

2024

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS





## Daily Current Affairs from *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express* & *The Assam Tribune*

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#### GS 1: ART & CULTURE, HISTORY, INDIAN SOCIETY AND GEOGRAPHY

##### 1. 6000 leaders from 75 nations to attend Pravasi Bhartiya Divas convention

**Context:** India will be celebrating the 18<sup>th</sup> Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2025 on January 9. From the Classification of Overseas Indians and Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award to the History of the Indian Expat, here's what you must know about the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and the Indian diaspora. The 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) will take place in Bhubaneswar from January 8 to 10, 2025. This event aims to strengthen ties between India and its diaspora. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the convention, with President Christine Carla Kangaloo of Trinidad and Tobago as the chief guest addressing the gathering virtually. The event celebrates the contributions of overseas Indians to India's progress.

## Key points

- **Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas:** It is celebrated annually on January 9th to commemorate the return of Mahatma Gandhi, India's greatest Pravasi, from South Africa in 1915—a moment that marked a turning point in India's Freedom Struggle. The observance was established in 2003, and in 2015, it was restructured to be celebrated biennially, with thematic conferences held in the intervening years.
- **Significance:** Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas is important for several reasons-
  - The day acknowledges the achievements and accomplishments of our Indian Diaspora community as well as helps them reestablish a connection with their homeland.
  - The day highlights the challenges faced by Indians living abroad and acknowledges them.
  - The day provides a global platform to network with the NRIs and improve connections between the younger generation and the immigrants.
  - The interaction is beneficial as it induces growth opportunities for the immigrants and their contributions towards the nation.
- **Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas Related Schemes:** The Indian government has introduced several schemes to support Indians residing abroad, including-
  - *Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY)* - Aims to institutionalize skill development for Indian emigrant workers to enhance their employability.
  - *Scholarship Program for Diaspora Children (SPDC)* - Offers 100 annual scholarships to children of Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) and Non-Resident Indians (NRI) for higher education in India.
  - *Know India Program (KIP)* - Engages youth of Indian origin (aged 18-30) to explore contemporary and modern India.
  - *System of Emigration* - Maintains a database of global employers to ensure the safety and protection of Indian emigrants from exploitation.
  - *VAJRA (Visiting Advanced Joint Research Faculty)* - Facilitates a rotational program for distinguished NRI professionals, including scientists, engineers, and doctors, to contribute their expertise to Indian institutions for a limited period.
- **Participants and Themes of 2025:** This year's theme is "Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat." The convention will see participation from over 50 countries, including prominent businessmen, entrepreneurs, and economists. The event aims to encourage dialogue between the Government of India and its diaspora. Discussions will focus on visa regulations, investment opportunities, and community welfare.
- **Focus on Economic Development:** The PBD aims to encourage investment in India, particularly in Odisha. The state government has planned discussions on business and investment opportunities. Workshops and cultural exhibitions will provide vital information about Odisha's heritage. The event is expected to attract NRIs, government officials, and business leaders to discuss economic development.
- **Way forward:** The PBD will serve as a platform for NRIs to connect with state of India leaders. Discussions will revolve around potential collaborations in industries, education, and tourism. The event aims to encourage relationships that may lead to long-term partnerships. Janata Maidan will be a hub for dialogue on the future of the Indian diaspora and technology's role in shaping these relationships.

## GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

### 2. Tech innovations like Bharatpol will help bring fugitives from abroad

**Context:** Union Home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said modern systems introduced under the three new criminal laws and technological interventions like Bharatpol will enable law agencies to bring fugitives who have escaped abroad after committing crimes in India to justice. Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the 'Bharatpol' portal on January 7, developed by the CBI to enhance international police cooperation. The portal serves as a broadcast hub for real-time action against transnational crimes, enabling central and state law enforcement agencies to connect efficiently with Interpol and expedite investigations. In addition to that Mr. Shah also directed Up CM Yogi Adityanath to ensure 100% implementation of the new criminal laws by March 31 of this year.

#### Key points

- **About Bharatpol:** Bharatpol, developed to streamline international cooperation, addresses delays by making police collaboration more seamless. It enables real-time assistance for criminal investigations. The portal was introduced in response to the rise in transnational crimes such as cybercrime, financial crimes, online radicalisation, organised crimes, drug trafficking, and human trafficking. These crimes demand instant international coordination.
- **Bharatpol Portal Key Features:**
  - Unified Platform for Law Enforcement* - Bharatpol connects the CBI (NCB-New Delhi) with all law enforcement authorities in India, including SPs and CPs, ensuring seamless integration.
  - Simplified Request Mechanism* - Frontline police officers can easily request international assistance from 195 Interpol member countries using standardised templates.
  - Rapid Information Dissemination* - The portal enables the CBI to quickly share criminal intelligence and inputs from Interpol member countries with law enforcement agencies across India.
  - Enhanced Utilisation of Interpol Notices* - Bharatpol simplifies drafting requests for Red Corner Notices and other Interpol notices, aiding in global tracking of crimes, criminals, and illicit assets.
    - *Interpol* - International Criminal Police Organisation is an international police organisation made up of 196 member countries. It has enjoyed a special role – that of Permanent Observer at the United Nations - since 1996. It was founded in 1923 and is headquartered at Lyon, France.
  - Capacity Building and Training* - The portal offers access to documents, templates, and training resources, improving the skills of frontline officers in conducting international investigations.
- **Modules of Bharatpol:**
  - Connect* - Enables Indian law enforcement agencies to function as an extension of Interpol's NCB-New Delhi. It ensures quick, secure, and structured transmission of requests for Interpol Notices and aiding in the swift location of criminals globally.
  - INTERPOL Notices* - Facilitates streamlined requests for Interpol Notices to enhance international crime tracking.
  - Broadcast* - Provides real-time access to requests for assistance from Interpol's 195 member countries.
  - References* - Organises and manages references for international investigations.
  - Resources* - Simplifies the exchange and management of documents and training materials for efficient international collaboration.

## GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

### 3. Karnataka HC strikes down Centre's Electricity Rules

**Context:** In a major setback to the Centre, the High Court of Karnataka has struck down the Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy Through Green Energy Open Access) Rules, 2022, which were framed for promoting generation, purchase, and consumption of green energy, including the energy from waste-to-energy plants through open access in a bid to reach the goal of net-zero emission by 2070 as per international climate commitment. The court said the Centre lacked the legislative competence under the Electricity Act, 2003, to frame the rules (commonly known as the Green Energy Open Access [GEOA] Rules, 2022).

#### Electricity Amendment Rules 2024

- **About:** The Indian government has introduced the Electricity Amendment Rules 2024 under Section 176 of the Electricity Act 2003. This amendment aims to simplify business processes for starting captive power, energy storage, and green hydrogen projects.
- **Provisions:**
  - Setting Up Transmission Line* - The new rules allow certain captive generators and bulk consumers to set up dedicated transmission lines without a license.
  - Tariffs* - The rule specifically targets and handles issues related to wheeling charges, state transmission charges, and additional surcharges.
  - Open Access* - There is provision for Linear reduction and elimination of additional surcharge for those availing General Network Access or Open Access within four years.
- **Benefits:**
  - Affordable Electricity* - This provision will help bulk consumers by giving them access to affordable electricity and enhanced grid reliability.
  - Boost for High-Energy Consumers and Storage Systems* - The exclusion of licensing obligations for dedicated transmission lines, specifically for entities with substantial energy demands or energy storage systems, incentivizes investments in renewable energy projects.
  - Streamlining Procedures* - Simplifying the procedure for setting up dedicated transmission lines reduces administrative obstacles for both major consumers and developers in the renewable energy sector.
- **Drawbacks:**
  - Possibility of Market Manipulation* - Exemption of licensing dedicated transmission lines to large consumers could create opportunities for market manipulation and unfair competition.
  - Impact on State Transmission Utilities* - Capping charges for short-term open access can diminish revenue for state transmission utilities.

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The International Solar Alliance was launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2015.
2. The Alliance includes all the member countries of the United Nations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only                      (c) Both 1 and 2  
(b) 2 only                      (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: (a)**

## GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

### 4. The imperiled life of the district journalist in India

**Context:** The brutal murder of an independent young journalist, Mukesh Chandrakar, in Chhattisgarh, has once again highlighted the threats to life and the precarious nature of journalism at the district and mofussil levels. In a democratic country like India, the press plays a pivotal role in amplifying the voices of the populace and shedding light on government actions, serving as a crucial watchdog, tasked with scrutinising the workings of the government and bringing attention to any perceived injustices or shortcomings done by any state actors. However, the recently released World Press Freedom Index presents a concerning picture for India.

#### Key points

- **Overview:** India's ranking in the recently released World Press Freedom Index -159th out of 180, is alarming, especially considering its status as the world's largest democracy.
- **World Press Freedom Index (WPF):** It is a comprehensive assessment of the level of press freedom in countries around the world, compiled annually by Reporters Sans Frontiers (RSF) since 2002.  
*Global Trends* - Press freedom remains relatively robust in European Union countries, notably with the recent implementation of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA).  
*India's Position in Press Freedom Rankings* - India's 2024 ranking at 159th, slightly better than 2023's 161st, places it alongside countries such as the occupied Palestinian territories, UAE, Turkey, and Russia, reflecting worrying levels of press freedom.
- **Significance of Free and Unrestricted Media:** *Essential in a Democratic Framework and Civic Awareness* - The liberty of the press constitutes a cornerstone of democratic societies such as India, as it fosters the reinforcement of democratic principles and instigates engagement with the three pillars of democracy.  
*Enhancing a Nation's Resilience* - Through unbiased reporting and analysis, media outlets facilitate informed decision-making among citizens, ensuring the integrity of the democratic process by making them aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- **Challenges in India:** *Physical Threats and Violence against Journalists* - Particularly when they report on sensitive issues like corruption or communal tensions, tragically, some journalists have paid the ultimate price, faced attacks or even lost their lives while fulfilling their professional duties.  
*Fake News and Hate Speech* - Media practices such as paid news, advertorials, and the proliferation of fake news undermine the credibility of the media and erode its ability to report impartially.  
*Government Interference* - Government involvement makes the situation more complex, as it can undermine the editorial independence of media organisations, by controlling advertising budgets, authorities can either favour media that aligns with their views or punish those that express dissent, thus shaping the media's portrayal of events.
- **Way forward:** *Independent Media Regulatory Bodies* - Establishing independent and autonomous regulatory bodies to oversee the functioning of the media can help ensure fair and unbiased reporting. Ensuring transparent appointment processes for their members, providing adequate resources and funding, and fostering public trust in their ability to regulate the media impartially.  
*Addressing Online Threats and Fake News* - With the increasing use of digital media, it is essential to address online threats such as cyber harassment, trolling, and misinformation campaigns targeting journalists.



## 5. GDP growth likely to slip to 6.4 pc in FY25

**Context:** India's economic growth rate is estimated to slip to 6.4 percent in 2024-25, mainly on account of poor showing by the manufacturing and services sector, according to government data released on Tuesday. The gross domestic product (GDP) rate of 6.4 percent will be the lowest since the Covid year (2020-21) when the country witnessed a negative growth of 5.8 percent. It was 9.7 per cent in 2021-22; 7 per cent in 2022-23; and 8.2 per cent in the last fiscal ended March 2024. The National Statistics Office (NSO) projects India's real GDP growth for 2024-25 at 6.4%, a four-year low, compared to 8.2% in 2023-24. The economy, which grew 6% in the first half of 2024-25, is expected to rebound with a 6.8% growth in the second half.

### Key points

- **Sectoral Growth Trends:** *Agriculture* - Growth is expected to rise significantly to 3.8% from 1.4% in 2023-24.  
*Public Administration Defence and Other Services* - These sectors are projected to grow by 9.1%, up from 7.8% last year.  
*Manufacturing* - Growth is estimated to slow down sharply from 9.9% in 2023-24 to 5.3% in 2024-25.  
*Mining and Quarrying* - Growth is expected to dip to 2.9% from 7.1% in the previous year.
- **Investment Growth Concerns:** Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF), an indicator of fresh investments, is projected to grow at 6.4%, down from 9% in 2023-24.
- **Economic Challenges and Budget Implications:** Reviving the economy's growth to the 7%-plus levels seen in preceding years is identified as a key challenge for the Union Budget 2025-26. The Reserve Bank of India has revised its growth projection for the full year to 6.6%, down from the earlier estimate of 7.2%. The Finance Ministry now expects growth for 2024-25 to be 'around 6.5%', revising its earlier range of 6.5% to 7%.
- **Reasons for Decline in India's GDP Growth:** *Global Economic Slowdown* - The global economic slowdown has impacted India's exports and foreign investments, contributing to the decline in growth.  
*Weak Domestic Demand* - Consumer spending and private investment have been sluggish, affecting domestic demand and economic growth.  
*Manufacturing Slowdown* - The manufacturing sector, a key driver of economic growth, has experienced a slowdown due to various factors, including weak global demand and domestic challenges.
- **Way Forward:** *Boosting Investment* - Encouraging private investment through policy reforms and infrastructure development is crucial for reviving economic growth.  
*Reforming Labor Markets* - Implementing labour market reforms to enhance flexibility and productivity can boost employment and economic activity.  
*Improving Ease of Doing Business* - Streamlining business regulations and reducing bureaucratic hurdles can encourage entrepreneurship and attract foreign investment.  
*Focus on Exports* - Diversifying exports and promoting export-oriented sectors can boost economic growth and create jobs.  
*Addressing Rural Distress* - Addressing the challenges faced by the agricultural sector and improving rural incomes can boost domestic demand and economic growth.