

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## UPSC CSE 2026



DAILY CURRENT  
AFFAIRS NOTES

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### Cyber crackdown

- SC's direction to the CBI to conduct a **pan-India investigation** into **cyber-crimes**, and "digital arrest" scams in particular, might seem extraordinary. Such directions normally require **State government consent**.
- This is necessary as these scams depend on a **malleable financial architecture** and therefore require the intervention of agencies such as the **RBI**.
- The **Court** has instructed the RBI to employ **Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning** to trace the "layering" of **proceeds** through multiple accounts.
- The Court has also asked **online intermediaries** to cooperate with the **CBI**, invoking the **IT Rules 2021**.
- The Court is also right in asking the CBI to investigate other scams such as **investment schemes** and **part-time job scams** subsequently.
- The severity of **cyber frauds**, as **National Crime Records Bureau** data indicate, has risen significantly.
- While the judiciary and domestic policing can address symptoms within India, the problem is also **transnational**.
- The burgeoning of "scam centres" in conflict-ridden zones of **Southeast Asia** involves trafficked workers forced to run online fraud operations due to violence, confiscated documents, or **debt bondage**. This suggests that the solution requires **robust international diplomacy**.
- The **U.S.** has established a **Scam Center Strike Force** to tackle the issue.
- **Myanmar** remains a hotbed for these operations as the illegally ruling **junta** benefits from taxing the proceeds of such crimes. Tackling this requires moving beyond **bilateral requests**.
- **India** must act in cohesion with **ASEAN** and the **UN** to sanction the illegal regime and cut off the **financial lifelines** of these operations.
- Domestically, the battle must also be fought on the grounds of **digital literacy and capacity**.
- There remains a glaring **deficit in cyber awareness** as daily life and governance become increasingly digitised.
- **States, local administrations, and the RBI** must launch widespread **awareness campaigns**.
- There is an urgent need to upgrade the **digital capabilities of State police**.

### A day to pause and come down to earth

- Every year on **December 5**, the world observes **World Soil Day**, established by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the United Nations. For **2025**, the theme is "**Healthy Soils for Healthy Cities**".

#### World Soil Day 2025: Urban Focus

- The **2025** theme shifts focus from **rural farmland to the concrete jungle**. It highlights that the **ground beneath our cities is not mere dirt**, but a **dynamic ally** in building a **resilient urban future**.
- With over **56% of the global population living in cities**, urban environments face **food insecurity, pollution, flooding and extreme heat**. At the heart of solutions lies **urban soil**.

#### Role of Urban Soils

- **Urban soils** are silent, unsung heroes beneath **parks, street trees and community gardens**. They act as **living filters, natural sponges and carbon sinks**. Their health is directly linked to **urban resilience and well-being**.
- **Healthy soils help in:**
  - **Combating climate change and extreme heat** by absorbing heat, sequestering carbon and acting as **natural air conditioners**.
  - **Preventing floods and managing water** by absorbing rainfall, filtering it and replenishing **groundwater supplies**.
  - **Supporting urban food systems and biodiversity** through **urban agriculture**, shortening food chains and supporting **earthworms, microbes and pollinators**.
  - **Enhancing mental and physical well-being**, reducing **stress, anxiety and depression**, and encouraging **physical activity**.

#### Degradation of Urban Soils

- The **FAO** notes **nearly a third of the world's soils are degraded**, a problem **magnified in cities**.
- Urban soils face **contamination from industrial waste, severe compaction from construction, loss of organic matter, and sealing by concrete and asphalt**.
- These pressures **weaken plant growth, threaten food safety, and cripple ecosystems**, making the **2025** theme an **urgent call to action**.

#### Blueprint for Action

- The "**Healthy Soils for Healthy Cities**" **campaign** calls for transforming **urban landscapes**.
- It urges **municipal governments, planners, community groups and residents** to become **stewards of the soil**.

- **Urban soil restoration and protection** through **compost addition, soil testing and organic amendments**, and **limiting soil sealing**.
- **Promoting green infrastructure** by replacing concrete with **soil-based solutions** such as **parks, rain gardens and tree belts**.
- **Championing urban agriculture** through **community and backyard gardens**, including planting in **containers on balconies**.
- **Responsible soil management** by reducing **chemical fertilizers**, **minimising pesticide use**, planting **native species**, and **mulching**.
- **Boosting soil literacy and composting** through **school workshops** and **household composting of kitchen waste**.

#### **New Delhi's relative isolation, India's tryst with terror**

- Recent approval of the **27th Constitutional Amendment Bill** by Pakistan's Joint Parliamentary Committee of the **Senate and National Assembly**, altered the balance between **civil and military authority**.
- It has introduced a new '**Chief of Defence Forces**', elevating **Field Marshal Asim Munir** as the military supremo and commander-in-chief of all three services. It gives him **sole control over Pakistan's nuclear assets**.
- The amendment invests him with **absolute authority to deal with enemies**, removing parliamentary restraint and posing a real threat to **India on its western flank**.
- Concentration of power encourages strategic adventurism.
- A **Pakistan navy ship** visited **Bangladesh** after almost half a century. This visit is expected to help Pakistan re-establish its presence in the **Bay of Bengal**, with serious **security implications for India**.
- A mix of **ideological posturing and military governance** on India's western and eastern flanks has raised diplomatic temperatures across the region. This could have serious and adverse consequences if not properly handled, requiring **extreme vigilance and careful manoeuvring**.
- India is also facing the return of 'urban terror'. Investigations revealed an **entirely local terrorist module** using **encrypted channels** for indoctrination, coordination, fund movements, and logistics.
- Funds were raised by **professional and academic networks** under the guise of **social or charitable causes**.

#### **Putin's visit a tightrope walk for Modi govt. amid sanction threats**

- **Russian oil** has become the most contentious issue after India's oil purchases rose from **less than 2%** before the **Ukraine conflict** to **40% last year**.
- This expansion drove **India-Russia trade** from an annual average of **\$10 billion** to **\$68.7 billion in 2024-25**.
- With India expected to cut oil imports due to **U.S. sanctions**, India and Russia will discuss replacing some oil purchases with **other commodities from Russia**.
- Talks will also focus on boosting **Indian exports** to Russia of **produce, processed foods, apparel, and machinery**.
- Trade expansion is expected particularly through the **Eastern Maritime Corridor from Chennai to Vladivostok**.
- Both sides will push for progress on the FTA between India and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAU).
- Indian exporters affected by the **U.S.'s 50% tariffs** are seeking **new markets**.
- The **India-Russia labour mobility agreement**, expected as the centrepiece of the visit could boost opportunities for **Indian skilled and semi-skilled workers**.
- This assumes importance as **Western markets tighten immigration controls**.
- The visit will be closely watched for **defence deals**, given past U.S. threats of sanctions under **CAATSA** after India's **S-400 air defence system** deal with Russia. **Russian technology transfer** is key for India, as no other country has agreed to share its **most sensitive technologies**.
- With the **Russian Duma clearing the RELOS military logistics pact**, more **military exercises with Russia** could be expected.

#### **Parliament approves Bill to levy excise duty on tobacco**

- Parliament approved a Bill to levy a **higher excise duty on tobacco and related products** once the **GST compensation cess ends**, with the Rajya Sabha returning the legislation to the Lok Sabha.
- The **Lok Sabha** passed the **Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025**.
- **Union Finance Minister** said this was **not an additional tax**. She said the **tax burden under the GST regime will continue** as currently applicable.
- She stated that in the last **GST Council** meeting, it was discussed in detail that the **compensation cess collection will probably stop at the end of December**.
- She assured that **tobacco products will continue to be taxed under the demerit category at 40% under GST**, though there will be **no compensation cess**.

### Postal department considers UPI-like 'labels' for addresses

- The Department of Posts released a draft amendment to the **Post Office Act, 2023** to introduce an interoperable, standardised, and user-centric addressing system called **Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address (DHRUVA)**.
- The department aims to draw interest from **e-commerce and gig platforms**, where users need to provide addresses across multiple services.
- On such platforms, individuals would be able to provide a **label instead of an address** and authorise firms to receive **geographic coordinates and full address text instantly**.
- The draft amendment would allow the postal department to set up a **Section 8 not-for-profit entity under government supervision**. This body would play a role similar to the **National Payments Corporation of India**, which administers the **UPI payments system**.
- There is **no compulsion** in the draft amendment for **private players to join**.
- DIGIPIN** was open-sourced by the department. Each **DIGIPIN** corresponds to a **14 square metre patch of land**. A mathematical function deterministically generates a **unique code** for each DIGIPIN. This translates to around **228 billion DIGIPINs for Indian territory**.

### Smart addresses

A draft amendment seeks to enable an interoperable system replacing physical addresses with smart labels like "name@entity" powered by **DIGIPIN** for precise geolocation

Labels will be provided by address service providers, while consent architecture will be managed by address information agents

It will be based on the **DIGIPIN** system, which is a 10-character alphanumeric expression of latitude and longitude coordinates

The technology was developed to provide more precise locations in rural areas or in cases where the textual expression of a physical address does not



offer adequate information

The draft amendment is under consultation; Section 8 entity proposed (like NPCI for UPI)

The system will be built as part of government's digital public infrastructure initiatives, and will allow private firms to participate

### Supreme Court to review clause in 2025 Order that contradicts Assam Accord

- The Supreme Court sought the Centre's response to a plea challenging the constitutionality of a provision allowing persecuted **religious minorities** from **Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh** who entered India without valid documents before **December 31, 2024**, to stay in Assam.
- The plea challenges **Clause 3(I)(e) of the Immigration and Foreigners (Exemption) Order, 2025** as violative of the **Assam Accord**. The **Assam Accord** required foreigners who entered Assam on or after **March 25, 1971** to be identified and deported.
- The intent of the Assam Accord was made explicit through the insertion of **Section 6A into the Citizenship Act, 1955**. **Section 6A** barred citizenship to immigrants who entered Assam after **March 25, 1971**.
- The rationale behind the Assam Accord was to **preserve the demography** and promote the **cultural, social and linguistic identities and heritage** of the Assamese people.
- Extending the cut-off date from **March 24, 1971** to **December 31, 2024** would violate constitutional, legislative, and statutory protections under the Assam Accord. **Clause 3(I)(e)** has rendered the cut-off date in the Assam Accord **otiose**. The clause has indirectly legalised **illegal immigration into Assam after March 1971**.
- Clause has also violated **Section 6A**, which was upheld by a **Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court last year**.

### India cuts Russian oil imports by a sharp 38% in October

- India cut its **oil imports from Russia** by **38%** in value terms and **31%** in volume terms in **October 2025** compared with last year. The cuts were driven by a **high base effect** and an **overall reduction in India's oil imports**.
- India's **total oil import bill** was down **15.4%** in **October 2025**. During this month, **oil imports from the U.S.** jumped nearly **40%** in volume terms and **18.3%** in value terms compared with October last year.
- A previous analysis showed that India's strategy to pull back on **Russian oil imports** began well before the U.S. imposed a **25% tariff penalty on India**.
- Oil imports from Russia in **October 2025** were **7.3% higher in value** and **7.8% higher in volume** than in **September 2025**.