

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.