



P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

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1. Sahitya Akademi Award-winning writer Poomani (79) passed away in Chennai due to ill health.
 - i. He was the author of acclaimed novels such as Vekkai, Piragu, Vaikkal Varappugal, and Agnaadi. He also wrote numerous short stories. He received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2014 for his novel Agnaadi.
 - ii. Poomani's novel Vekkai, published in 1982, was adapted into the Tamil film Asuran, directed by Vetrimaaran.
 - iii. In 1997, Poomani directed the film Karuvelam Pookkal. The film was jointly produced by the National Film Development Corporation of India and Doordarshan. It was screened at several international film festivals.
2. Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko resigned on Sunday after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy unveiled a fresh restructuring of his Government, describing it as part of a new political strategy.
3. Manoj Kumar Sonthalia is the Chairman and Managing Director of The New Indian Express Group.
4. Italy's Jannik Sinner retained the Wimbledon men's singles title, the third Grand Slam tournament of the year.
 - i. World No. 1 Jannik Sinner defeated World No. 2 Alexander Zverev of Germany to win the championship.
5. India Women's cricket team defeated England Women by 270 runs in the Test match.
 - i. India created history by becoming the first team to win a women's Test match at Lord's Cricket Ground in London, popularly known as the "Home of Cricket."

6. External Affairs Minister S.Jaishankar launched India's official campaign for a non-permanent seat on the United Nation Security Council (UNSC).

- i. India previously served as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council during 2021–22. Elections for the 2028–29 non-permanent membership will be held in June next year. India and Tajikistan will contest for one seat under the Asia-Pacific Group, and Dr. S. Jaishankar officially launched India's campaign for the election.
- ii. During his visit to the United States, he inaugurated the campaign at a special event held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The event was attended by U.S. diplomats and officials. If elected, India will serve as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for a two-year term.

7. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman called for the introduction of new savings schemes to enhance foreign exchange inflows from Non-Resident Indians (NRIs).

- i. Speaking at a review meeting with the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of public sector banks and financial institutions, the Finance Minister discussed expanding the Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) [FCNR(B)] Deposit Scheme, which allows NRIs to maintain foreign currency deposits in Indian banks, as well as External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) and Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowings (OFCB).
- ii. According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Finance, banks should introduce new savings products and increase outreach to NRIs in order to strengthen foreign exchange resource mobilization.
- iii. The Finance Minister also urged banks to make greater use of the financial services ecosystem and institutional infrastructure available at the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in GIFT City, Gujarat.
- iv. The CEOs of public sector banks agreed with the proposal and stated that NRIs from Singapore, Hong Kong, West Asia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and other countries are willing to invest under these schemes.
- v. They further stated that fund-raising under the ECB route is expected to accelerate during October–December 2026, while the FCNR(B) scheme is already functioning effectively.
- vi. Earlier, on June 5, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra announced the monetary policy. It included a USD-INR swap facility for new FCNR(B) deposits and swap

facilities for ECBs and OFCBs. These measures were introduced to attract foreign investment and strengthen India's Balance of Payments (BoP).

- vii. FCNR(B) deposits declined from ₹67,700 crore (US\$7.1 billion) in FY2025 to ₹9,026 crore in FY2026, prompting the RBI to introduce these new initiatives.

8. The Central Government stated that social media platforms have submitted their responses to the notice seeking clarification on the proposed introduction of the username feature, and that the replies are currently under examination.

- i. Millions of users in India use messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Signal for communication. These platforms are planning to introduce a username feature that would allow users to communicate without sharing their mobile phone numbers.
- ii. However, concerns have been raised that the new feature could compromise user privacy, facilitate financial fraud such as digital arrest scams, and enable the creation of fake accounts impersonating well-known individuals. In response, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) issued notices to Meta (the parent company of WhatsApp), Telegram, and Signal, seeking explanations on how these concerns would be addressed.
- iii. When asked about the matter in New Delhi, S. Krishnan, Secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, said that some social media platforms had submitted their responses, which are currently being examined by the Ministry. The Government will decide its next course of action after completing the review. The platforms had been given 7–10 days to respond, and the Ministry also requires time to assess their submissions.
- iv. Earlier, the Ministry had also issued a notice to Meta seeking clarification regarding allegations that advertisements promoting the sexual exploitation of children had appeared on Instagram. Responding to questions from reporters, S. Krishnan said that Meta had submitted its reply, which is now under review, and that the Government would determine its next steps based on the findings of that examination.

9. National Institute of Virology (NIV) – Pune, Maharashtra

10. Analysis of India's higher education system, highlighting systemic failures as the

nation approaches a century of independence.

i. Historical Foundations of Higher Education

- Following India's independence, the first Education Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, aimed to move away from the colonial mindset and create an educational structure suitable for a developing democratic nation.
- In November 1948, the University Education Commission was established under the leadership of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.
- The commission submitted its recommendations in August 1949, which formed the basis for India's modern higher education framework.
- In 1956, the Indian Parliament passed an act to establish the University Grants Commission (UGC) to coordinate and maintain standards across universities nationwide.

ii. Enrollment and Demographic Challenges

- Despite 79 years of independence, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for higher education among the 18–24 age group has still not reached 30%.
- A severe disparity between states in both the quality of education and the rates of enrollment.
- This stagnation is presented as a major hurdle for the national goal of becoming a fully developed India (Viksit Bharat) by 2047.

iii. The "Brain Drain" and Economic Impact

- Due to falling domestic standards, Indian students are increasingly looking to foreign universities. In 2024, approximately 13 lakh (1.3 million) students were enrolled in higher education institutions abroad.
- The expenditure on foreign education fees has skyrocketed. In 2013–14, the cost was \$0.16 billion, but by 2023–24, it reached \$3.4 billion.
- Question arises whether India should be proud of the high number of students studying abroad or saddened by its inability to provide equivalent quality education at home.

iv. Vacancies in Premier Institutions

- A critical reason for the decline in quality is the massive shortage of teaching staff. Across India's 23 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), a total of 4,804 professor

positions (38.4%) remain vacant.

- State of Top IITs:
 - At IIT Kharagpur, more than 50% of the professor positions are currently unfilled.
 - At IIT Delhi, the vacancy rate stands at 39%.
- The lack of permanent staff has led to the hiring of temporary or intermediate professors. Furthermore, many applicants lack the necessary research qualifications (PhDs) required for these high-level positions.

v. Systemic and Political Hurdles

- Political meddling in university operations has damaged their reputation and quality.
- While education is on the Concurrent List (shared by Central and State Governments), the UGC rules are intended to be the primary guide for university operations, yet these are often undermined by external pressures.
- Unless India fixes these systemic flaws—specifically the shortage of quality faculty and the lack of research-qualified graduates—it will be impossible to achieve the status of a fully developed nation.

II. Intensification of the El Nino phenomenon and the strategies needed to mitigate its global impact.

i. Scientific Mechanism and Geography

- The Pacific Ocean serves as the world's largest climate control center.
- El Nino is a natural climatic event where the sea surface temperature in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean rises 0.5°C to 2.5°C above normal.
- Usually, trade winds blow from east to west, pushing warm water toward Asia and Australia; during El Nino, these winds weaken or reverse, causing warm water to move toward the eastern Pacific.
- An El Nino event is officially declared if this temperature rise persists for at least five consecutive months.

ii. Current Global Status: The "Super El Nino"

- Current satellite data indicates that this phenomenon is intensifying at an unprecedented speed, leading some scientists to categorize it as a "Super El Nino".
- Both the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the World

Meteorological Organization (WMO) have warned that the current cycle has already begun.

- Alarming, temperatures in the deep-sea parts of the Pacific have risen by as much as 6°C above the average.

iii. Historical Context

- Historically, 1997–1998 and 2015–2016 are recorded as the years with the most intense El Nino activity.
- The 1997–1998 event caused massive flooding in South America and devastating forest fires in Indonesia.
- The 2023–2024 period, combined with general global warming, pushed global temperatures to new record heights.

iv. Regional and Geographical Impacts

- Americas: Certain regions in the Americas are expected to face severe rainfall and flooding.
- Australia and Southeast Asia: These regions are highly susceptible to severe drought and increased risks of forest fires.
- Impact on India: El Nino is a primary cause for the failure of the Indian monsoon. When rain fails, crops wither, leading to food shortages and economic instability.
- Contrast with La Nina: "La Nina" is the opposite phase, characterized by cooler sea temperatures, which generally brings good rain to India but can cause heavy flooding in Tamil Nadu during the North-East monsoon.

v. Socio-Economic and Health Consequences

- The yield of essential crops like rice, wheat, and maize significantly decreases due to rainfall disruptions.
- Groundwater levels plunge, and reservoirs/lakes dry up, leading to acute drinking water crises.
- Intensified heatwaves increase the risk of respiratory issues and the spread of infectious diseases.
- Rising sea temperatures cause significant damage to deep-sea ecosystems and marine life.

vi. Recovery Strategies: The Role of Technology

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now being used to analyze decades of satellite imagery, wind pressure, and sea temperatures to predict El Nino events months in advance with high accuracy.
- AI-driven weather models allow Governments to issue early warnings for floods, droughts, and forest fires, potentially saving thousands of lives.
- These advanced technological tools help the agricultural sector adapt and minimize crop damage through better planning.
- Scientific planning and proactive preparation are mandatory requirements to face the current El Nino cycle, the full severity of which is still unfolding.