



Daily Current Affairs



To The Point by Dhananjay Gautam

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1 India-Spain Joint Statement: Key Outcomes and Bilateral Relations

Context: After the visit of the President of the Government of Spain to India—the first such visit in 18 years—India and Spain issued a joint statement highlighting important areas of cooperation.

**Key Outcomes:**

1. **Defence Manufacturing:** The **C295 Aircraft Final Assembly Line** was inaugurated in Vadodara by **Tata Advanced Systems** in collaboration with **Airbus Spain**. This is a landmark project in defence manufacturing and part of India's "Make in India" initiative.
2. **Investment Facilitation:** The establishment of a **Fast Track Mechanism** between India's **DPIIT** and Spain's **Directorate General of International Trade and Investment** to ease and encourage mutual investments.
3. **Consular Expansion:** Spain announced a new **Consulate in Bengaluru**, while India's **Consulate in Barcelona** was made operational, enhancing consular services and people-to-people ties.
4. **Cultural Cooperation:**
 - Launch of the **Cultural Exchange Programme for 2024–2028**.
 - **2026 declared as the India-Spain Year of Culture, Tourism, and Artificial Intelligence**, promoting greater cultural and technological collaboration.

India-Spain Bilateral Relations

- **Diplomatic Relations:** Established in 1956, marking a long-standing diplomatic partnership.

Significance of Bilateral Relations

1. **Defence Ties:** **India-Spain Defence Joint Working Group** facilitates defence cooperation, exemplified by the **C295 aircraft manufacturing** initiative in India.
2. **Economic and Commercial Growth:** Spain is India's **6th largest trade partner in Europe**, with bilateral trade reaching **US\$ 9.9 billion in 2023**.
3. **Multilateral and Global Cooperation:**
 - Support for each other's **United Nations Security Council candidacies**.
 - Commitment to addressing shared global challenges, including **climate change, counter-terrorism, and sustainable development**.

This joint statement underscores the strengthening of India-Spain ties across defence, investment, culture, and global cooperation, signifying mutual commitments to long-term partnership.

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2 IEEFA Report: “India’s Hunt for Critical Minerals”

Context: The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) released a report on India’s dependency on critical minerals like **cobalt, copper, graphite, lithium, and nickel**. This report addresses India’s reliance on imports, the expected surge in demand, and potential economic and strategic implications.



Key Findings:

1. Import Dependency:

- India is **100% reliant** on imports for minerals like **lithium, cobalt, and nickel**, which are crucial for renewable energy, electronics, and other sectors.
- Demand for these minerals is expected to more than double by 2030.

2. Significance of Critical Minerals:

- **Definition:** Critical minerals are those with high economic importance and supply risks. Shortages can significantly impact industries reliant on these resources.
- **Applications:** These minerals are essential for:
 - **Renewable Energy** (solar panels, batteries),
 - **Electronics** (semiconductors, devices),
 - **Medical Technology** (MRIs, medical equipment),
 - **Defence/Aerospace** (military equipment, aircraft components).

Concerns Related to Import Dependence:

1. **Strategic Vulnerability:** Heavy reliance on specific countries, particularly **China**, poses a strategic risk.
2. **Price Volatility:** Fluctuations in global prices can impact **manufacturing costs** and **energy production**.
3. **Economic Impact:** Increasing import expenses could reduce **India’s global competitiveness**.
4. **Renewable Energy Ambitions:** India’s **clean energy goals** and **electric vehicle initiatives** are at risk due to high import dependency.

Report Recommendations:

- **Risk Mitigation:** Develop strategies to reduce import dependency and encourage **domestic mineral production**.
- **International Investments:** Explore partnerships with **mineral-rich, friendly countries** like Australia, Chile, Ghana, and South Africa.

Measures Taken by India:

1. **Regulatory Reforms:** Six critical minerals, including lithium, have been delisted from the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023** to enable private sector investment in exploration and mining.
2. **India-Australia Partnership:** India and Australia have established a **Critical Minerals Investment Partnership** to boost resource security.
3. **Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL):** Created to **acquire overseas mineral assets**, KABIL focuses on securing critical minerals through strategic international investments.

The IEEFA report underscores the urgency for India to develop self-reliance in critical minerals to secure its economic stability, renewable energy targets, and global competitiveness.

3 CERT-In Advisory on Online Scams

Context: The **Computer Emergency Response Team of India (CERT-In)** has released an advisory detailing various online scams perpetrated across India, including a recent scam trend known as “**digital arrest**”.



Cybercrime Statistics:

According to the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** report for **2022**, there were **17,470** cases registered under cyber fraud.

Key Advisory Points:

- Avoid Money Transfers Under Pressure:** Legitimate law enforcement agencies will not demand immediate money transfers.
- Do Not Disclose Sensitive Information:** Avoid sharing personal or financial details over calls, especially to unfamiliar numbers.

About "Digital Arrest" Scams:

In this **new form of cybercrime**, fraudsters impersonate law enforcement officials—such as CBI agents, income tax officers, or customs agents—contacting victims through calls. Victims are pressured to transfer money to avoid "arrest."

- Reported Loss:** Citizens in India reportedly lost around **₹120 crore** to digital arrest scams in the first quarter of **2024**.
- Origins:** The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notes that many perpetrators are based in **Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia**.

Challenges in Tackling Cybercrime:

- Shortage of Qualified Personnel:** Limited trained manpower to implement cybersecurity measures.
- Lack of Cyber Awareness:** Insufficient awareness and cybersecurity practices at both individual and organizational levels.

Government Initiatives to Tackle Cybercrime:

- Indian Cyber Coordination Centre (I4C):** Coordinated by the MHA, it centralizes cybercrime control measures across India.
- CERT-In:** Acts as the national agency for addressing computer security incidents.
- National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal:** Part of I4C, this portal allows the public to report cybercrime incidents.
- National Toll-free Helpline Number 1930:** Provides assistance in lodging cyber complaints.

4 World Meteorological Organisation's (WMO) Greenhouse Gas Bulletin

Context: The **Greenhouse Gas Bulletin (GGB)**, released by the **World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)**, provides the latest analysis of global atmospheric concentrations of **long-lived greenhouse gases (LLGHGs)**, based on observations from the WMO's **Global Atmosphere Watch (GAW) Programme**. This bulletin assesses changes in greenhouse gases like **carbon dioxide (CO₂)**, **methane (CH₄)**, and **nitrous oxide (N₂O)** and examines their implications for climate change.

**Key Highlights of the GGB:**

- Greenhouse Gas Concentrations:** As of 2023, globally averaged surface concentrations of:
 - CO₂ are at **151%** of pre-industrial levels,
 - CH₄ at **265%**,
 - N₂O at **125%** of levels recorded before 1750.
- Radiative Forcing Increase:** Radiative forcing by long-lived greenhouse gases has surged by **51.5%** from **1990 to 2023**, with CO₂ alone contributing approximately **81%** to this increase.
- Methane (CH₄):** Atmospheric methane has witnessed its **largest three-year increase on record**, mainly due to emissions from **natural wetlands** exacerbated by climate change.
- Impacts of Climate Change:** Climate change is amplifying greenhouse gas emissions through:
 - Ecosystems releasing additional GHGs,
 - Wildfires** emitting more CO₂,
 - Oceans absorbing less CO₂, which also contributes to **ocean acidification**.

Radiative Forcing by Long-lived GHGs:

- Definition:** Radiative forcing measures the energy per unit area added to or removed from the climate system by greenhouse gases.
- Significance:** GHGs, by trapping heat that would otherwise escape to space, disrupt Earth's energy balance and cause **global warming**.

About the WMO

- Established:** 1950
- Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- Membership:** 187 Member States and 6 Member Territories, including India
- Role:** As a **UN specialized agency**, WMO monitors atmospheric composition and interactions between the **atmosphere, oceans, and biosphere** to help countries understand and address climate challenges.

5 Space Biotechnology

Context: The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)** have partnered to advance **space biotechnology research**. This collaboration aims to address critical challenges in space exploration, such as nutrient availability, waste management, food preservation, and health risks due to microgravity and radiation. The partnership seeks to explore how organisms adapt and function in space environments to support human survival on extended missions.

**Key Applications of Space Biotechnology and Their Significance:**

1. **Microgravity Research:** Space-based microgravity enhances **protein crystal growth**, which improves our understanding of protein structures for more precise drug development.
2. **Radiation Research:** **BioSentinel**, a NASA program launched in 2022 on **Artemis I**, is an example. It examines cellular repair mechanisms in response to space radiation, providing insights to protect human health.
3. **Environmental Monitoring:** Studying microbes in space could enable **bioremediation** to convert lunar or Martian regolith into soil suitable for plant growth, supporting potential habitation efforts on these celestial bodies.
4. **Disease Modeling:** Space biotechnology helps model diseases encountered during long-duration missions, addressing challenges like **bone and muscle loss** and radiation-induced cancers.
5. **Bioregenerative Life Support Systems:** Developing self-sustaining **life support systems** in space—through waste recycling and resource regeneration—contributes to both space and Earth's sustainability goals.

Notable Initiatives:

- **India:** Key missions like **Axiom-4** and **Gaganyaan** involve components of space biotechnology to support human spaceflight and long-term missions.
- **Global Programs:**
 - **NASA:** Space Biology Program
 - **European Space Agency (ESA):** Biolab
 - **China National Space Administration (CNSA):** Space breeding programs

This collaboration between ISRO and DBT is expected to drive innovation and sustainability in space missions, fostering advancements in biotechnology with applications for both space and Earth.

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6 Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (PMVKY)

Context: The Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (PMVKY), launched in 2014, recently celebrated its 10-year milestone. It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** focused on the comprehensive development of tribal communities, aiming to enhance their socio-economic status and preserve their cultural heritage. The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA)** implements the scheme, ensuring that the programs address the unique challenges faced by India's tribal population.



Key Initiatives Under PMVKY:

- Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana:** Focuses on critical sectors such as **road and telecom connectivity**, education, health, and basic infrastructure development.
- Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):** The **Pradhan Mantri PVTGs Development Mission**, launched in 2023-24, aims to provide essential services like housing, drinking water, sanitation, education, health, and nutrition for PVTGs.
- Support to Tribal Research Institutes (TRI):** This initiative facilitates **research and documentation** of tribal cultures, helping to preserve and promote the heritage of tribal communities.
- Scholarship Programs:** Includes **Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarships** to support the education of tribal students.
- Administrative Assistance:** Support for **Project Management Units** to efficiently implement and manage various tribal welfare projects.

Tribal Community in India:

- Scheduled Tribes (ST)** make up about **8.6% of India's population**.
- There are **over 730 Scheduled Tribes** notified under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution.
- Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):** 75 identified PVTGs are spread across 18 states and the Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Other Major Steps for Tribal Welfare:

- Eklavya Model Residential Schools:** Provide quality education to tribal students from grades VI to XII.
- Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM):** Combines support mechanisms for marketing **Minor Forest Produce (MFP)** at Minimum Support Prices and promoting tribal products.
- Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST):** In addition to MoTA, **41 ministries** and departments allocate a portion of their budgets to programs specifically for tribal development.

The PMVKY has helped strengthen the socio-economic fabric of India's tribal regions, laying the foundation for a more inclusive approach to national development.

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7 Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)

Context: The **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** is a government initiative established by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** to address the growing threat of cybercrime in India through a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach. Located in **New Delhi**, I4C serves as a **central hub** for managing and coordinating responses to cybercrime across law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and other stakeholders.



Objectives and Functions of I4C:

- **Nodal Agency for Cybercrime:** I4C is the central point for coordinating efforts against cybercrime across agencies.
- **Research and Development:** It collaborates with research institutions and academia to develop advanced cyber tools and forensic technologies.
- **Legal and Policy Framework:** Provides inputs for amending cyber laws to adapt to new technologies and ensures international cooperation through **Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs)**.
- **Cybercrime Prevention:** Focuses on preventing cyber activities that promote terrorism and extremism.
- **Public Awareness and Assistance:** Aims to enhance cyber hygiene among citizens and offers quick reporting channels for financial cyber fraud.

Key Components of I4C:

1. **National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (TAU):** Monitors and analyzes cybercrime threats at the national level.
2. **National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP):** A 24/7 platform for citizens to report cybercrime complaints from anywhere in India.
3. **National Cybercrime Training Centre (NCTC):** Provides training to officials, especially for state LEAs, to handle cybercrime cases.

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4. **National Cybercrime Research and Innovation Centre:** Drives research for indigenous cybercrime prevention tools.
5. **Joint Cyber Crime Coordination Team:** Facilitates collaboration among states/UTs for sharing data and strategies.
6. **Cybercrime Ecosystem Management Unit:** Promotes cyber awareness and hygiene to prevent cybercrimes.
7. **National Cybercrime Forensic Laboratory:** Supports LEAs with forensic investigations.

Other Initiatives and Programs:

- **Cyber Crime Volunteers Program:** Engages citizens to help combat cybercrime through volunteerism.
- **Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System:** Enables near-real-time reporting and response to financial cyber fraud.
- **National Toll-Free Helpline '1930':** Provides immediate assistance for online cyber complaints.
- **CyberDost:** An initiative on social media to raise cyber awareness.

Through **I4C**, the Indian government integrates public and private sectors, academia, and international partners in a unified response against cybercrime, emphasizing both **prevention** and **real-time intervention**.

8 Land Ports Authority of India

Context: The **Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI)** is a statutory body established under the **Land Ports Authority Act, 2010**, tasked with developing, managing, and maintaining border infrastructure for facilitating cross-border trade and movement between India and its neighbouring countries.

Objectives and Mandate:

- **Border Infrastructure Development:** LPAI is responsible for creating, upgrading, maintaining, and managing Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) and other facilities at designated international border points.
- **Cross-Border Movement Management:** It facilitates the seamless movement of passengers and goods by providing essential services at border points.
- **Security and Sanitation:** LPAI ensures that all necessary security and sanitation measures are in place at these crossing points.

**Structure and Composition:**

- **Appointments:** The Chairperson and Members of LPAI are appointed by the **Central Government**.
- **Tenure:** They serve a five-year term or until the age of sixty, whichever comes first.
- **Nodal Ministry:** It operates under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.

Recent Development: Petrapole, West Bengal

Recently, the **Union Home Minister inaugurated a new Passenger Terminal Building and a Maitri Dwar (Friendship Gate)** at Petrapole, built by LPAI at a cost of ₹487 crore. Key highlights include:

- **Petrapole's Significance:** It is the **largest land port in South Asia** and serves as a major trade gateway between **India and Bangladesh**.
- **Passenger Movement:** Facilitates the annual transit of over 2.35 million passengers, making it India's **eighth-largest international immigration port**.

By streamlining infrastructure at border points, LPAI plays a crucial role in bolstering **trade, commerce, and people-to-people connectivity** with India's neighbouring countries.

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9 FCI Grievance Redressal System App

Context: Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, and New & Renewable Energy, Shri Pralhad Joshi launched the Mobile Application of FCI Grievance Redressal System (FCI GRS) for Rice Millers in New Delhi.

**About FCI Grievance Redressal System App:**

The **FCI Grievance Redressal System App** is an initiative by the **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** to streamline the grievance redressal process for rice millers, making it efficient and transparent. This digital platform enables millers to lodge complaints, track progress, and receive timely responses, aligning with the government's aim to use technology for good governance.

Objectives and Benefits:

- **Enhanced Responsiveness:** Provides rice millers a convenient, digital platform for submitting grievances.
- **Improved Accountability:** Ensures transparency in addressing grievances and fosters trust in FCI's processes.

Key Features of the App

1. **User-Friendly Grievance Submission:** Rice millers can easily register and submit grievances with a simple interface. Each grievance receives a **Unique Grievance ID** for tracking.
2. **Real-Time Tracking:** The app provides real-time updates on each grievance's status, ensuring transparency and accountability.
3. **Automatic Assignment and Fast Resolution:** Grievances are automatically assigned to Nodal Officers, who can investigate through a **Quick Response Team (QRT)** or consult relevant divisions for prompt resolution.
4. **Geo-Fencing for QRTs:** For on-site visits, the app uses geo-fencing to verify QRT members' physical presence, ensuring efficient and accountable field operations.

By digitalizing the grievance process, the app aims to foster efficient communication between FCI and rice millers, ultimately enhancing **responsiveness, accountability, and transparency** in the FCI's operations.

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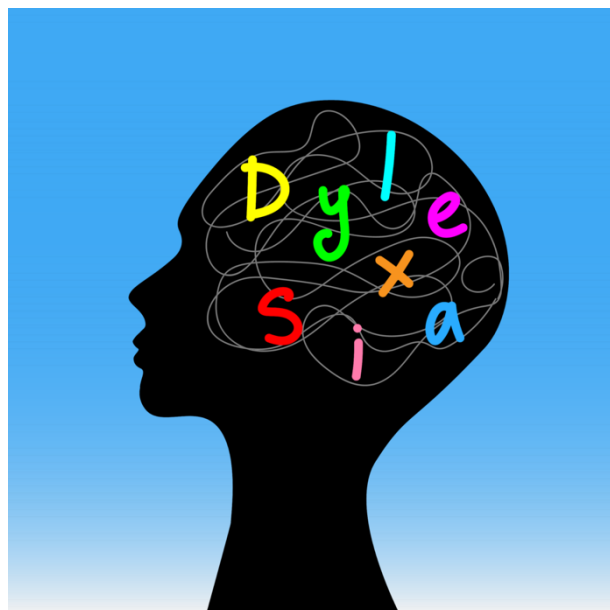
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10 Dyslexia

Context: Recently, as part of the nation-wide 'Act4Dyslexia' campaign, key monuments in Delhi, including **Rashtrapati Bhawan, Parliament House, North and South Blocks, and India Gate**, have been illuminated in red, the colour for Dyslexia Awareness.

About Dyslexia:

Dyslexia is a common learning disorder characterized by difficulties in reading due to challenges in identifying speech sounds and understanding their relationship to letters and words, a process known as **decoding**. It is a neurological condition affecting language processing areas of the brain and is **not related to intelligence, hearing, or vision problems**. Often, dyslexia is mistakenly perceived as a "slow-learner syndrome."

**Causes of Dyslexia:**

1. **Genetics:** Dyslexia is strongly hereditary, with children having a 30-50% likelihood of inheriting it if one parent has the condition.
2. **Brain Development and Function:** Differences in brain structure and function, particularly in areas responsible for language processing, are common in individuals with dyslexia.
3. **Developmental Disruptions:** Exposure to toxins, infections, or other factors during fetal development can impact brain function and may increase the risk of dyslexia.

Legal Recognition and Support in India:

- **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016:** Dyslexia and other specific learning disabilities are officially recognized, entitling individuals to equal opportunities in education, employment, and life.
- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:** Emphasizes inclusive education by focusing on early identification, teacher training, and accommodations to support students with dyslexia.