



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Coverage of

14th May - 20th May, 2025

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**UPSC ESE, PSUs,
RRB, SSC, Banking &
State Services Exams**

Justice B.R. Gavai

The 52nd Chief Justice of India



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14th MAY 2025

UNSC 1267 Sanctions Committee

- **Context:** India has decided to send a team to the United Nations Security Council's 1267 Sanctions Committee meeting to seek the designation of The Resistance Front (TRF) as a terrorist organisation.

Key Highlights

- The team will present new evidence pointing to Pakistan's involvement in supporting terrorism.
- The evidence will highlight TRF's role in the attack.
- Pakistan, a non-permanent member of the UNSC, has been protecting TRF at the council with support from China.

About 1267 Sanctions Committee

- It is also called the ISIS and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee, was established under a UNSC resolution in 1999, to focus on combating terrorism linked to ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and related groups.
- Member States may at any time submit to the Committee listing requests for inclusion of individuals, groups, undertakings and entities.
- The Committee comprises all 15 members of the Security Council and makes its decision by consensus.
- **Sanctions Measures Include:**
 - **Asset Freeze:** All assets of designated individuals/entities are frozen.
 - **Travel Ban:** Listed individuals are banned from entering or transiting through any member state.
 - **Arms Embargo:** Prohibition on supplying arms or related material.

e-Methanol

- **Context:** Denmark has launched the world's first commercial-scale e-methanol plant in Kasso. It has been developed by European Energy

(Denmark) and Mitsui (Japan), which will produce 42,000 metric tonnes of e-methanol annually.

About Methanol

- Methanol (CH_3OH) is a light, volatile, and flammable liquid alcohol.
- Conventionally produced from natural gas and coal, it is used in chemicals, fuels, and plastics.
- It is used in shipping fuel, plastic production, manufacturing fuel cells etc.

About India's Methanol Economy Programme

- Launched by NITI Aayog, the Methanol Economy Programme aims to reduce oil import bills, curb pollution and promote cleaner alternatives of fuel.
- Production of methanol from coal, biomass, and municipal waste can be used in LPG blend, power generation, and transportation which eventually helps in reducing India's oil import bill & greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- The program targets a 10% reduction in crude oil imports by 2030 by substituting it with methanol.
- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has initiated the Methanol Economy Research Programme (MERP) to support research and development in methanol production and utilization.
- Blending of 15% methanol in gasoline (M15) has been notified, and test standards are being developed.
- National Policy on Biofuels 2018 recognizes methanol and DME (dimethyl ether) as alternative fuels.

USA-Saudi Arabia Deals

- **Context:** The United States and Saudi Arabia signed a defence agreement worth nearly \$142 billion, as part of a broader Saudi commitment to invest \$600 billion in the USA.

Key Highlights

- **Defence Package:**
 - Arms, military systems, and services form the core of the deal.
 - Discussions also included Saudi Arabia's interest in Lockheed Martin's F-35 fighter jets, though no final purchase has been confirmed.
- **Commercial Deals:**
 - **General Electric (GE):** Gas turbines and energy solutions exports worth \$14.2 billion.
 - **Boeing:** Sale of 737-8 passenger aircraft worth \$4.8 billion.

15th MAY 2025

CJI Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai

- **Context:** Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai was sworn in by President Droupadi Murmu as the 52nd Chief Justice of India.



Constitutional Provisions

- The Constitution of India does not mention any procedure for appointing the CJI.
- Article 124 (1) of the Constitution merely says, "There shall be a Supreme Court of India consisting of a Chief Justice of India."
- Clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution says that every Judge of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the President. Thus, in the absence of a constitutional provision, the procedure to appoint CJI relies on convention.
- **Convention:**
 - The outgoing CJI recommends his successor a practice, which is strictly based on seniority.
 - Seniority, however, is not defined by age, but by the number of years a judge has been serving in the top court of the country.

Eligibility

- Apart from being an Indian citizen, the person must;
 - Have been for at least five years a Judge of a High Court or of two or more such Courts in succession or,
 - Have been for at least ten years an advocate of a High Court or of two or more such Courts in succession, or
 - Be, in the opinion of the President, a distinguished jurist.

Tenure and Retirement

- The Constitution does not fix a tenure for the Chief Justice.
- The retirement age for Supreme Court judges, including the CJI, is 65 years.

Removal of CJI

- The constitution provides that a judge can be removed only by an order of the president, based on a motion passed by both houses of parliament.
- The procedure for removal of judges is elaborated in the Judges Inquiry Act, 1968.

Belt and Road Initiative

- **Context:** Colombia formally agreed to join China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.

About Belt and Road Initiative

- It was launched in 2013 by Chinese President Xi Jinping under the initial name One Belt One Road (OBOR).
- This initiative aims to enhance regional integration, boost trade, and stimulate economic growth by developing infrastructure and connectivity across Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- **Key Components:**
 - **Silk Road Economic Belt:** Overland routes connecting China to Central Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

- **21st Century Maritime Silk Road:** Sea routes connecting China's eastern coast to Southeast Asia, South Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Major Facts and Key Concern

- China is now the largest trading partner of several Latin American countries (Brazil, Chile, Peru).
- China is expanding its footprint through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), while the U.S. views Chinese presence near strategic locations like the Panama Canal as a national security threat.
- The U.S. accuses China of trapping countries in unsustainable debt for geopolitical leverage.
- A major point of contention for India is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project under the BRI, which passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), a territory India claims as its own.
- Like Nepal formally joined the BRI in 2017 and China's increasing infrastructure projects in Nepal, particularly those close to the border (like the Chinese-funded airport in Pokhara), are seen as potentially compromising India's security
- BRI projects in Nepal and other South Asian nations (Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh) reflect China's growing political-economic footprint, diluting India's traditional sphere of influence.
- Part of the broader "String of Pearls" strategy — perceived Chinese effort to encircle India with pro-China regimes or strategic assets.
- India is wary that China might use its economic leverage through the BRI to ensnare smaller neighboring countries like Nepal in debt traps.

Bhargavastra

- **Context:** India has successfully tested an indigenous counter-drone system dubbed as 'Bhargavastra'.

Key Facts

- Designed and developed by Solar Defence and Aerospace Limited (SDAL), Bhargavastra uses minor rockets to detect and neutralise drones at a range of up to 2.5 km.
- The Bhargavastra system deploys unguided micro rockets to neutralise swarms of drones with a lethal radius of 20 metres.
- The system's second layer of defence is the guided micro-missile, which ensures precise and effective targeting. It has the capability to fire 64 micro missiles simultaneously.
- Its radar has a range of 6 to 10 km for locating small aerial threats.
- The system can also be integrated with the existing network-centric warfare infrastructure. It allows integration of soft kill options like jamming and spoofing.

16th MAY 2025

Article 143

- **Context:** President Droupadi Murmu sought the Supreme Court's advisory opinion under Article 143 on whether the President and governors need to follow timelines to decide on state bills.

Key Facts

- Recently, the Supreme Court verdict laid down a timeline for the President and governors to decide on state bills.
- Though, the Governor is not bound by any time limit to act on a Bill. This creates a situation where the Governor can simply not act on a Bill indefinitely this is referred to as a "Pocket Veto", although the term is not officially used in the Constitution.
- The Supreme Court ruled that Governors cannot delay or withhold assent to Bills indefinitely once they are passed or re-passed by the state Assembly.
- The ruling set a timeline for the Governor to act on Bills:

- One month for re-passed Bills.
- Three months if the Bill is withheld contrary to Cabinet advice.
- It raises questions about the scope of judicial authority under Article 142, and whether the courts can enforce accountability on constitutional functionaries like Governors and the President.

About Article 142

- Article 142 of the Indian constitution is a provision that empowers the Supreme Court to pass any decree or order necessary for doing complete justice in any case or matter pending before it.
- It also makes such decree or order enforceable throughout the territory of India.
- The importance of Article 142 lies in the following aspects:
 - It enables the Supreme Court to exercise executive and legislative functions in certain situations, such as issuing guidelines, directions, or orders to the government or other authorities.
 - It allows the Supreme Court to intervene in matters of public interest, human rights, constitutional values, or fundamental rights, and to protect them from any violation or infringement.
 - It enhances the Supreme Court's role as the guardian of the constitution and the final arbiter of the law.

About Article 143

- **Article 143(1):** The President can refer any question of law or fact that is of public importance to the Supreme Court for its advisory opinion.
- The Court may choose to answer or decline. The opinion is not binding, but is highly respected.
- A similar power to make references was granted to the Federal Court of India under Section 213 of the Government of India Act, 1935.
- Article 145(3) requires any such reference to be heard by five judges, after which the SC returns the reference to the President with the majority opinion.

- Under the Constitution, the President acts on the aid and advice of the Cabinet.
- The advisory jurisdiction allows her the means to seek independent advice to act on certain constitutional matters.
- It is a power that the President has invoked on at least 15 occasions since 1950.

Ajay Kumar

- **Context:** President Droupadi Murmu has appointed Dr. Ajay Kumar as the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission under Article 316 (1) of the Constitution. Earlier, he also served as the Defence Secretary.



Key Points

- The post of UPSC chairman fell vacant after the completion of Preeti Sudan's tenure.
- The UPSC conducts civil services examinations to select officers for the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Foreign Service and the Indian Police Service, among others.
- Besides the chairman, it can have a maximum of 10 members. A UPSC chairman is appointed for a term of six years or until attaining 65 years of age, all members have the same term.
- The UPSC Chairman is not eligible for reappointment after completing their term.
- Under Article 317, the Removal by President:
 - Can only be done on the ground of misbehaviour.
 - Requires a Supreme Court inquiry and report confirming the misbehaviour.
 - Reference to the Supreme Court is made by the President.
 - Can remove without Supreme Court inquiry if the person: Is adjudged insolvent, engages in paid employment outside office duties, is unfit due to mental or physical infirmity.

World Food Prize 2025

- **Context:** Brazilian microbiologist Mariangela Hungria, has been named the 2025 World Food Prize Laureate.

Key Facts

- Hungria developed seed and soil treatments using beneficial bacteria like rhizobia and Azospirillum brasilense.
- Her innovations help soybeans fix nitrogen naturally and enhance root growth in crops like corn, improving nutrient and water uptake.

About World Food Prize

- The World Food Prize is the foremost international award recognizing the accomplishments of individuals who have advanced human development by improving the quality, quantity, or availability of food in the world.
- The award was established in 1986 by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Norman E. Borlaug.
- It is often referred to as the Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture.
- The \$500,000 award is formally presented at the Laureate Award Ceremony in mid-October, on or around World Food Day.

17th MAY 2025

58th Jnanpith Award

- **Context:** President Droupadi Murmu conferred the 58th Jnanpith Award on Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya and Urdu poet and lyricist Gulzar.

About Jnanpith Award

- It is India's highest literary honor, instituted in 1961 by the Bharatiya Jnanpith.
- Bharatiya Jnanpith is a literary and research organization founded by Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain and Smt. Rama Jain.

- It is awarded for the work in 22 languages recognized by the Constitution of India and, from 2013, in the English language.
- Once a language receives the award, it becomes ineligible for the next 3 years.
- It is awarded annually to an Indian author for their outstanding contribution to literature.
- The prize carries a cash award, a citation, and a bronze replica of Vagdevi (Saraswati), the goddess of learning.
- The first recipient of the award was the Malayalam writer G. Sankara Kurup who received the award in 1965 for his collection of poems, Odakkuzhal (The Bamboo Flute).

Akash Missiles System

- **Context:** The indigenously developed Akash missile system was pivotal in thwarting Pakistan's aerial attacks during Operation Sindoor.

About Akash Missiles

- It is a mobile short-to-medium-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) system.
- Developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), it is currently in service with the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Army.
- It provides air defence cover to vital assets against enemy aircraft, cruise missiles, and UAVs, and can engage multiple targets simultaneously.
- It is capable of speeds up to Mach 2.5, with high manoeuvrability to intercept dynamic aerial threats.
- The original Akash missile variant had an operational range of 27 to 30 kilometers, and could rise to an altitude of up to 18 km.

Other Variants

- **Akash Prime:** Akash Prime boasts much improved reliability in low temperature environments and higher altitudes.
- **Akash-NG (New Generation):** Extended range up to 70 km.

- Designed to intercept stealthy, high-maneuvrability threats with low radar cross-section (RCS).
- Features a compact footprint and is lighter and more agile.

■ DO YOU KNOW: _____

In 2022, Armenia became the first foreign buyer, signing a deal worth ₹6,000 crore for 15 Akash missile systems.

Lupex Mission

- **Context:** India and Japan are set to enter the design phase of the Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPEX) mission, also referred to as Chandrayaan-5.

About Lupex Mission

- **Objective:** To conduct detailed exploration of the Moon's south polar region, especially focusing on water ice deposits.
- **Mission life:** Approved by the Cabinet in March this year, the mission is proposed to be for 3.5 months (100 days).
- ISRO is developing the lander, while JAXA is building and programming the 350-kg rover to traverse the lunar surface and climb slopes up to 25 degrees.

18th MAY 2025

Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project

- **Context:** India's decision to establish a direct link between the Northeast and Kolkata via Myanmar, bypassing Bangladesh, marks a strategic shift in regional connectivity.

Key Facts

- India shares a 1,643 km land border with Myanmar, connecting Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram.
- Myanmar serves as India's gateway to Southeast Asia, making it vital for trade and connectivity.

About Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP)

- It aims to link Kolkata to Mizoram via Sittwe Port (Myanmar) and Paletwa inland waterways.
- It enables multi-modal cargo flow (sea, river, road). It reduces distance and time compared to the 'Chicken's Neck' corridor (Siliguri).
- It connects with India's East-West industrial corridor plans.
- **Phases:**
 - Kolkata to Sittwe (Sea) – 539 km (Completed)
 - Sittwe to Paletwa (River) – 158 km (Completed)
 - Paletwa to Zorinpui (Road) – 108 km (Partially completed, delayed due to armed conflict in Rakhine State).
 - Zorinpui to Aizawl & Shillong (Road Extension): Underway through the Shillong-Silchar-Zorinpui corridor, approved by MoRTH.

Rare Earth Magnets

- **Context:** China has imposed curbs on rare earth magnets.

Key Facts

- Rare earth magnets, especially neodymium-iron-boron (NdFeB) magnets, are crucial for Electric Vehicle (EV) manufacturing, particularly in electric motors.
- They provide the strong magnetic fields needed for efficient and powerful electric motors, including traction motors that drive EVs.
- These magnets also play a major role in other EV components like power steering systems, wiper motors, and braking systems.
- China has a near monopoly over these rare earth magnets.
- US and India are heavily dependent on Chinese exports of these metals.

19th MAY 2025

Take It Down Act

- **Context:** The U.S. President Donald Trump signed the Take It Down Act, criminalizing the non-consensual sharing of intimate images including AI-generated deepfakes.

Key Highlights of the Act

- The Act makes it illegal to “knowingly publish” or threaten to publish intimate images without a person’s consent, including AI-created “deepfakes.”
- It also requires websites and social media companies to remove such material within 48 hours of notice from a victim.
- The platforms must also take steps to delete duplicate content.
- An online boom in non-consensual deepfakes is currently outpacing efforts to regulate the technology around the world due to a proliferation of AI tools.

About Deepfakes

- Deepfakes are synthetic media generated using Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly through machine learning techniques like GANs (Generative Adversarial Networks).
- These tools can fabricate hyper-realistic images, videos, or audio, making it appear as if someone said or did something they never actually did.
- Deepfakes can be used to create fake news, propaganda, or doctored statements from public figures, influencing public opinion, eroding trust in media, and potentially disrupting elections or inciting social unrest.
- Unethical use of deepfake technology is creating pornographic content by superimposing individuals’ victimising women.
- The unauthorized use of a person’s likeness or voice in deepfakes raises serious privacy concerns.

e-Zero FIR Initiative

- **Context:** Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) has introduced the new e-Zero FIR initiative to nab any criminal with unprecedented speed.

Key Highlights

- High-value cyber financial crimes (above 10 lakh) reported via National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) or helpline 1930 will now be automatically converted into Zero FIRs, ensuring quicker initiation of investigations.
- It brings together systems from the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), Delhi Police’s e-FIR, and National Crime Record Bureau’s (NCRB’s) Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS).
- Complaints can be filed and processed irrespective of the complainant’s location, removing delays due to jurisdictional constraints.
- Victims can get their Zero FIR converted into a regular FIR by visiting the relevant cybercrime police station within 3 days.
- Initially launched as a pilot in Delhi, the system will soon be extended to other States and Union Territories across India.

20th MAY 2025

Operation Olivia

- **Context:** Operation Olivia helped protect a record of over 6.98 lakh Olive Ridley turtles nested at the Rushikulya river mouth in Odisha.

Key Highlights

- Operation Olivia is an annual mission of the Indian Coast Guard’s (ICG) conducted from November to May.
- It is aimed at ensuring safe nesting grounds for Olive Ridley turtles particularly at Gahirmatha Beach and surrounding coastal areas of Odisha, which see the arrival of over eight lakh turtles each year.

About Olive Ridley Turtles

- The olive ridley gets its name from the olive-green color of its heart-shaped shell. These are carnivores and feed mainly on jellyfish, shrimp etc.
- Olive ridleys are found throughout the world primarily in the tropical regions of the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic oceans.
- **Major nesting sites in India:** Rushikulya rookery coast (Odisha), Gahirmatha beach (Bhitarkanika National Park) and the mouth of the Debi River.
- They are known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
 - CITES Appendix-I
 - Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Alternative Investment Funds

- **Context:** RBI has proposed revised guidelines to ease restrictions on investments by regulated entities (REs) in Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs).

About Alternative Investment Fund (AIF)

- Alternative Investment Fund or AIF means any fund established or incorporated in India which is a privately pooled investment vehicle which collects funds from sophisticated investors, whether Indian or foreign, for investing it in accordance with a defined investment policy for the benefit of its investors.
- AIF does not include funds covered under the SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996, SEBI (Collective Investment Schemes) Regulations, 1999 or any other regulations of the Board to regulate fund management activities.
- AIFs in India are classified into three categories based on their investment strategy, risk profile, and use of leverage:
 - Category-I AIFs invest in sectors that are considered socially or economically desirable by the government or regulators, such as start-ups, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), infrastructure, and social ventures.
 - Category-II AIFs comprise funds that do not fall under Category I or III and typically include private equity funds, real estate funds, and distressed asset funds.
 - Category-III AIFs are designed for high-risk, high-return strategies and are permitted to employ leverage and complex trading strategies, including in listed or unlisted derivatives.