Convergence: Both nations maintain regular high-level engagements through annual summits, mutual dialogues & multilateral forums.

Areas of Convergence

- Support for a **multipolar world order**.
- Reform of global governance institutions.
- Respect for strategic autonomy.
- Opposition to unilateral sanctions and coercive diplomacy.

Challenges

- Divergent perceptions regarding Europe and the Ukraine conflict.
- Russia's growing proximity to China.
- India's expanding ties with the West.

Analysis: Despite differences, both nations have demonstrated diplomatic maturity by compartmentalizing disagreements.

Defence Cooperation- Remains the strongest pillar of India–Russia ties.

Major Platforms

- S-400 Air Defence System.
- BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile.
- T-90 Tanks.
- Sukhoi-30 MKI aircraft.
- INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier.

Emerging Trends

- Joint production and technology transfer.
- Defence indigenization under *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.
- Maintenance and lifecycle support cooperation.

Concerns

- Delays due to sanctions and supply-chain disruptions.
- Need for diversification of military imports.

Strategic Significance: Russia remains India's largest source of legacy military platforms and critical technologies.



Energy Security: A New Growth Engine: The Ukraine conflict transformed energy cooperation into a major pillar of bilateral engagement, with energy emerging as most dynamic component of bilateral relations in the post-2022 era.

Hydrocarbon Cooperation

- Increased imports of discounted Russian crude oil.
- Collaboration in LNG and petrochemicals.
- Investments in Russian energy projects.

Nuclear Energy Cooperation

- Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project.
- Cooperation in peaceful uses of atomic energy.
- Potential collaboration in advanced reactor technologies.

Why It Matters

- Supports India's energy security.
- Diversifies import sources.
- Enhances long-term strategic resilience.



Trade and Economic Relations: Untapped Potential- Bilateral trade has expanded significantly, crossing historic levels in recent years.

Growth Drivers

- Energy imports.
- Fertilizers and minerals.
- Pharmaceuticals.
- Engineering goods.

Structural Challenges

- Trade imbalance in Russia's favor.
- Payment settlement issues.
- Limited connectivity and logistics.

Future Opportunities

- Rupee-ruble mechanisms.
- Local currency trade.
- Industrial cooperation.

- Investment partnerships.

Need of the Hour: Transforming energy-driven trade into diversified economic engagements.

Connectivity and the Eurasian Dimension- Connectivity is becoming increasingly important in bilateral relations. **Key Corridors are:**

International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

- Links India with Russia through Iran and Central Asia.
- Reduces transport time and costs.

Chennai–Vladivostok Maritime Corridor

- Connects Indian and Russian Far East regions.
- Enhances maritime cooperation.

Strategic Benefits

- Greater access to Eurasian markets.
- Reduced dependence on traditional routes.
- Enhanced regional integration.
- Human spaceflight cooperation.
- Training support for India's Gaganyaan mission.
- Joint scientific research initiatives.

Future Outlook: Technology partnerships can help diversify relations beyond defense and energy.



Multilateral Cooperation: Partners in Global Governance -India and Russia frequently coordinate positions in international institutions.

Common Platforms are BRICS, SCO, G20, & the UN.

Shared Objectives

- Democratization of global institutions.
- Greater voice for the Global South.
- Reform of multilateral governance.

Strategic Importance- Both countries advocate a world order where power is distributed among multiple centers rather than concentrated in a few states.

The China Factor- One of the most discussed dimensions of India–Russia relations is Russia’s increasing engagement with China.

Indian Concerns

- Strategic dependence of Russia on China.
- Impact on Eurasian balance.
- Potential implications for India's security.

Balancing Factors

- Russia values strategic autonomy.
- India remains a major defense and economic partner.
- Moscow seeks diversified partnerships in Asia.

Assessment: India needs to preserve strategic space while engaging both Russia and Western partners.

Future Areas of Cooperation



- **Critical Minerals**-Lithium, cobalt, rare earths as well as supply chain resilience.
- **Arctic Cooperation on** - shipping routes, energy exploration, climate research.
- **Digital Economy**- Fintech, Cybersecurity, Digital public infrastructure.
- **Green Transition** -Hydrogen economy, Nuclear energy expansion, Sustainable technologies.



Way Forward: Building a Future-Oriented Partnership: Policy Priorities

- Diversify bilateral trade beyond hydrocarbons.
- Expand cooperation in critical minerals.
- Strengthen technology partnerships.
- Accelerate connectivity projects.
- Enhance people-to-people exchanges.
- Promote joint manufacturing and innovation.
- Institutionalize supply-chain cooperation.

Conclusion: India-Russia relations today stand

at an important crossroad. While the partnership faces new geopolitical realities, it continues to be anchored in strategic trust accumulated over decades. The relationship is evolving from a predominantly defense-centric framework toward a broader agenda encompassing energy security, connectivity, critical minerals, technology, and multipolar governance. In an era marked by uncertainty, this relationship remains a significant stabilizing force in Eurasia and a crucial component of India's multi-aligned foreign policy vision.

INDIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS

TIMELINE

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19TH CENTURY	STALIN ERA	1965	1971	POST FALL OF USSR	2010
Tsarist threat to British Indian Empire	No bonhomie due to Indian Non-Aligned posture	Soviets mediated to end Indo-Pak war through Tashkent Agreement	India-Soviet Treaty of Peace and Friendship	After initial hiccups, the relationship continued	Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership (SPSP) signed
					

PRACTICE QUESTIONS: CIVIL SERVICES MAINS



Q1. Global supply chains are increasingly becoming instruments of strategic influence rather than mere economic networks. Discuss in the context of semiconductor competition, trade agreements and India's manufacturing ambitions.

Sample Answer

Introduction: Global Supply Chains (GSCs) were traditionally organised around efficiency and cost reduction. However, recent geopolitical shifts, technology competition and industrial policy interventions have transformed them into instruments of **economic security, strategic autonomy and strategic influence**. Notably, around 70% of global trade occurs through Global Value Chains (OECD).

Why are supply chains becoming strategic?

1. Control over critical technologies creates geopolitical leverage

- Strategic industries such as semiconductors increasingly determine industrial leadership and national capability.
- Semiconductor demand is expected to approach **US\$ 1 trillion by 2030 (industry estimates)**, making chip ecosystems economically and strategically significant.

2. Shift from efficiency → resilience and diversification

- Recent disruptions accelerated movement towards **friend-shoring, near-shoring and supply-chain diversification**.
- OECD notes that firms are increasingly **reconfiguring supply chains rather than fully reshoring production**.

Role of semiconductors and trade arrangements

- Chips are foundational for:
 - Electronics
 - Defence systems
 - Artificial Intelligence
 - Digital infrastructure
- Thus, control over semiconductor value chains influences economic & tech power.

Trade agreements: moving beyond tariff reduction

Modern trade arrangements increasingly focus on:

- Supply-chain security
- Technology cooperation
- Investment facilitation
- Digital trade governance

Implications for India's manufacturing ambitions

Opportunities: India aims to raise manufacturing to **25% of GDP (National Manufacturing Policy target)**; **PLI schemes cover 14 sectors** to deepen domestic manufacturing.

Challenges: Dependence on imported components; Infrastructure and logistics constraints; Need for higher R&D intensity

Way Forward: Build integrated manufacturing ecosystems, invest in R&D and skilling, strengthen logistics and deepen trusted trade partnerships.

Conclusion: Global supply chains are no longer merely economic networks but strategic assets. India must leverage this transition to build resilient manufacturing capacity and strengthen long-term economic competitiveness. This version follows a closer-to-UPSC toppers' sheet format: heading → concise intro → body aligned to directive → small value addition → conclusion. Only Q1 is answered; the remaining four are listed for practice.

4 More Qs to Attempt Yourself

Q2. Technology can improve governance outcomes, but excessive digitalisation may also deepen exclusion. Examine in the context of India's welfare architecture.

Q3. Energy security & climate commitments often appear contradictory, but can be pursued simultaneously. Discuss.

Q4. AI presents opportunities as well as challenges for national security and employment. Analyse.

Q5. Middle powers are increasingly shaping global governance in a multipolar world. Evaluate India's role in this context with examples from recent past.

THE READER'S PAGE

This month's contributions are from **Army Public School, Sagar Cantt, MP**. We thank **Mrs Sonal Jaishekhar**, the co-ordinator & class teacher of these girls & the **Principal, Mrs Jyoti Dubey**, for making this effort possible!

GOING ON A WALK

By: Janhvi Tripathi, 12th C



If all the experiences in this world were ranked from bad to worse, I think “feeling like a burden” would definitely be on the first, and losing your dream job would be second. And I am experiencing both of them currently. While I was busy blaming myself and demoting myself in my mind while having my dinner, I heard someone's voice. “You want anything Meera? Chapati? Rice?” My Mom asked me. Her words came out flat, like she was not irritated or angry— was just feeling very empty, like how I was.

“No” I replied in the lowest voice I could.

And the silence was back again. In that very moment I remembered that, one of my colleagues, told me that she goes on a walk whenever she feels low or upset. And I told her how much of time waste that solution was. “Who has so much of free time to go on a walk. I would rather work in that time” I had told her. That's how I always have been, all about my work, promotions and my paychecks of course. Well now I actually have that “free time” as I don't have any job or work to do anymore. “Let's try this as well” I said to myself as I finished my dinner.

“I am going on a walk Mom. The weather seems nice today”, I told my Mom as I left the house. I didn't use the weather as an excuse, it was actually pleasant. I could feel breeze on my skin, and somehow even in the dark alley with the dimmest street light, the darkness in my mind started to fade away.

As I walked a few meters, I reached the lake of our town. It marked the centre of our town, though the road was always crowded with people and vehicles, the lakeside trail was rather peaceful. As it was already past 10 pm, that too on a working day, the crowd on the road was a bit less, and the crowd around the lake-trail was even lesser. As I started walking, all I could think about is- how this town has changed since I last visited this place. This town didn't look like this when I was leaving it for Canada. It looked pretty different. I remember how this exact place used to be my favourite in childhood. And it didn't even look this beautiful back then, as it had stone slabs instead of concrete tiles and a very few lamps around it. But I think it wasn't about this place's beauty that made me love this place, it was my memories of childhood innocence that made me love it so much. When I was child, every weekend me and my parents used to

come here, walk around and talk about everything that happened in our lives the previous week while having Orange ice creams. At that very moment, that lake felt like the largest lake of the world and that ice cream felt like the tastiest ice cream on earth. Well after that, I have visited much more beautiful lakes in Canada and have tried many more ice cream flavours other than Orange flavour. But honestly neither of them made me feel contented as much as I felt in my childhood while walking around this lake and having an Orange ice cream. As I was thinking about all this, I realised how this town which feels so small to me now, once was my whole world. This town feels too small after returning from Canada, and eight years back, Canada seemed too big when I went there for the first time after I left this town. Funny isn't it?

As my heart was finally feeling light, my brain reminded me that I was jobless and currently had no clue what exactly to do with my financial condition right now. This feeling was so unfamiliar to me, because I always knew what I wanted from my life. Study hard, get a well-paying job in abroad, make your parents proud and get settled. Well, I did half of these things. I studied hard, got my job and hopefully made my parents proud. But I don't think they are proud of their daughter who is currently jobless. And to be very honest, I am not also very proud of me either.

Also, I do miss my job. It was my dream job after all. But sometimes things do not turn out to be as perfect as we planned them. We can never really "plan" happiness, right?

While I was thinking about all this, I noticed two men arguing on the road. By looking at their formal dressing, I could definitely tell that both of them were returning from their offices. I saw a little bit of my past in both of them. Right then, a woman as aged as myself, walked past me. She was on a phone call and was constantly saying "Please grant my application sir. I really want to visit my home this Rakshabandhan sir." Suddenly I got flashbacks from my office days when I also used to beg for holidays just to see my parents at least once a year.

"At least I am not taking out my frustration of my office on someone or begging for a leave anymore" I told myself.

"But still, I don't have enough money or a secure job anymore" came with another wave of sadness. Being financially stable makes most of the things convenient. And let's be honest, being financially weak is everybody's worst nightmare. But I can't really do anything about it right now.

Now I was heading back home, as it was already very late. I won't say this walk made me feel completely fine, but it did make me remember some good and some bad stories of my past. As I was walking back home, I noticed a beggar in front of me. She was begging for food, and it was clear from her face that she was actually starving. Then, a man came and gave her two *Chapaties* wrapped in a newspaper. As she was unwrapping the food I could see a radiant smile appearing on her face. Though she was wearing old and untidy clothes, looking old with wrinkles all over her face, her smile suddenly made her look so bright and so beautiful. Her smile made me smile as well, she looked at me and we both smiled at each other. My smile definitely looked less bright, as I was still stuck somewhere in my thoughts. We had an eye contact for a while, and then that woman started eating those Chapaties. I sensed contentment in her eyes, a genuine smile that sparked happiness. It felt like she found everything she needed in those plain Chapaties.

Looking at her made me realise, I have never been that happy in my life. Not when I scored the highest marks in my class, not when I got admission in one of the best universities of our country, not even when I got my dream job. Not today. Not ever.

At that exact moment, that beggar on the road taught me something important. Which was to find happiness and not to wait for happiness to come to you. I learned that as long as I'm alive, I can always find happiness in every tiny positive thing life gives me.

THE WORDS THAT LEFT MY MOUTH

I said it; the words left my mouth and the instant regret

Became something I can never forget
Immediate feeling of “What have I just said?”

Hit me in the head harder than any stone ever thrown from a distance could

I wanted to take my words back but water spread on soil cannot be taken back

I was too irate to admit my blunder

So, I stood like someone in thunder
“Why don’t you just die” I screamed at my cousin brother
I cannot recall why was I so enraged for a TV remote
I don’t even like watching TV anymore

I just wanted to watch you grow young and old with me,
I did apologize to you after and you forgave me
But I still remember the way you cried

You had a habit of covering yourself with a blanket until your eyes dried

I laid beside you and hugged you

I was sorry for the way words came out Just like that summer ended
It was time for us to say goodbye

You hugged me so tight I could barely breathe

If only I knew, it would be our last-I would ask the time to freeze

Later my brother was diagnosed with dengue

and when you are not paying much attention it’s just fever

Just like that you lost your life right in front of Bhopal hospital

I was told by my mother that you are doing fine,

But on a cardiac monitor you were just flat line

I was told that it was never my fault
But one does not know the weight of guilt and grief,
Until they are the one bearing it
Now I talk to the stars in the sky

Paying the price for the words I once said, Water spread on soil cannot be
taken back

It’s all red now that you are dead.

ABOUT US

This monthly magazine provides you all with a worldwide view of Military, Sports, National & International, Science & technology and Environmental happenings. So, let's take a dip into the realm of current affairs and events, guided by the brilliance of insights by Team CMDA. In midst of the prevailing culture of fake news and false publicity, we have attempted to convey factual and 'to the point' information for you all, under the directions and guidance of Col (Dr) Bhasker Gupta (retired). It is also being published under his sponsorship.

HIGHLIGHTS

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- 30 Questions Quiz to Rack your Brains
- Civil Services Mains Exam-Imp Ques with one answered
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**Printed at- Xtreme Office Aids(P) Ltd.
Plot no 11, Basement, Bhanot Building,
Nangal Raya, New-Delhi-46, 7982084106**

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Rs. 199/-