

CURRENT AFFAIRS

UPSC CSE 2026



**DAILY CURRENT
AFFAIRS NOTES**

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With new Bill, demand-led job scheme set to turn supply-driven

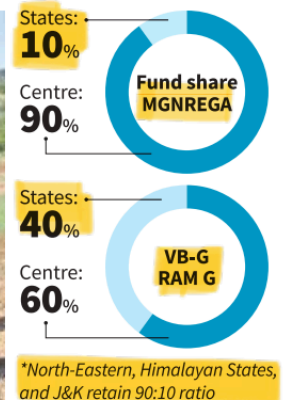
- The **Viksit Bharat Guarantee For Rozgar And Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill** proposes to increase **guaranteed workdays from 100 to 125**, but **raises the financial burden on States** and **dismantles the demand-driven structure of the MGNREGA**.
- Under the **new system**, **allocations will be capped at a fixed budget** determined by the **Union government** based on **parameters not yet specified**.
- **Employment** will be provided only in **rural areas notified by the Centre**.

Framework change

The government has circulated the VB-G RAM G Bill to MPs, framing it as legislation to 'establish a rural development framework aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047'

Shifts from MGNREGA to VB-G RAM G Bill

- Rights-based employment guarantee → **Supply-driven employment and livelihood scheme**
- 100 days of wage employment → **125 days**
- Flexible budget → **Budget cap**
- Year-round → **Seasonal pause allowed**

**The Oman visit is more than a routine diplomatic trip**

- The visit of **PM Modi to Oman** comes at a crucial time amid **regional uncertainties, tariff wars, conflicts, energy transitions, and emerging connectivity corridors**. The visit marks **70 years of diplomatic relations** between India and Oman.

Geopolitical Context

- The Oman visit takes place amid **tremendous geopolitical flux in the region**, especially the **uncertain peace after the Gaza ceasefire**.
- Both nations are seeking to **strengthen their partnership** in the evolving regional environment.

Strategic Partnership

- India signed a strategic partnership agreement **with Oman in 2008**.
- **Oman was invited as a guest nation during India's G-20 Presidency in 2023**.

Defence and Security Cooperation

- Defence and security engagement are governed by a **memorandum of understanding on military cooperation signed in 2005**.
- **Oman is the first Gulf country** with which **all three wings of India's defence forces hold joint exercises**.
- Since **2012-13**, an **Indian naval ship** has remained on duty in the **Gulf of Oman** for **anti-piracy operations**.
- **Oman was the first Gulf country to purchase the INSAS assault rifle in 2010**.
- The **logistics agreement on Duqm Port**, signed during **Mr. Modi's visit in 2018**, provides **basing facilities, operational turnaround and logistics facilities** to the **Indian Navy**.
- Oman's **strategic location overlooking the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea** allows India to keep a **discreet watch on growing Chinese PLA Naval activity**.

Economic and Commercial Relations

- **Bilateral trade** has increased to **\$10.613 billion for FY 2024-25**.
- **Cumulative FDI equity inflow from Oman to India from 2000 to 2025 stands at \$605.57 million**.

Investment Cooperation

- The **Oman-India Joint Investment Fund (OIJIF)** is a **50-50 joint venture** between the **State Bank of India** and the **Oman Investment Authority**.
- **OIJIF has invested \$600 million in India**, including a **third tranche worth \$300 million announced in 2023**.

Fintech and Digital Payments

- In **2022**, the **Central Bank of Oman** signed a **MoU with NPCI** to **link payment systems**.
- The **Rupay debit card** was **launched in Oman**.

Trade Agreement

- The **India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** is likely to be signed.
- Oman would become the **second country in the region after the UAE** to sign such an agreement with India.

A broad-based development model

- According to the **Reserve Bank of India**, **Tamil Nadu (T.N.)** is the **second largest economy**.

- T.N. recorded double-digit growth of 11.2% in 2024-25 (constant prices), making it the fastest-growing State.
- This growth outpaces the national average of 6.5%.
- The secondary sector, particularly manufacturing, has been the principal driver of growth.
- T.N. is a major industrial powerhouse.
- T.N. has the largest number of technical institutions in India (955 in 2024-25).
- While India's FDI equity inflows declined, T.N.'s FDI inflows rose.
- T.N. ranks first in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education at 47%, compared to national average of 28.4%. T.N. ranks third in female GER at 47.3%. T.N. ranks first in the Export Preparedness Index.

One in six people exposed to conflict worldwide in 2025

- According to a new report from ACLED, an estimated 831 million people, or 10% of the world's population, were exposed to conflict this year. Nearly three out of four such events directly involved state forces.
- Europe recorded the greatest increase in violence, largely driven by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, affecting the highest number of people since 2022.
- While conflicts persisted in West Asia, the end of Syria's civil war and ceasefires in Lebanon and Gaza reduced violent events.
- Israel and Russia were responsible for about 90% of violent incidents targeting civilians outside their borders.
- The Myanmar military accounted for nearly a third of violence by state forces against civilians.
- In terms of fatalities, about 60% were caused by non-state armed groups and mobs.
- The Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Sudan's paramilitary group, were a major contributor.
- The Allied Democratic Forces, linked to the Islamic State, were responsible for at least 1,370 civilian fatalities.
- The March 23 Movement (M23) was also cited.

Why were IndiGo operations disrupted?

- Planning gaps in pilot rostering and misjudgement of pilot availability emerged under new DGCA rules on pilot rest and duty hours.
- These issues were compounded by technical glitches, winter schedule changes, adverse weather, and aviation system congestion.
- The issue relates to Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) governing pilot rest and duty hours.
- In 2019, the DGCA introduced new rules reversing some pilot-friendly provisions of the 2011 rules.
- The 2011 Nasim Zaidi Committee report had recommended safeguards on FDTL.
- The 2019 rules allowed up to two consecutive nights of duty and used vague definitions for night flying hours and duty hours.
- After pilot bodies approached the Delhi High Court, revised norms were notified in 2024.
- The revised norms increased weekly rest from 36 to 48 hours. They restricted night flying by capping landings to two, maximum flying time to eight hours, and duty time to 10 hours.
- The rollout was paused following airline warnings of cancellations and the need for more pilots.
- In 2025, the Delhi High Court ordered phased enforcement.
- The government should strengthen the Passenger Charter of Rights on cancellations and delays.
- The regulator's website should transparently list delay, cancellation, and baggage policies in simple formats.
- Fostering market competition and addressing operational costs of airlines is essential.

Does India need to upgrade its biosecurity measures?

- New age biotechnologies endow powers to understand biology better and harness biological agents to target humans, making it necessary that biosecurity measures need to be upgraded.

What is Biosecurity

- Biosecurity refers to the set of practices and systems designed to deter the intentional misuse of biological agents, toxins or technologies.
- It covers everything from safeguarding labs handling dangerous pathogens to detecting and containing an intentional outbreak of a pathogen.
- Biosecurity is not only about protecting human health, but extends to agricultural and animal health.
- Biosecurity differs slightly from biosafety, which prevents the accidental leakage of pathogens. A robust biosafety protocol feeds into biosecurity.
- After instances of bioweapons development, the Biological Weapons Convention (1975) came into existence. It prohibited the use and development of biological weapons of mass destruction and asked signatories to destroy existing stockpiles.

Why India Needs Biosecurity

- India's geography and ecology make it vulnerable to **cross-border bio-risks**.
- **Dependence on agriculture** and a **large population** make the threat more dangerous.
- There have been reports of alleged preparation of the toxin Ricin for potential use in a **terror attack**. This underscores how **non-state actors are pursuing biological tools**.
- The rapid spread of **biotechnologies** has increased **control over biology**, raising chances of **malicious experimentation with bioweapons**.

India's Institutional and Legal Framework

- The **Department of Biotechnology** oversees **research governance and safety frameworks**.
- The **National Centre for Disease Control** manages **outbreak surveillance and response**.
- The **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying** monitors **livestock biosecurity and transboundary diseases**.
- The **Plant Quarantine Organisation of India** regulates **agricultural imports and exports**.
- Laws include the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** governing **hazardous microorganisms and GMOs**.
- The **Weapons of Mass Destruction Act, 2005** criminalises **biological weapons**.
- **Biosafety Rules (1989)** and **guidelines released in 2017** cover **Recombinant DNA Research and Biocontainment**.
- The **National Disaster Management Authority** has guidelines on **management of biological disasters**.
- India is part of international platforms such as the **Biological Weapons Convention** and the **Australia Group**.

Gaps and Global Standing

- Despite multiple agencies, a **unified national biosecurity framework** is still evolving.
- India is ranked **66 on the Global Health Security Index**.
- While the score for **detecting biothreats** has increased, the score for **effective response** has reduced.

Risks Ahead

- An inadequate biosecurity apparatus **jeopardises the lives of billions of Indians**. It is necessary to develop a **national biosecurity framework** that coordinates actions across government agencies.

SHANTI Bill to allow private sector to make, run nuclear power plants

- The **Centre** introduced the **SHANTI Bill** in the **Lok Sabha** to incentivise private sector participation, both **Indian and foreign**, in **nuclear power production**.
- The Bill replaces the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (CLND) Act, 2010.
- It introduces the **Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025**.
- It creates an **atomic energy regulatory structure** answerable to **Parliament**, removes **NPCIL's monopoly** over operating **nuclear plants**, and restricts **operator compensation claims** from **equipment suppliers** in case of an **accident**.
- It also **buffers operators** by introducing **limits on liability** based on **plant size** and caps the **maximum penalty** at **₹1 crore** even for a **"severe breach"**.
- The Bill proposes a **revised civil liability framework**, confers **statutory status** on the **Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)**, and strengthens **safety, security, safeguards, quality assurance, and emergency preparedness**.
- **Privatising the nuclear power sector**, which accounts for **1.5% of installed capacity** and **3% of electricity produced**, aims to boost **clean energy**, improve **grid stability**, and move towards **2070 net-zero targets**.
- The plan includes **scaling installed nuclear power to 100 GW by 2047 from 8.8 GW**.
- It includes a **₹20,000 crore** mission to develop **small modular reactors**.
- It also includes **customised 220 MW pressurised heavy water reactors**.

Unemployment rate dips to 4.7% in November: PLFS

- The **PLFS**, conducted by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** under **MoSPI**, stated that the **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** increased to **55.8% in November**, the **highest since April**.
- According to a **MoSPI statement**, the rise in **LFPR** was primarily driven by **rural areas**.
- The **female LFPR** showed a **steady rise** from **June 2025 to November 2025**.
- The **Worker Population Ratio (WPR)** for persons aged **15 years and above** in **rural areas** increased.

India, Mexico in talks to mitigate tariff hike impact, says Agrawal

- **India and Mexico** are discussing ways to **mitigate the impact** of **Mexico's proposed tariff increases** on countries **without a free trade agreement**, including **India**.
- A quick solution could be a **Preferential Trade Agreement**.
- The proposed **tariffs** would impact about **\$2 billion worth of Indian exports** to **Mexico**.

- The **Mexican government** re-submitted a proposal to hike **tariffs to 50%** on imports from countries with **Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status** but **no trade agreement**.
- **Tariffs** have been increased on an **MFN basis** within the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** framework.
- An increase in **MFN tariffs** impacts **non-Free Trade Agreement** and **non-Bilateral Trade Agreement** partners, affecting **India**.

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