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1.The Union Government has imposed restrictions on the import of silver from foreign countries.

(i) Earlier, simple procedures were followed for importing silver bars, silver metal, and other silver products. Now, restrictions have been imposed on them under the import policy.

(ii) In a statement issued by the Central Government regarding this, it was said: "Under the revised import policy, mandatory approval from the Central Government must be obtained for the import of silver bars, unprocessed silver, silver powder, and other forms of silver.

(iii) Amendments have been made so that specified silver products can be imported only in compliance with the rules of the Reserve Bank of India."

(iv) This step has been taken to prevent excessive imports of precious metals from abroad.

(v) Earlier, the Central Government increased the import duty on gold and silver from 6 percent to 15 percent. Following this, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) also tightened the rules for duty-free gold imports by gem and jewellery exporters under the Advance Authorization Scheme. Accordingly, the upper limit for gold imports under one license was fixed at 100 kilograms.

(vi) Monthly reporting:

- If an applicant is applying for these concessions for the first time, approval will be granted only after officials directly inspect the manufacturing units.
- Similarly, free authorization will be provided only if 50 percent of exports under previous licenses had been completed.
- In addition, those importing gold duty-free must submit reports to the Central Government twice every month with the help of auditors. These reports must be submitted monthly to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade.
- As India's gold imports increased to ₹6.9 lakh crore in the 2025–26 financial year, the Central Government increased import duty on gold to control imports.

2.US President Donald Trump has said that China has agreed to purchase 200 aircraft from Boeing. Recently, Trump visited China, during which several trade agreements were signed between American companies and China. One of them was the agreement with Boeing, the leading aircraft manufacturer based in the United States.

(i) After assuming office for a second term as US President, Trump has been taking steps to revive the American manufacturing sector through Boeing. A year ago, during his visit to Middle Eastern countries, Qatar Airways agreed to purchase 210 Boeing aircraft. Saudi Arabia also agreed to buy Boeing planes. Similarly, during Trump's recent visits, South Korea agreed to purchase 100 Boeing aircraft, Turkey 225 aircraft, and Dubai 135 aircraft.

3.The Kremlin has announced that Russian President Vladimir Putin will undertake an official visit to China next week.

(i) This announcement was made suddenly within 24 hours after US President Donald Trump completed his visit to China.

(ii) The Russia–Ukraine war has continued for more than four years. Although China claims to be neutral in the conflict, it has repeatedly been alleged that it indirectly supports Russia with military assistance. Likewise, reports suggest that China has also been providing various forms of support to Iran in the Middle East conflict involving Iran, the United States, and Israel.

(iii) In this context, President Trump and senior American officials visited China on an official trip. It is said that Trump and the Chinese President discussed the Ukraine war and the Middle East conflict during the visit. Within 24 hours of Trump leaving China, the Kremlin released a new announcement.

(iv) According to it, the 25th anniversary of the China–Russia Friendship Treaty signed in 2001 is approaching. In this context, Putin will visit China on May 19 and 20. During the visit, the Chinese President and Putin will discuss bilateral issues, as well as international affairs, regional matters, and economic cooperation.

4.Despite gold prices remaining at record highs in the international market, India's gold imports in April increased by 81.69 percent year-on-year to $5.62 billion.

(i) Likewise, silver imports rose by 157.16 percent to reach $411 million.

(ii) Since gold alone accounts for more than 5 percent of India's total imports, this sharp increase has widened the country's trade deficit to $28.38 billion, the highest level in three months.

(iii) Switzerland continues to lead:

- Switzerland continues to be the largest contributor to India's total gold imports, accounting for 40 percent. It is followed by the UAE (16 percent) and South Africa (10 percent).
- In April alone, gold imports from Switzerland increased by 26.73 percent to $1.47 billion.

(iv) Full financial year status:

- During the 2025–26 financial year, India's gold imports rose by 24 percent in value terms to a record high of $71.98 billion.
- However, in volume terms, gold imports declined by 4.76 percent to 721.03 tonnes.
- Earlier, imports stood at 795 tonnes in 2023–24 and 757 tonnes in 2024–25. Due to high prices, import volumes declined in the last financial year.

(v) Increase in customs duty:

- Since the value of gold and silver imports has continued to rise, India's foreign exchange reserves are being affected. Therefore, as a control measure, the Central Government sharply increased the import customs duty on gold and silver from 6 percent to 15 percent.
- The new duty came into effect last Wednesday.
- Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal stated: "Because of the increase in customs duty, imports and consumer demand for gold and silver are certain to decline in the current financial year. However, since silver has higher industrial usage, the impact on silver may be comparatively lower."

(vi) No major impact from UAE agreement:

- Under the India–UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), gold imports were allowed with a 1 percent duty concession.

- Explaining this, Rajesh Agrawal said: "Although imports worth $8 billion were permitted under this concession limit during 2025–26, only 1 tonne of gold was actually imported. Therefore, this agreement has had no major impact on India's overall gold imports."

5.On the occasion of Sikkim's 51st Statehood Day, President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang conveyed their greetings on Saturday.

(i) Sikkim, which was formerly a monarchy, became a full-fledged state of India on May 16, 1975. The 51st Statehood Day of Sikkim was celebrated on Saturday.

6.Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Ali Fali Kadhim Al-Zaidi on Saturday after he assumed office as the new Prime Minister of Iraq.

(i) Businessman Al-Zaidi was selected as the consensus candidate to lead Iraq's next Government after a week-long internal discussion among alliance parties. He later won the Parliamentary vote held for his appointment and subsequently assumed office as Iraq's new Prime Minister.

7.The Central Government is implementing a project worth ₹10,211 crore to renovate 736 dams across the country. The Ministry of Jal Shakti stated in a report:

(i) India ranks third globally in terms of the number of dams, with 6,628 dams. Of these, 6,545 are already operational, while 83 are under construction. These dams together can store 330 billion cubic meters of water.

(ii) Under the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP), projects worth ₹5,053 crore have already been approved for the renovation of 191 dams. By March 31, 2025, renovation work on 43 dams had been completed.

(iii) The second and third phases of this project began in October 2021. Steps were taken to renovate 736 dams across 19 states. A total project cost of ₹10,211 crore was prepared for these phases — ₹5,107 crore for Phase II and ₹5,104 crore for Phase III.

(iv) Out of this ₹10,211 crore, ₹7,000 crore is planned to be obtained as foreign financial assistance, while the remaining ₹3,211 crore will be jointly contributed by the Central and State Governments.

8.Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that "Captagon," known as the "jihadi drug," worth ₹182 crore had been seized in an unprecedented operation.

(i) In a post on X, he said: "Under 'Operation Ragepill,' the Narcotics Control Bureau conducted intensive surveillance and raids, leading to the seizure of 227.7 kilograms of Captagon drugs worth ₹182 crore, the largest seizure of its kind so far.

(ii) The consignment was intended to be smuggled through India to Middle Eastern countries. A foreign national involved in the smuggling attempt has also been arrested. This action is a strong example of India's zero-tolerance policy against narcotics."

9.Data available on the Lok Sabha website shows that, on average, only 53 percent of members attend meetings of 16 Parliamentary Standing Committees and the Public Accounts Committee.

(i) Most Parliamentary Standing Committees were reconstituted last September, following which meetings were held to discuss various issues.

(ii) Each Parliamentary Standing Committee consists of 31 members — 21 from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha.

(iii) Similarly, the Public Accounts Committee consists of 15 members from the Lok Sabha and 7 from the Rajya Sabha.

(iv) According to Lok Sabha website data:

- On average, only 53 percent of members attended meetings of 16 Department-related standing committees dealing with agriculture, food and consumer affairs, chemicals and fertilizers, energy, social justice and empowerment, among others.
- Attendance was comparatively higher in committees related to railways, petroleum and natural gas, external affairs, and finance.
- At least 11 members are required for committee meetings to take place. Due to insufficient attendance, five meetings had to be postponed since last September.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has repeatedly stressed that members of both Houses should regularly attend Parliamentary committee meetings.

10.Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that “today’s India, which is progressing like never before, has limitless ambitions.”

(i) He made these remarks while addressing the Indian community in The Hague, Netherlands. Modi began a six-day official visit to five countries — the UAE, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and Italy. After completing the first leg of his UAE visit, he arrived in the Netherlands.

(ii) 125 unicorn companies:

- India aims to emerge as a global manufacturing hub, a world leader in green energy, and a driving force for global growth. It is also aspiring to host the Olympic Games.
- In 2014, India had only four unicorn startups (companies valued at over $1 billion). Now, around 125 unicorn companies are operating in the country.
- Indian startups are making notable contributions in key sectors such as artificial intelligence, defence, and space technology. These innovations and research efforts are becoming highly valuable.
- India is now the world’s third-largest startup ecosystem.

(iii) Return of Chola-era copper plates:

- The famous Anaimangalam copper plates from the reigns of Emperor Rajaraja Chola and Rajendra Chola were formally handed back to India in the presence of Prime Minister Modi in The Hague.
- These 11th-century copper plates were taken to the Netherlands in the 1700s by Florentius Camper, who had come to Nagapattinam for Christian missionary work during Dutch rule.
- These plates, which are among the most important historical records of the Chola Empire and priceless treasures of Tamil history, had been preserved at Leiden University in the Netherlands.Demands had long been raised for their return to India. The 21 copper plates, inscribed

in Tamil and Sanskrit, weigh around 30 kilograms and are bound together with a copper ring bearing the seal of Rajendra Chola. The inscriptions contain details about the charitable grants made by the Hindu king Rajaraja Chola to a Buddhist monastery.