



# P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

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## 1. CBSE Class 12 Answer-Sheet Evaluation Controversy

The controversy surrounding the CBSE Class 12 answer-sheet evaluation through the On-Screen Marking (OSM) system has intensified, leading to the transfer of CBSE Chairperson Rahul Singh and Secretary Himanshu Gupta from their posts.

### (i) New Appointments

- Senior IAS officer Lokande Prashant Sitaram has been appointed as the new Chairperson of CBSE.
- Senior officer Varun Bharadwaj has been appointed as the new Secretary of the Board.

### (ii) Inquiry Committee

- The Central Government has constituted a one-member inquiry committee to investigate the awarding of the OSM contract.
- The committee is headed by S. Radha Chauhan.
- It has the authority to appoint experts from other Departments, if required.
- The committee will submit its report to the Department of Personnel and Training within one month.

### (iii) Examination Results

- CBSE Class 12 results were announced on May 13.
- Around 1.768 million students appeared for the examination.
- The overall pass percentage was above 85%.

### (iv) Complaints About OSM

- For the first time, CBSE evaluated Class 12 answer scripts through the OSM system.
- The pass percentage fell by about 3% compared to the previous year.
- Many students received unexpectedly low marks.
- Complaints included improper scanning of answer sheets and evaluation errors.

### (v) Contract Controversy

- It emerged that the OSM contract had been awarded to Coepmt Edutech, a company that had previously been involved in a major controversy in Telangana.
- Allegations were raised that CBSE relaxed tender conditions to award the contract to the company.

### (vi) Re-evaluation Issues

- Students also faced difficulties in obtaining copies of answer sheets and paying fees for re-evaluation.

## 2. India-US Interim Trade Agreement Talks

The next round of negotiations to finalize all aspects of the India-US interim trade agreement began in

New Delhi.

(i) Participants

- The Indian delegation is led by Additional Secretary Darpan Jain.
- The US delegation is led by Chief Negotiator Brendan Lynch.

(ii) Areas of Discussion

The three-day talks focus on:

- Market access
- Tariff concessions
- Customs duties and trade benefits
- Investment promotion
- Economic security
- A broader comprehensive trade agreement

(iii) Seeking Better Terms

- India is reportedly seeking more favorable benefits from the US than neighboring countries such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.
- Earlier, US President Donald Trump imposed tariffs totaling 50% on Indian goods.
- Following negotiations in February, the additional tariffs were removed and reciprocal tariffs were reduced from 25% to 18%.
- India agreed to tariff concessions for US products and expressed interest in purchasing US goods worth \$500 billion over the next five years, including fuel, aircraft, aircraft parts, and technology products.

(iv) Changing Trade Environment

- The US Supreme Court ruled that Trump's reciprocal tariff measures on many countries were invalid.
- Subsequently, Trump introduced a uniform 10% tariff, which was later stayed by a federal court.
- These developments prompted both countries to reconsider the framework of the interim agreement.
- Earlier discussions were held in Washington in April, followed by the current round in New Delhi.

(v) Trade Statistics

- The United States is India's second-largest trading partner.
- During 2025–26:
  - India's exports to the US increased by 0.92% to \$87.3 billion.
  - Imports from the US rose by 15.95% to \$52.9 billion.

3. India–Nepal Border Dispute

India has firmly stated that there is no role for any third-party intervention in resolving the India–Nepal border dispute.

(i) The statement came after Nepal's Prime Minister Balen Shah said that Nepal had discussed the issue with China and the United Kingdom.

(ii) External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated:

- About 98% of the India–Nepal border has already been demarcated.
- Only a few segments remain unresolved.
- Changes in the course of the Gandak River contributed to the dispute.
- There have been encroachment incidents on both sides.
- Both countries have already established bilateral mechanisms to address the issue.
- Therefore, no third-country involvement is necessary.

#### 4. Denmark Government Formation

Following Denmark's general election and two months of coalition negotiations, Mette Frederiksen will assume office as Prime Minister for a third term, heading a four-party centre-left coalition government.

#### 5. US Intelligence Leadership Change

Following the resignation of Tulsi Gabbard, President Donald Trump appointed Bill Pulte as the acting Director of National Intelligence.

#### 6. UN Warning on El Niño

The World Meteorological Organization warned that:

- A strong El Niño event may develop soon.
- The impacts could become more severe due to global warming.

#### 7. NATO Military Exercise

The United States and member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will conduct joint military exercises in the Baltic Sea region.

#### 8. President of the 81st UN General Assembly

(i) Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman was elected President of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

- He becomes only the second Bangladeshi to hold the position after Humayun Rashid Choudhury in 1986.

(ii) Representatives from 21 countries, including Afghanistan, Egypt, and Iraq, were elected Vice-Presidents.

(iii) The 81st session will begin in September. Rahman defeated Andreas Kakouris of Cyprus in the election.

(iv) He will take over from Annalena Baerbock, who is currently serving as President of the 80th UN General Assembly.

(v) Rahman previously served as:

- National Security Adviser to Bangladesh's Interim Government led by Muhammad Yunus
- High Representative for Rohingya Affairs

He became Bangladesh's Foreign Minister in February.

#### 9. Introduction of Producer Price Index (PPI)

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The Government of India has decided to gradually replace the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) with the Producer Price Index (PPI) for more accurate inflation measurement.

(i) According to Chief Economic Adviser Praveen Mahto:

- A revised WPI based on 2022–23 as the base year will be released on June 15.
- The number of commodities covered has increased from 697 to 957.

(ii) New indices to be introduced:

- Output Producer Price Index (OPPI)
- Input Producer Price Index (IPPI)
- Service PPI for sectors such as banking, insurance, and railways.

(iii) WPI will continue to be published alongside PPI for five years. This transition period will allow users to adapt before WPI is eventually phased out.

(iv) The reform aligns with recommendations of the International Monetary Fund and international best practices.

#### 10. Fiscal Deficit Rises Sharply

Due to rising crude oil prices linked to conflict in the Middle East, India's fiscal deficit reached 21.4% of the annual budget target in April 2026, the first month of FY 2026–27.

(i) According to data from the Controller General of Accounts:

- Fiscal deficit in April stood at ₹3.62 lakh crore.
- This was nearly double the level recorded in April of the previous financial year.

#### 11. Applications Invited for SEBI Whole-Time Members

The Central Government has invited applications for two vacant Whole-Time Member positions in Securities and Exchange Board of India.

(i) SEBI currently has four whole-time members besides the Chairperson. The terms of Kamlesh Chandra Varshney and Amarjeet Singh will end in September.

(ii) Eligibility

Applicants must have:

- Outstanding knowledge in securities markets, law, finance, economics, accounting, or administration.
- At least 20 years of professional experience.

(iii) Age should be between 45 and 60 years. Candidates must not have financial or personal conflicts of interest.

(iv) Applications can be submitted until June 30. Appointments will be made based on recommendations of the Financial Sector Regulatory Appointments Search Committee.

#### 12. Chennai Rider Wins International Motorcycle Race

Chennai motorcycle racer Kavin Quintal secured second and third places in different races of the BMW 1000cc category at the 2026 Copa de España Velocidad International Motorcycle Championship held in Jerez. He competed for the Spanish Easy Race Team.

### 13. Successful Test of Rudra Missile

India successfully tested the Rudra Missile from a Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter aircraft.

- The test took place at Chandipur Test Range.
- The missile was developed in Hyderabad.
- It can accurately strike targets up to 350 km away.

### 14. Changes to Immigration and Foreigners Rules, 2025

The Central Government issued a notification regarding amendments to the Immigration and Foreigners Rules, 2025.

#### (i) Visa Extension Changes

- Previously, foreigners on 180-day visas who wished to extend their stay had to register within 14 days after the visa expired.
- Under the new rules, they must register before the visa expires.
- Registration will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

#### (ii) Child Citizenship Provisions

- Earlier, parents seeking visa-related services after the birth of a child had to inform registration authorities within 30 days through a website or mobile app.
- This requirement no longer applies if both parents are Indian citizens, or if one parent is Indian and they wish the child to retain Indian citizenship.
- However, if the child later acquires foreign citizenship, one of the parents must inform the registration authority within 30 days of that change.

### 15. Landmark legislation passed by the United Kingdom to create the first smoke-free generation.

#### (i) Historic Ban on Tobacco Sales

- The British Parliament has passed the "Tobacco and Vapes Bill 2026", which received royal assent from King Charles III on April 29, 2026.
- The law makes it a criminal offense to sell cigarettes or tobacco products to anyone born on or after January 1, 2009.
- This effectively means that individuals who are currently 17 years old or younger will never be legally permitted to purchase tobacco in their lifetime, regardless of their age in the future.

#### (ii) Restrictions on Vaping

- The legislation also targets the use of e-cigarettes (vaping), tightening regulations on their distribution.
- Vaping is now strictly prohibited in specific areas, including inside cars, and outside schools, hospitals, and sports stadiums.

#### (iii) Public Health and Economic Objectives

- In Britain, approximately 64,000 people die annually due to smoking, and 10% of the adult population currently smokes.
- Health Secretary Wes Streeting emphasized that these reforms will save countless lives and significantly reduce the pressure on Government hospitals.
- While the tobacco industry must pay taxes, the Government asserts that the cost of treating smoking-related diseases far outweighs the revenue generated from tobacco sales.

(iv) Historical Background of Anti-Smoking Efforts

- Opposition to tobacco in Britain dates back to King James I, who in 1604 published "A Counterblaste to Tobacco", describing it as a "filthy" habit harmful to the brain and lungs.
- King James-I had even imposed a 4,000% tax hike on tobacco to eradicate its usage.
- Smoking habits have persisted in Britain since 1565.

(v) Economic and Social Concerns

- Retailers have raised concerns that the ban will adversely affect small businesses and the retail sector.
- Some critics argue that systematic education is a better approach than a legal ban and have questioned the fairness of a law that treats adults differently based on their birth year.

(vi) Global Impact and the "Smoke-Free" Vision

- Britain's decision is seen as a global model, particularly for developing nations where tobacco-related deaths are high.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that tobacco kills 70 lakh people annually worldwide, including 13 lakh deaths in India.
- The primary goal of this legislation is to ensure that the next generation grows up entirely free from tobacco addiction.