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1.The retail selling prices of petrol and diesel were hiked for the third consecutive time. Petrol prices were increased by 87 paise per litre, while diesel prices were raised by 91 paise per litre.

(i) With this, petrol and diesel prices have increased by a total of ₹5 per litre over the past nine days.

(ii) Similarly, the price of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) for vehicles was increased by ₹1 per kilogram. As a result, CNG prices have risen by a total of ₹4 per kilogram in the last nine days.

(iii) Oil companies stated that the price hike was implemented to offset losses caused by rising crude oil prices in the international market due to the West Asian conflict.

2.SpaceX, owned by Elon Musk, successfully carried out the next phase of testing for its “Starship” spacecraft, the largest and most powerful rocket system in its history.

3.The United Nations conference to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) concluded without any final agreement.

(i) This is the third consecutive time such a conference has failed without reaching a consensus. Previously, in August 2022, the talks collapsed because of disagreements related to the Ukraine war involving Russia.

(ii) The failure of the current conference, which began on April 27 with participation from 191 member nations, is said to have been caused by tensions between the United States and Iran over Iran’s nuclear programme.

4.The Union Government has asked states to apply within 40 days for setting up 50 new industrial parks.

(i) During the Union Cabinet meeting held in March, approval was granted under the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana scheme to establish 100 world-class industrial parks across the country. Speaking in New Delhi, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said:

- The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of 100 industrial parks. In the first phase, 50 parks will be set up across the country at a cost of ₹33,600 crore.
- In the second phase, the remaining 50 parks will be developed.
- Of the first 50 parks, 20 will be established within the first two months, and the remaining 30 within the following two months.
- These industrial parks will be developed jointly by state governments and private sector participants.
- Each industrial park will span between 100 and 1,000 acre.
- The Centre will provide infrastructure support of ₹1 crore per acre.
- All states have been invited to participate in the scheme. Applications for the first 50 parks will be accepted from May 23 for the next four months.
- If state governments collaborate with private companies to establish industrial parks, the Centre may also provide financial assistance of ₹50 lakh per acre.

5.Rupamani Gor from Assam successfully scaled Mount Everest. She was part of a team of women personnel from the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). She has become the first Assamese woman to climb



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Everest.

6.The draft rules for the new rural employment scheme called VB G RAM G, introduced by the Union Government, have been released ahead of its implementation from July 1.

(i) The Centre has invited public feedback on the draft rules.

(ii) The VB G RAM G 125-day employment scheme law was passed in Parliament last December as a replacement for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 100-day scheme. The bill became law after receiving assent from President Droupadi Murmu.

7.Defence Minister Rajnath Singh stated that no force can stop India from becoming the world's largest arms exporter within the next 25 to 30 years.

(i) He inaugurated a factory manufacturing explosives and artillery shells in Shiradi, Ahilyanagar district of Maharashtra.

(ii) The event was attended by Chief of Defence Staff Anil Chauhan, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, and DRDO Chairman Satheesh Kamath.

(iii) Speaking at the inauguration, CDS Anil Chauhan said:

- Future wars will involve cyber warfare and multi-domain attacks.
- Warfare, weapons, and military strategies are evolving rapidly.
- Modern warfare will increasingly rely on artificial intelligence, drones, robots, cyber systems, space technologies, and precision weapons rather than only manpower and conventional arms.
- Battlefields will extend beyond geography into information networks and cyber infrastructure.
- Domestic defence production has reached ₹1.27 lakh crore.
- Defence exports have touched record levels and currently stand at ₹38,000 crore.
- Military equipment is being exported to more than 100 countries.
- The Nibe group will manufacture artillery ammunition.
- Shiradi, known for spirituality and faith, will now also be recognized for defence manufacturing, industrial growth, technological innovation, and national security.
- The factory is not merely an industrial project but part of India's mission for self-reliance in defence.

8.India's Ambassador to Estonia, Ashish Sinha, said that relations between India and Estonia are progressing steadily and that Estonia could become India's gateway to Northern Europe once the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement comes into force.

(i) Although Estonia has a population of only 1.3 million, it offers Indian goods access to the wider European Union market.

(ii) Once the India-EU FTA becomes operational, ties in the small and medium industries sector between India and Estonia are expected to strengthen further.

(iii) Estonia could emerge as India's entry point into Northern Europe, while Estonian dairy and agricultural products may gain access to Indian markets.

(iv) Estonia is one of the world's leading countries in digital technology, IT, and AI software services, creating strong opportunities for cooperation.



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(v) India was among the first countries to recognize Estonia after it gained independence in 1991. Bilateral relations have expanded across sectors. Estonian President Alar Karis attended the AI Summit held in India in February, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi met him during the AI Summit in Paris last year.

(vi) A statue of Mahatma Gandhi was recently unveiled in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. Around 2,000 Indians live in Estonia, most of them working in digital and technology sectors, while many have become entrepreneurs.

(vii) As democratic nations committed to pluralism and international law, India and Estonia continue to support international peace and security.

(viii) India and the European Union signed a Free Trade Agreement in January. Described as the “mother of all agreements,” it provides duty-free access to 93% of Indian goods, while tariffs on EU imports such as luxury cars and alcohol have been reduced.

9. Democratic Party lawmakers have opposed the new Green Card policy introduced by the administration of Donald Trump and demanded its withdrawal.

(i) Since assuming office, Trump has introduced several policy changes, including a new immigration policy. Under the new rules, foreign nationals living in the United States can no longer apply for Green Cards (permanent residency) from within the country unless under extraordinary circumstances. Instead, they must leave the U.S., return to their home country, and apply from there.

(ii) Earlier, students and professionals staying in the U.S. were allowed to apply for Green Cards while remaining in the country. The Trump administration has now ended that practice.

(iii) The move is expected to affect students and workers from countries including India. Democratic lawmakers have criticized the decision by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and said they would campaign for its reversal.

(iv) USCIS clarification:

- USCIS has not specified who would be exempt from the new Green Card policy, except that asylum seekers will not be affected.
- USCIS spokesperson Jack Kaler said that individuals providing economic benefit or serving national interests may still continue applying from within the U.S.
- However, it remains unclear whether this exemption applies to skilled foreign workers on H-1B visas.
- Commenting on the issue, Ajay Bhutoria, a former adviser to former President Joe Biden, said that around 1.2 million Indians in the U.S. who have legally complied with regulations, paid taxes, and waited years for Green Cards are now facing uncertainty. He added that several groups are expected to challenge the policy in court.