

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## UPSC CSE 2026



**DAILY CURRENT  
AFFAIRS NOTES**

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### Retail inflation hits record low of 0.25%

- Retail inflation fell to a historic low of **0.25%**, according to government data. This is the **lowest rate of inflation in the current Consumer Price Index (CPI) series, i.e., the lowest since 2012.**
- The government attributed the fall to the **first full month's impact of GST rate cuts, a favourable base effect, and a drop in inflation of several food items** such as vegetables and fruits. Data reveal that the fall in overall inflation is **largely due to the statistical impact of the base effect on food inflation.**

### Fine-tune the AI labelling regulations framework

- Millions of Indians watched the Finance Minister speak about **indirect tax reforms** while a viral **AI-generated video** falsely endorsing an investment scheme led a Roorkee resident to lose **₹66 lakh**, highlighting the urgent need to address **synthetic media.**

#### Noble intent, ambiguous grouping

- Synthetic media is **artificially or algorithmically created, modified, or generated** to appear authentic.
- Labelling such content is complicated since not all altered media is made by **generative AI.**
- Over **50% of all Internet content** is now considered **AI-generated.**
- Draft rules mandate labels covering 10% of visual area for synthetic videos or 10% of initial duration for synthetic audio, but mixed media applications remain unclear.
- **Watermarks** from AI companies lack reliability as tools can **scrub them entirely.**
- Framework needs **fine-tuning with precise standards.**
- A **tiered-labelling system** distinguishing '**fully AI-generated**', '**AI-assisted**', and '**AI-altered**' content may be more effective.

#### Graded compliance, targeted intervention

- Rules mandate intermediaries such as **Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X** to analyse and label synthetic media.
- Scope must broaden to include **creators**, who frequently employ AI for visual storytelling, avatars, and digital twins.
- High-influence creators should **disclose AI use**, while voluntary self-labelling can be encouraged for smaller creators. **Graded compliance** recognises professional creators' influence and the need for **transparency.**

#### Verification needs more hands on deck

- Rules require SSMLs to ask users to label synthetic content and verify declarations, but **synthetic media is multiplying faster** than verification tools.
- Platforms adhere to **C2PA standards**, but content is not strictly labelled, and detection remains challenging.
- Platforms will require **third-party detection tools**, whose reliability depends on training and accuracy.
- The ecosystem must rely on **independent information verifiers and auditors** for credible identification.

### Inter-State rivalry that is fuelling India's growth

- The Centre has encouraged a **shift toward competitive federalism**, with rankings on **ease of doing business, startup promotion, and export readiness** intensifying healthy competition.
- Investors who once feared India's bureaucracy now view **regional diversity as a positive**, with multiple entry points and distinct State strengths.
- **Andhra Pradesh's ease of doing business, Punjab's entrepreneurial verve, Tamil Nadu's skilled workforce, Gujarat's infrastructure, Jharkhand's mineral base, and Uttar Pradesh's untapped potential** together present a **federation of opportunity.**
- Competition carries risks and **must not become a race to the bottom**; States should guard against **reckless subsidies** or **indiscriminate land giveaways** that threaten fiscal stability.
- The smarter approach is to **compete through competence and credibility**, not concessions.
- Healthy rivalry promotes **imitation of best practices** — one State's reform triggers another's response.
- Single-window clearances, EV policies, and other reforms spread through **cross-State learning**, shaping **policy diffusion** across India.

- Global manufacturing and services are in churn as multinationals diversify away from China and seek **scale, predictability, and credible governance**.
- The “+1” in the China+1 formula must be earned **State by State**; investors land in **Bengaluru, Bhopal, or Bhubaneswar**, not in “India” abstractly.
- India competes globally **through its States**, which now drive investment outcomes.
- India has moved from a **permission-based economy to a persuasion-based one** over three decades.
- States no longer queue for Delhi’s patronage; they **campaign with CEOs and investors**, pitching their case with **confidence and data**.

### Can lawyers break client confidentiality?

- The Supreme Court recently affirmed the **indispensable role of advocates** in a constitutional democracy, ruling that a lawyer cannot be summoned merely to disclose client communications except where legal advice is used to commit or conceal a crime.

### What are privileged communications?

- Privileged communications are **confidential exchanges** between protected relationships such as **attorney-client** and **spousal**, shielded from disclosure.
- Purpose: promote **honesty, trust**, reinforce **justice** and **ethical responsibility**.
- **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA), 2023**, Sections **128–134** outline protections:
  - **Section 128**: protects **marital communications**, preventing compelled or permitted disclosure without consent, except in cases of crimes against each other or suits between them.
  - **Section 129**: bars release of **unpublished official records** relating to affairs of State without approval.
  - **Section 132**: prohibits advocates from revealing **professional communications**.

### What did the SC state?

- State intrusion into the **lawyer-client relationship** endangers **equitable representation, fair trial, and rule of law**.
- **Section 132 (BSA)**: an advocate cannot disclose professional communications except when: **Client consents**, Communication pertains to **illegal purposes**, Advocate observes **criminal activity** during employment.
- Privilege belongs to the **client**, but its enforcement depends on the **lawyer’s silence**.
- This silence protects not only the powerful but also **women reporting sexual violence, accident victims**, and families of those affected by **custodial excesses**.
- With **3.9 lakh undertrials**, this privilege keeps the **promise of fair defence** alive.
- Investigating/prosecuting agencies **cannot summon a lawyer** merely for appearing or advising unless material shows the case fits **Section 132 exceptions**.
- Court linked Section 132 to **Article 20(3)** (protection against self-incrimination), thereby **constitutionalising** the privilege.
- If a citizen cannot be compelled to confess, the State cannot coerce the citizen’s lawyer to disclose confidential communication.

### What about a lawyer’s role?

- SC positions advocate as “**constitutional actor**”, essential to **constitutional architecture of legal representation**. Professional privilege is **not a perk**, but a **safeguard for citizens**. Privilege ensures **no prejudice** to the accused.
- Summoning a lawyer to divulge client information turns the advocate into an **involuntary witness**, collapsing the line between **defence and prosecution**.
- Such acts are a “**blatant breach of the rule against non-disclosure**”, undermining **Article 21’s fair defence** and **Article 14’s equality**.

### Why is the verdict important?

- Strengthens the **right to effective legal representation**, read into **Article 21** and **Article 22(1)**.
- SC cited **M.H. Hoskot (1978)** and **Hussainara Khatoon (1980)**: liberty without counsel is **liberty in theory**.
- At a time when agencies summon journalists, tax consultants, and even lawyers to “assist” investigations, the judgment restores **institutional sobriety**.

### Why does India's road safety system keep failing?

- The Supreme Court took cognisance of two **mass-casualty road crashes** in Phalodi, Rajasthan (14 killed) and NH 163, Telangana (19 killed). More than **1.7 lakh lives** were lost in 2023 due to road crashes.

### What are the problems in licensing?

- Licensing and training should be the **first line of defence**, not just an administrative formality.
- Driver licensing is meant to be a **filtration process**, but licences can be obtained **without formal training**.
- Driving tests are often **perfunctory**, limited to small test tracks.
- **No structured, standardised safety training** exists for commercial drivers.
- After a licence is issued, **few checks** assess continuing skill, physical fitness, or mental alertness.
- **Heavily fatigued drivers**, some with compromised vision or chronic illness, routinely operate heavy vehicles with **no detection mechanism**.

### What is the role of enforcement?

- **Speeding, overloading, lane violations, driving under the influence** remain major causes of fatal crashes.
- Enforcement still relies on **resource-constrained, unskilled manual policing**.
- Even where technology exists (automated cameras, digital challans), **coverage is limited, data integration weak**, penalties often **not recovered**.
- The Supreme Court has emphasised **electronic enforcement standards**, but adoption is **patchy across States**.

### What about weak infrastructure?

- Poorly banked curves, **no crash barriers**, inadequate illumination, missing rest areas contribute to fatal outcomes. Highways were designed for **speed and throughput**, not safety, resulting in **'unforgiving roads'**.
- **Maintenance gaps**: broken dividers, exposed concrete structures, **unmarked construction zones**, encroachments. Urban areas lack adequate **pedestrian infrastructure**.
- Evidence from the **Zero Fatality Corridor** programme on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway shows engineering and enforcement changes cut **crash deaths by more than half**.

### How can trauma care be improved?

- Survival often depends on what happens in the **critical hour** after a crash.
- Ambulance networks vary widely in **availability and efficiency**.
- Rural delays can exceed an hour; urban victims are often extracted **without equipment or medical support**.
- Facilities near crash sites often lack **trauma specialists, blood banks, or resuscitation facilities**.
- A proposed **Right to Trauma Care law** could mandate **time-bound emergency response** and a **coordinated trauma network**.
- Licensing, infrastructure, and trauma care are treated as **separate silos**; safety requires **coordination and accountability** across all three.

### Union Cabinet clears new royalty rates of critical minerals

- Seeking to reduce **import dependence** and **supply chain vulnerabilities** in **critical minerals**, the Union Cabinet approved the **rationalisation of royalty rates** for **graphite, caesium, rubidium, and zirconium**.
- Under the new structure, **graphite** will shift from a **per tonne royalty** to an **ad valorem basis**.
- The Cabinet said the rationalisation would **promote the auction** of mineral blocks of **caesium, rubidium, and zirconium**.

### India ninth worst affected by extreme weather: study

- A new report, the **Climate Risk Index (CRI) 2026** published by **Germanwatch** at **COP30 in Belém**, finds that **over 832,000 people died, nearly 5.7 billion were affected, and economic losses exceeded \$4.5 trillion (inflation-adjusted)** from **9,700+ extreme weather events** between **1995 and 2024**.
- **Germanwatch** is a Bonn-based **environmental and development organisation** advocating for **global equity and sustainability** in climate policy.
- **India ranks ninth** among the countries **most affected** during this period. India faced recurring **floods, cyclones, droughts**, and increasingly severe **heatwaves**.

### Tuberculosis incidence falling in India by 21% a year: WHO report

- India's **tuberculosis (TB) incidence** fell by **21%** from 2015 to 2024 — almost **double the global decline of 12%**, according to the **WHO Global TB Report 2025**.
- This was **one of the highest declines globally**, outpacing reductions in other **high-burden countries**.
- India's **innovative case-finding approach**, uptake of **newer technologies**, **decentralisation**, and **community mobilisation** increased **treatment coverage to over 92%** in 2024 (up from 53% in 2015).
- There is **no significant increase in multidrug-resistant (MDR) TB patients** in the country.
- **Treatment success rate** under the **TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan** rose to **90%**, higher than the **global rate of 88%**. Since its launch in **2024**, **TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan** has screened **over 19 crore vulnerable individuals**, detecting **over 24.5 lakh TB patients**, including **8.61 lakh asymptomatic cases**.

### India leads global TB fight

India records one of the world's steepest tuberculosis declines, doubling global progress through innovation and outreach



■ TB incidence fell 21% (2015–2024), from 237 to 187 cases per lakh.

■ Treatment coverage rose from 53% (2015) to 92% (2024)

■ 26.18 lakh diagnosed out of 27 lakh estimated cases

■ The number of missing cases reduced from 15 lakh (2015) to <1 lakh (2024)

■ The treatment success rate in India was about 90%, against the global average of 88%

■ TB mortality declined from 28 deaths per lakh to 21 deaths per lakh (2015–2024)

### GI tag fee cut to ₹1,000; Minister promises backing for tribal goods

- Commerce and Industry Minister announced that the **application fee for the Geographical Indications (GI) tag** has been **reduced to ₹1,000 from ₹5,000**.
- He urged **tribal artisans** to register and protect **traditional products and crafts**. He promised Ministry support to create **export and e-commerce linkages** and **international warehouses** for tribal products.
- The conclave was organised by the **Ministries of Tribal Affairs and Culture** and **DPIIT** at the **Yashobhoomi Convention Centre**. The event featured discussions on **financing innovations, investments in tribal enterprises, partnerships, industry linkages, and skilling**.
- Schools, universities, industries, and the government must work together to ensure **tribal products reach domestic and global markets**.
- The conclave was part of **Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh** celebrations marking the **150th birth anniversary year of Birsa Munda**.
- **GI tag certificates** were distributed for products such as **Kannadippaya (Kerala)**, **Apatani textile (Arunachal Pradesh)**, **Marthandam honey (Tamil Nadu)**, **Lepcha Tungbuk (Sikkim)**, **Bodo Aronai (Assam)**, **Ambaji white marble (Gujarat)**, and **Bedu & Badri cow ghee (Uttarakhand)**.
- The Tribal Affairs Ministry announced a **Tribal Affairs Grand Challenge** inviting enterprises to design **solutions for tribal communities**.

### SEBI panel proposes 'wider' conflict of interest regulations

- A **high-level committee** under SEBI has proposed **expanding the definition of family**, strengthening **disclosures**, and placing **investment restrictions** on board members under a new framework to overhaul **conflict of interest regulations**.
- SEBI formed the committee, headed by former **CVC chief Pratyush Sinha**, after allegations of violating conflict of interest rules by former SEBI chief from which she was later exonerated.
- The committee recommended creating an **Office of Ethics and Compliance**, headed by an **Executive Director-level officer**, to oversee the framework.
- A significant proposal is the **expanded definition of family** to include:
  - Any person for whom the member/employee is a **legal guardian**;
  - Any person **related by blood or marriage** to the employee or spouse and **substantially dependent** on the employee.
- These rules will apply to **SEBI employees and board members**.

- Under the **2008 guidelines**, the definition of family was limited to **spouse and children**.
- The term '**relative**' will now be defined in line with the **Companies Act, 2013**, and applied to both **members and employees**.