

CURRENT AFFAIRS

UPSC CSE 2026



**DAILY CURRENT
AFFAIRS NOTES**

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Seven held in crackdown by J&K Police on terror module

- The **Jammu and Kashmir Police** have busted an “**inter-State and transnational terror module**”, arrested **seven people**, and seized **2,900 kg of IED-making material** in the past 15 days.
- The terror module was linked to the **Jaish-e-Mohammed** and the **Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind**.
- The investigation revealed a **white collar terror ecosystem** involving **radicalised professionals and students** in contact with **foreign handlers** operating from **Pakistan and other countries**.

Women are ‘largest minority’, says SC

- The **Supreme Court** said women are the “**largest minority**” in India and their presence in **Parliament is steadily receding**.
- Justice **B.V. Nagarathna**, the Supreme Court’s sole woman judge, asked “**Why not give women representation even without reservation**”.
- The Bench was hearing a petition challenging the provisions of the “**Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam**” (Constitution 106th Amendment) granting **33% reservation for women** in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies.
- She pointed to **Article 15(3)** of the Constitution, which mandates the State to take **affirmative action** and make **special provisions** for the empowerment of women.
- The **2023 law** would be implemented only after the **next Census** and the subsequent **delimitation exercise** to determine seats to be reserved for women.
- The **quota for women** in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies would continue for **15 years**, and **Parliament could later extend** the benefit period.

What South Asia wants from COP30

- A decade after the **Paris Agreement**, the **climate crisis** has intensified, with **South Asia** bearing the brunt through monsoon **floods, landslides, and heatwaves**.

South Asia’s concerns and priorities

- The global order is **fractured** — multilateralism under strain, **climate pledges weakened**, and **trade protectionism** rising.
- Withdrawal of the **United States** from the Paris Agreement has tested global credibility, but collective action continues through **small island-states**, emerging economies and coalitions.
- Consultations across **Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh** identified convergence for COP30 and opportunities for regional climate cooperation.
- South Asia’s response is **pragmatic and collaborative**, driven by **renewable energy, climate-resilient agriculture**, and integrating adaptation into development.

Five concerns and priorities emerged:

1. Implementation gap

- Implementation is the **Achilles heel** of climate action. Large gap between **promises** and **delivery** in action and finance. Only **65 countries** have submitted enhanced NDCs.
- Strengthen cooperation through **knowledge sharing, aligned priorities, and scaling technology solutions**. Examples: India’s **CDRI**, Nepal’s **Sagarmatha Sambaad**.

2. Climate adaptation equal to mitigation

- Adaptation must stand **shoulder-to-shoulder** with emission mitigation. **ADB**: South Asia may see days above **35°C** rise from **100 to 200** annually by 2100. Region-specific impacts: **Nepal**: glacial lake outburst flood, **Maldives**: coastal threats, **India**: heatwaves, **Sri Lanka**: drylands, water stress.
- Requires **technical, institutional and financial support** to develop and implement plans. Mainstream **locally-led adaptation** to complement scientific innovation. Need **simple, non-burdensome indicators** under the **Global Goal on Adaptation**, adaptable for regional and national use.

3. Investing in trust

- Past marked by **delayed finances, broken promises, diluted commitments** from developed countries. Easy exit from agreements undermines **trust**.

- **CEEW analysis**: developed countries not on track for **2030 NDCs**.

4. Deliver predictable and fair climate finance

- Finance must be **predictable, adequate, fairly distributed, accessible, and non-debt inducing**.
- Without clarity, the **\$300 billion adaptation target (2035)** is meaningless.
- Launch a **South Asian resilience finance facility** for innovative finance and nature-based solutions.

5. Climate transition requires non-state actors

- Non-state actors must be **engines of scale**: sub-national entities, private sector, civil society, youth, academia, businesses. Private sector can **unlock finance**; civil society can conduct **independent assessments**.
- Develop a **regional compendium** of traditional knowledge and practices.

Way forward

- South Asian countries are largely **excluded from international technology flows**. Time for promises is over; **delivery** is the only currency of trust at COP30.
- **Delivery must rest on**:
 - **Mutual clarity** (responsibilities and pathways)
 - **Mutual cooperation** (vulnerabilities and opportunities)
 - **Mutual implementation** (turning promises into action)
- South Asia is **leading, innovating and demanding** restoration of multilateral credibility through **delivery**.

In free fall

- Sudan is no stranger to **violence by paramilitary forces**, yet the **rape, pillage and mass killings** by the **Rapid Support Forces (RSF)** in **El-Fasher** after capturing the city were shocking even by Sudan's standards.
- The **RSF**, a predominantly **Arab militia** known for brutality against Sudan's **African communities**, unleashed atrocities including a **massacre at a maternity hospital**.
- The **RSF** now **controls five of Darfur's capitals**, tightening its grip over the **famine-stricken region**.
- The **RSF** was born from the **Janjaweed militia** in the early 2000s, accused of **ethnic cleansing and genocide** against non-Arab communities in Darfur.
- The **RSF laid siege to El-Fasher** triggering **famine** due to the blockade. Over **12 million people** have been displaced since Sudan's **civil war broke out in 2023**, and **tens of thousands killed**.
- The **military government**, backed by **Egypt**, controls most of Sudan, while the **RSF**, supported by the **UAE**, dominates **Darfur**. Earlier this year, the army **pushed the RSF out of Khartoum**, the capital.
- The **fall of El-Fasher** confirms that the **RSF remains entrenched in its stronghold**.

Celebrating a sage king, a celebration of India-Bhutan ties

- **Hydropower cooperation between India and Bhutan** has developed into one of the **strongest and most significant pillars** of their bilateral relationship.
- **Punatsangchhu II hydroelectric project** will be formally inaugurated symbolising this friendship. The **1,020 MW** Punatsangchhu II project has been **generating electricity for some months**, helping Bhutan **raise its economic profile**.
- The project was constructed as a **cooperative venture** between the Governments of India and Bhutan, with **India providing the initial capital**.
- The capital is **paid off by the project** through income generated from the **sale of electricity to India**, with rates competitive but **adjusted periodically**.
- India is grateful to Bhutan for **Operation All Clear** in 2003, where the **RBA drove out several hundred Indian insurgent group cadres** sheltering in Bhutan. After the operation, on the Indian side of the border, the **Indian Army was able to easily arrest these insurgent groups** and proceed against them as per law.

Iraqi elections: An opportunity for India

- The **Iraqi oil and gas sector** has remained largely **unaffected by political and security flux**.
- Iraq has been **producing around 4.5 mbpd** and **exporting nearly 3.6 mbpd**, with **China and India** as the top two customers in **2024**.
- Iraq claims **5.5 mbpd production capacity** and has signed agreements with **Chinese, American, and Western oil and gas majors** to ramp up production to **7 mbpd by 2029**.
- **Reducing gas flaring** is a priority so that the gas can be used as **fuel for power generation**.
- India had **close ties with Iraq during the 1980s**, with nearly **\$10 billion** worth of construction projects and oil exploration blocks.
- In **2024-25**, total **bilateral trade was \$33.35 billion**, making Iraq **India's eighth largest trade partner**.
- The trade balance is **9:1 in Iraq's favour** due to India's dependence on crude.
- As **Russian oil supplies recede**, Iraq is likely to **resume its role as India's largest crude supplier**, further tilting the trade imbalance.

What is the role of a pay commission?

- The Central government has constituted the **8th Central Pay Commission (CPC)** with **Ranjana Prakash Desai** as Chairperson. It will submit its report within **18 months**.

What is a pay commission?

- Pay commissions are set up in India by an **executive order based on a Cabinet decision**.
- The CPC examines **salary structures, retirement benefits, and service conditions** of Central government employees, including **defence personnel**.
- It **makes recommendations** on necessary changes. The **first CPC** was set up in **1946**.

What are its terms of reference?

- The **Terms of Reference (TOR)** are finalised by the Union Cabinet.
- The TOR of the **8th CPC** requires consideration of:
 - **Economic conditions and fiscal prudence**
 - Need for **resources** for developmental expenditure and welfare
 - **Unfunded cost** of non-contributory pension schemes
 - **Impact on State finances**, since States usually adopt CPC recommendations
 - **Prevailing emolument structure** and working conditions in **CPSUs** and the **private sector**

What are the international practices?

- Till the **1970s**: focus on **equity**, benchmarking with the private sector.
- **1980s**: **efficiency** became the key principle.
- **1990s onward**: emphasis on **performance** and **incentives**, balanced with affordability.
- **Current global trend**: compensation systems aim to **recruit and retain skilled individuals** while containing public expenditure.
- Key characteristics of fair public-sector compensation globally: **clear philosophy, ability to attract talent, internal equity, external competitiveness, clarity**.
- In India, **internal equity** is strong but **external competitiveness** lags for **top positions**.
- Comparative data show that despite perceptions of a **gargantuan public sector**, India fares **lower** on most parameters than major democracies.

What next?

- TOR requires the CPC to **compare public and private sector pay structures**.
 - Entry-level public sector salaries are **higher**, but **higher posts and specialist roles** receive lower salaries than private counterparts.

Table1: Comparison of public sector employment and expenditure

Country	Public sector wage bill (% of GDP)	Public sector wage bill (% of total expenditure)	Public sector employment (% of total employment)
India	5.48	17.70	8.5
U.S.	9.50	20.58	12.9
U.K.	10.20	20.29	29.0
France	13.37	21.43	31.5
Germany	8.51	16.46	22.4
Brazil	10.65	24.92	12.5

- The **compression ratio** (lowest to highest salary) was **1:12.5** in the 7th CPC.
- **Privileges, perks, and job security** compensate for lower salaries at top posts, but this requires **revisiting** for specialist roles.
- Intangibles such as **learning and development, training, work environment, flexible working, and health promotion** are not part of the TOR, but may be addressed by the Commission.
- The 8th CPC must consider **economic conditions, adequate resources for welfare, and unfunded pension costs**.
- The **pension bill** for **2025-26** is estimated at **₹2.76 lakh crore** out of the total revenue expenditure of **₹39.44 lakh crore**.

Ministry simplifies rules to boost cornea transplant services

- The **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has amended the **Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues (Amendment) Rules, 2025** to boost **cornea donation and transplant services** across the country.
- A **notification** in this regard was issued under the **Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994**.
- The **mandatory requirement of clinical specular equipment** in corneal transplantation centres has been **removed** under this amendment.
- **Clinical specular microscopes** are used to assess the **health and density of corneal endothelial cells**.
- The change was introduced after **expert recommendations** and **stakeholder consultations**, the Ministry said.
- The move aligns with the government's vision to promote **equitable access** to organ and tissue transplantation services.
- The amendment **strengthens the National Organ Transplant Programme (NOTP)** and **streamlines functioning** of corneal transplantation centres. The amendment is expected to **ease infrastructure and operational challenges**, especially for **smaller eye centres in rural and semi-urban areas**.
- A **corneal transplant** replaces a **damaged or diseased cornea** with healthy donor tissue to **restore vision and reduce pain**. The **cornea** is the clear front part of the eye that helps **focus light**; when cloudy or scarred, vision becomes significantly impaired.
- A transplant can involve replacing **the entire cornea** or only the **affected layers**.
- **Corneal blindness** is the **second-leading cause of blindness** in the over-50 age group in India.
- India has an estimated **1.2 million corneal blind persons**.

Centre yet again seeks auto industry inputs on EV import policy

- The government has once again **invited suggestions from the auto industry** on its **electric vehicle (EV) import policy**, which offers **duty concessions** in exchange for **local manufacturing commitments**.
- Earlier, the policy failed to attract **any bidders**.
- Earlier, the government invited auto players to submit interest for the **Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars (SPMEPC)** in India. The scheme permits automakers to **import up to 8,000 EVs** at a **reduced duty rate of 15%** (instead of 70–100%) if they commit to **invest ₹4,150 crore** in local EV manufacturing.
- The **deadline for submissions ended with not a single applicant**. On the lack of interest, the officials said one reason was the **ongoing India–EU trade agreement negotiations** and potential **import concessions** under it.
- The government also received suggestions to **include ICE vehicles** under the scheme. The official said while **minor changes could be made, the fundamentals cannot be altered**.

Rural unemployment down, urban joblessness up, finds government survey

- The **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** shows **rural unemployment** among persons aged 15+ declined to **4.4%** from **4.8%** in the previous quarter.
- **Urban unemployment rate “edged up slightly”**, rising from **6.1% to 6.2% for males** and **8.9% to 9.0% for females**. Overall unemployment among persons aged 15+ **dropped to 5.2%** from **5.4%** in the previous quarter.
- **Self-employment dominated** in rural areas, while urban jobs were primarily **regular wage or salaried employment**. **Self-employed persons (15+) in rural areas** increased to **62.8%** from **60.7%**.
- In urban areas, the share of **regular wage/salaried employment** rose to **49.8%** from **49.4%**.

- The rural workforce continued to **concentrate in agriculture**, with **57.7%** engaged in the sector, up from **53.5%** in the previous quarter due to **seasonal agricultural operations**.
- In urban areas, the **tertiary sector** remained dominant, employing **62%** of workers, slightly above **61.7%**.
- The **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** among females aged 15+ increased to **33.7%** from **33.4%** in the previous quarter.