



P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

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1. Five New Judges Appointed to the Supreme Court

Five new judges, including senior advocate V. Mohana from Tamil Nadu, have been appointed to the Supreme Court. The notification was issued by the Union Ministry of Law and Justice.

- (i) With the swearing-in of the new judges, the number of serving Supreme Court judges will rise to 37.
- (ii) While the sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court was previously 34 judges, the Union Government last month promulgated an ordinance for increasing the total number of judges, including the Chief Justice of India, to 38.

2. Election for the President of the 81st UN General Assembly

The election for the President of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which will commence in September, is being held on June 2.

- (i) Under the rotational system, the Presidency this year is allocated to the Asia-Pacific region, leading to a closely contested race between Bangladesh and Cyprus. The winner will serve a one-year term succeeding the current President, former German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock.
- (ii) Bangladesh has nominated its Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman. He previously served as National Security Adviser in the Interim Government led by Muhammad Yunus and assumed office as Foreign Minister in February. If elected, he will become only the second Bangladeshi to hold the position after Humayun Rashid Choudhury, who served in 1986.
- (iii) Cyprus has nominated Andreas Kakouris, the country's Special Envoy for Multilateral Affairs. With over four decades of diplomatic experience, including service as Cyprus's Ambassador to the United States, he would become the first Cypriot citizen to serve as President of the UN General Assembly if elected.
- (iv) The election is attracting global attention amid preparations for selecting the next UN Secretary-General, escalating conflicts worldwide, and divisions within the UN Security Council over maintaining international peace and security.

3. Malaysia Bans Social Media Use for Children Under 16

To protect children from online dangers and inappropriate content, the Malaysian Government has prohibited individuals under the age of 16 from creating and using social media accounts.

- (i) Major social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, each with more than eight million users in Malaysia, have been instructed to implement the rule immediately.
- (ii) Under the new regulations, Government-approved identity documents must be verified before minors can create accounts. Social media companies have been given six months to identify existing underage users and enforce the ban.
- (iii) Companies that fail to comply or do not implement adequate age-verification systems may face fines of up to 10 million ringgit (approximately ₹24.01 crore).

(iv) The Government clarified that parents will not face fines or penalties if minors circumvent the rules and create accounts.

(v) The move has drawn mixed reactions. Many parents have welcomed the decision, believing it will protect children from social media addiction and mental health problems.

(vi) Critics argue that the restrictions could negatively affect children who use platforms such as YouTube for educational and creative purposes. Concerns have also been raised about threats to user privacy arising from identity verification requirements.

(vii) Countries such as Australia, Brazil, and Indonesia have already introduced restrictions over concerns regarding the impact of social media on children, while the United Kingdom, France, and South Korea are considering similar legislation.

4. Colombian Presidential Election Heads to Runoff

Colombia's Presidential election will proceed to a second round after no candidate secured more than 50% of the vote.

(i) Right-wing candidate Abelardo de la Espriella leads with 44.2% of the vote, while left-wing candidate Iván Cepeda follows closely with 41%.

(ii) A runoff election between the two leading candidates is scheduled for the 21st.

5. India's Industrial Production Growth Slows to 4.9%

India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) growth slowed to 4.9% in April.

(i) Growth had stood at 5.7% in April last year. The slowdown has been attributed to weakness in the energy sector arising from the conflict situation in the Middle East.

(ii) Sector-wise:

- Manufacturing grew by 6.2%
- Electricity and gas supply increased by 4.9%
- Water supply and waste management expanded by 6.6%
- Mining and quarrying contracted by 5.1%

(iii) The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has revised the IIP base year from 2011-12 to 2022-23.

(iv) The change was made following recommendations from an expert committee to ensure that industrial production is measured more accurately and reflects current economic conditions. This is the first official dataset released after the revision.

(v) Under the revised methodology, 120 new products have been added and 64 obsolete products removed. Newly added items include:

- CCTV cameras
- Credit and debit cards
- Medical stents
- Vaccines
- Aircraft and spacecraft components

(vi) Items removed due to declining usage include:

- Kerosene
- CFL bulbs
- Sewing machines
- Printing machines

(vii) The updated index now covers 1,042 products across 463 categories. The revisions better reflect industrial diversification and technological advancements. Separate indices will also track electricity generated from renewable and non-renewable energy sources.

(viii) The Ministry stated that IIP data for each month will henceforth be released within 28 days of the end of that month.

6. India and Australia to Enhance Defence Cooperation

India and Australia have agreed to strengthen defence cooperation.

(i) Australian Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles, currently visiting India, met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

(ii) Discussions covered:

- Expanding defence cooperation
- Energy supply disruptions caused by tensions in West Asia
- China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific
- Freedom of maritime trade

According to the joint statement:

- Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to building a free, peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region in cooperation with other countries.
- They agreed to deepen defence-industrial cooperation between India and Australia.
- Discussions were held on finalising an integrated maritime security strategy.
- Both sides supported adherence to the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), including freedom of navigation and overflight.
- They welcomed the visit of Australia's first Defence Trade Mission to India.
- They endorsed greater cooperation among India, Australia, the United States, and Japan in maintaining Indo-Pacific security.
- They supported implementation of the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness initiative.

Following the talks, both Ministers announced that work would begin on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further strengthen defence cooperation.

7. India-Oman Free Trade Agreement Comes into Force

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal announced that the India-Oman Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has come into effect.

(i) The agreement was signed in Muscat on 18 December 2025 and has now entered into force.

(ii) To mark its implementation, ten consignments, including goods, gems, and jewellery, were shipped from Chennai, Mumbai, and Kolkata to Oman under preferential tariff benefits.

(iii) Goyal stated that the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement will provide Indian exporters in sectors such as:

- Textiles
- Leather
- Plastics
- Marine products
- Automobiles
- Sports goods
- Agricultural products

with preferential market access in Oman.

(iv) Oman will provide tariff concessions for date imports under a quota system, enabling Indian consumers to access cheaper Omani dates. India has granted customs duty concessions on 77.79% of tariff lines for imports from Oman.

(v) Oman is India's second-largest trading partner in the Gulf region. Bilateral trade rose from \$10.61 billion (₹1 lakh crore) in FY 2024–25 to approximately \$10.6 billion-plus (₹1.06 lakh crore) in FY 2025–26.

8. India Seeks Bids to Import 1.7 Million Tonnes of Urea

The Union Government has invited a second international tender to import 1.7 million tonnes of urea.

(i) The ongoing conflict involving Iran and the US–Israel alliance has disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, preventing the transportation of crude oil, natural gas, and fertilizers imported from the Middle East.

(ii) At an inter-ministerial meeting in New Delhi on the West Asia situation, Additional Secretary Aparna Sharma of the Finance Ministry stated:

- International urea prices have surged from \$447 per tonne in February to \$947 per tonne.
- India has already procured 2.5 million tonnes of urea and 5 million tonnes of DAP fertilizer from alternative sources outside the Middle East.
- These supplies are expected to arrive during June–July.
- The new tender for 1.7 million tonnes of urea is the second procurement tender for the Kharif season.

(iii) The Government has also increased onion procurement to build buffer stocks. According to Additional Secretary Anupam Mishra of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs:

- The procurement price of onions has been increased from ₹12.70 per kg to ₹15.80 per kg.
- The Government routinely purchases and stores onions to stabilize market prices.
- Procurement of 200,000 tonnes of onions is planned this year, compared to 300,000 tonnes last year.
- Pulse stocks have reached a record 4.3 million tonnes, double the level recorded in May last year.
- Higher domestic production has reduced pulse imports by 30%, while chickpea imports have fallen by 51%.

India imports pulses primarily from Myanmar, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Canada, Australia, and Brazil.

9. Myanmar President's visit to India

(i) The Assurance Against Anti-India Activities

- Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing gave a firm assurance to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that Myanmar will not allow its soil to be used for any activities detrimental to India's security interests.
- Both leaders affirmed a mutual commitment to prevent their respective territories from being used for hostile actions against the other.

(ii) Context and Significance of the Visit

- The President arrived in New Delhi for a five-day official state visit starting June 1.
- This visit is strategically significant as it occurs shortly after Min Aung Hlaing officially assumed the presidency in April 2026 following the conclusion of Myanmar's general elections.

(iii) Bilateral and Strategic Cooperation

- High-level discussions emphasized strengthening ties in trade, economy, and defense.
- Key areas identified for enhanced cooperation include health, education, energy, technology, and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- The meeting also focused on border management and various Indian-assisted development projects within Myanmar.

(iv) Sovereignty and Border Security

- Prime Minister Modi reaffirmed India's unwavering support for Myanmar's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- The security of the shared 1,640 km border, which touches Northeast Indian states such as Nagaland and Manipur, remains a top priority for both nations.
- National Security Advisor Ajit Doval held separate, detailed discussions with the President regarding bilateral security ties.

(v) Stance on Myanmar's Internal Peace

- The leaders discussed the situation regarding former Prime Minister Aung San Suu Kyi and the ongoing efforts to restore peace in Myanmar.
- India maintains that long-term stability in Myanmar requires inclusive engagement involving all stakeholders.

10. Tamil Nadu Farmers Expect Increase in Compensation for Damages Caused by Wild Animals**(i) Overview of the Problem**

- Farmers throughout Tamil Nadu face persistent challenges and significant financial losses due to wild animals such as elephants, wild boars, deer, bears, and peacocks.
- The issue is most severe for those whose agricultural lands are located near the foothills of the Western Ghats.

(ii) Impact on Agriculture and Human Safety

- Elephants frequently damage high-value crops like coconut and banana. In many areas, the regular destruction caused by wild boars and deer has forced farmers to stop cultivating tubers and groundnuts.
- Encounters with bears and wild boars often result in severe physical injuries and, in some instances, human fatalities.

- Due to the relentless damage, farmers at monthly grievance meetings have demanded that wild boars be removed from the protected species list and that permission be granted to shoot them.

(iii) Critique of Current Compensation

- Farmers argue that the current compensation amounts are paltry and negligible, failing to account for the rising costs of seeds, fertilizers, and labor.
- While the compensation for human death or permanent disability was increased from ₹4 lakh to ₹10 lakh in 2024, farmers contend that other compensation categories remain outdated and insufficient.

(iv) Specific Compensation Demands

Farmers are calling for a substantial increase in compensation rates to match current economic realities:

- Human Death/Disability: Increase from ₹10 lakh to ₹20 lakh.
- General Crop Damage: Increase from ₹25,000 to ₹50,000 per acre.
- Coconut Trees: Increase from ₹500 to ₹10,000 per tree.
- Concrete Houses: Increase from ₹95,100 to ₹4 lakh.
- Huts/Thatched Houses: Increase from ₹10,000 to ₹1 lakh.
- Livestock: Demands include increasing compensation for milching cows to ₹60,000, bullocks to ₹50,000, and goats/sheep to ₹15,000.
- Property and Equipment: Increases are sought for household items (to ₹5,000), shops (to ₹10,000), and damage to irrigation tools like motors and wells.

(v) Administrative Friction and Future Expectations

- The inadequacy of current payments often leads to confrontations between farmers and the forest department, as many farmers refuse to accept the low compensation offered.
- Despite repeated pleas over the years, effective solutions have not been implemented. Farmers are now urging the new Government to prioritize their safety and financial stability by increasing compensation and controlling wild animal populations.