

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## UPSC CSE 2026



**DAILY CURRENT  
AFFAIRS NOTES**

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### Prudent action

- The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to cut interest rates by 25 basis points to 5.25%.
- The decision is both an assessment of India's current economy and of what to expect over the next few months. Cumulatively, interest rates have been cut by 125 basis points in calendar year 2025.
- Real growth looks higher due to an unusually low deflator, and companies can afford to invest more, even if fuelled by debt. A rate cut addresses both issues.
- The MPC also possibly feels that the economic impact of the U.S.'s 50% tariffs have not yet fully played out.

### Democracy's paradox, the chosen people of the state

- The Indian passport is meant to be issued only to Indian citizens, and only citizens are supposed to be on the electoral rolls of the country. Holding an Indian passport or having one's name on the electoral rolls is no proof of citizenship, because people can forge these documents.
- This is a conflict between evidence of status and status of evidence. This question of citizenship governance has resurfaced in the context of the Election Commission of India's countrywide Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The legal challenge against the SIR is based on three grounds.
  - First, the ECI has no power to determine citizenship, and only the Home Ministry has.
  - Second, there is no provision in law for an en masse SIR, and it can only be done selectively.
  - Third, whether one is a foreigner can be determined only by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) under the Citizenship Act and by Foreigners Tribunals under the Foreigners Act, 1946.
- The ECI has argued that its constitutional mandate to determine eligibility for electoral rolls entails verifying citizenship status. Its contention is that assessing eligibility for enrolment cannot be equated with a formal determination of citizenship. Countrywide, there is no single piece of evidence that proves Indian citizenship.
- The Citizenship Act, 1955, as amended in 2004, provides the Central Government to compulsorily register every citizen and issue a National Identity Card.
- National identity cards are to be issued to citizens entered in the National Register of Citizens (NRC), a subset of the National Population Register (NPR). The NRC is mandated in the Act, while the NPR is authorised by rules framed under the Act. The NRC is to include only citizens.
- The law is clear that the onus of proving citizenship lies on the individual, and not the state.
- The founders favoured Jus Soli (Right of the Soil), though blood lineage and ethnicity were also included. Over time, Jus Sanguinis (Right of Blood) gained more prominence. Citizenship by birth in India has multiple caveats.
  - Persons born before July 1, 1987 are eligible for citizenship by birth regardless of parents.
  - Persons born between July 1, 1987 and December 2, 2004 are citizens only if either parent is a citizen.
  - Persons born on or after December 3, 2004 require one parent to be a citizen and the other not an illegal migrant.
- A section of identified illegal immigrants qualify for citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.

### Carceral culture

- The Supreme Court of India's directions last week to provide disability-related support in prisons arose from a petition seeking to implement the existing disability law in places of detention, drawing on the experiences of G.N. Saibaba and Stan Swamy.
- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 obligates governments to ensure support for all services in their control.
- Many failures in implementing the Act are structural, as prisons are a State subject whereas the Union government shapes policy through a model prison manual, laws and advisories.
- Recent national guidelines on prisoners with disabilities acknowledged special needs and called for accessible infrastructure and procedures, whereas many State prison manuals still reflect older assumptions.
- In a separate matter, the Court has held that caste-based segregation in jails is unconstitutional and suo motu said that it would monitor discrimination in prisons along caste, gender, and disability lines.
- Following the new order, the Centre and States need to amend prison manuals to include clear duties about disability-related accommodation, and screen for disability at admission and support individuals.
- These measures require more funds. Prison budgets have to be redesigned to treat accessibility and non-discrimination as core obligations.
- Independent inspections and routine publication of disaggregated data on caste and disability inside prisons should support public oversight.



### A new step in the dragon-elephant tango

- China is one of the **top three trading partners** for **157 countries and regions**, including **India**.
- Contributing approximately **30% to global economic growth**, China remains an **anchor and engine** for the **world economy**. In **2024**, bilateral trade reached **\$138.46 billion**.
- **Synergy between China and India** will yield **mutual benefits** and enhance their positions in the **global industrial and value chains**. **Friendship**, rooted in **close contact between the people**, is key to **sound bilateral relations**.
- China resumed **Indian pilgrimages** to the **sacred mountain and holy lake** in the **Xizang Autonomous Region**, and **India reinstated tourist visas** for **Chinese citizens**.
- Several **direct flights** between the **two countries** were **restored**. This year marks the **75th anniversary** of the **establishment of diplomatic relations**.

### AI could widen the inequalities in Asia Pacific

- A **UN report** argues that the **Asia-Pacific region** begins this **transition** from **widely unequal starting points**.
- The **AI Preparedness Index** in the region varies drastically, ranging from **over 70% in advanced economies** to **under 20% in fragile states**.
- The **Index by IMF** assesses countries' **digital infrastructure**, **human capital** and **labour market policies**, **innovation** and **economic integration**, and **regulation** and **ethics**.
- The report notes that **inclusive adoption** will require **strengthening both hard and soft foundations**.
- **Hard infrastructure** includes **affordable internet**, **reliable and clean electricity**, **cooling resources**, and **adequate computing capacity**. **Internet access** has expanded rapidly across **Asia-Pacific**, but **inequalities remain**.
- **Soft infrastructure** includes **human capital**, **strong public institutions**, and **legal frameworks** that ensure **secure and fair access**.

### How can India benefit from neurotechnology?

- **Neurotechnology** is emerging as a field that enables **direct interaction with the brain**, raising possibilities for **repairing or enhancing brain function**, while also highlighting the need for **regulatory support and public engagement**.

#### What is Neurotechnology and BCI

- **Neurotechnology** is the use of **mechanical tools to talk directly to the brain**.
- It includes systems that **record, monitor or influence neural activity**.
- It draws on advances in **neuroscience, AI, engineering and computing**.
- Devices can **sense or stimulate brain signals in real time**.
- At the core is the **Brain-Computer Interface (BCI)**.
  - **BCIs translate thoughts into action** by converting **brain signals into digital commands**.
  - BCIs can control a **computer cursor, wheelchair or robotic arm**.
  - Some BCIs use **non-invasive sensors** such as **EEG headsets**. Others use **implanted electrodes** for **more precise control**.

#### Applications and Benefits

- A BCI **listens to the brain, decodes signals and converts them into instructions**.
- Some devices are **purely diagnostic**, helping study **brain disorders or cognitive function**.
- Others enable **paralysed patients to move prosthetic limbs**.
- Certain systems **stimulate brain regions** to treat **depression or Parkinson's disease**.
- For people living with **paralysis**, **neuroprosthetics** could **restore mobility and communication**.

#### Global Developments

- The **U.S.** is the **global leader in neurotechnologies**. The **NIH's Brain Research Through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies® (BRAIN Initiative®)** accelerates development of **innovative neurotechnologies**.
- In **2024**, **Neuralink** received approval from the **Food and Drug Administration** for **in-human trials of its BCI**. Neuralink has demonstrated **prosthetic-enabled motor function** in **paralytic patients**.
- The **China Brain Project (2016–2030)** focuses on **understanding cognition, brain-inspired AI, and treating neurological disorders**.
- The **EU and Chile** are **pioneering laws** related to **BCIs and neurorights**.

#### Concerns and Way Forward

- **Inadequate regulatory support** could **thwart BCI development and adoption**.
- A **public engagement strategy** is needed to discuss **benefits and risks of BCIs**.
- Such engagement would help understand **public perception** of these technologies.