

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 (EAEU)**.
- 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**.