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Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

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1. An agreement has been signed between India and Mauritius for the long-term supply of petroleum products to Mauritius.
 - i. During his two-day visit to Mauritius on August 20 and 21, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri oversaw the signing of the five-year agreement between the public-sector oil company Indian Oil Corporation and the State Trading Corporation of Mauritius.
 - ii. Under the agreement, Indian Oil Corporation will meet the entire import requirement of Mauritius for petrol, diesel and aviation fuel.
 - iii. The agreement has been designed to ensure assured supplies of petroleum products to Mauritius and to minimise the impact caused by fluctuations in prices.
 - iv. Officials said that a fuel storage facility with a capacity of about 27,500 tonnes has been established in the Mer Rouge area of Mauritius at an investment of ₹240 crore. This facility will enhance the country's fuel storage capacity and help develop Mauritius as a major fuel-refuelling hub.
 - v. India, which has emerged as a major crude-oil refining hub in the world, produces around 267 million tonnes of refined petroleum products annually from its 23 refineries and is also an exporting country.
 - vi. Besides neighbouring countries such as Nepal and Bhutan, India exports significant quantities of petroleum products to markets beyond the region as well.
2. Following the failure of the final round of trade talks between Canada and the United States, both countries imposed reciprocal tariffs on certain imported goods.
 - i. The new 50% tariff imposed by the United States on goods worth around \$20 billion, accounting for about 5% of Canada's total exports, was scheduled to come into

effect at midnight last Tuesday.

- ii. A few hours before the tariff was due to take effect, US President Donald Trump announced that its implementation would be temporarily postponed for three days following discussions with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney.
- iii. During this interim period, officials from both countries continued negotiations in an effort to reach an agreement. However, US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer accused Canada of suddenly putting forward new demands and backing away from agreements reached earlier, resulting in the failure of the talks.
- iv. Canada also imposed retaliatory tariffs:
 - Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, meanwhile, countered that the conditions put forward by the United States at the last minute were unfair and would cause economic damage.
 - Subsequently, Canada imposed retaliatory tariffs on US steel, dairy products, electronic goods and other items, announcing that they would come into effect from September 8.

3. Turkey is set to seek an Interpol Red Notice against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the attack on activists carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza.

- i. Turkey, a NATO member, has been accusing Israel of continuing to violate human rights and international law in Gaza. It has also already issued several domestic arrest warrants against Benjamin Netanyahu over the military operations.
- ii. In May, Israeli forces opened fire on a relief ship carrying aid to Gaza while it was in international waters. Israel had previously intercepted several similar humanitarian missions as well.

4. A humanoid robot from China has broken the 100-metre world record set by Jamaica's legendary sprinter Usain Bolt.

- i. At the 2009 World Athletics Championships in Berlin, Usain Bolt ran 100 metres in

9.58 seconds, which has remained the human world record. Now, a humanoid robot developed by Chinese smartphone manufacturer Honor has covered 100 metres in just 9.32 seconds.

- ii. The high-speed robot, named "Lightning," achieved a maximum speed of 14.5 metres per second during a preliminary test for the second World Humanoid Robot Sports Games, which began in Beijing on Saturday.
- iii. Earlier, the Lightning robot participated in the Beijing Half Marathon (21 km) held in April and won the race by completing it in 50 minutes and 26 seconds.
- iv. During that half marathon, the robot was 169 cm tall and had legs measuring 95 cm in length. For the World Humanoid Robot Sports Games, researchers have extended its legs by another 10 cm, increasing their length to 1.05 metres.
- v. China is actively promoting humanoid robots as an important emerging industry, with the aim of increasing their use in manufacturing, logistics and consumer applications by leveraging advances in AI and hardware technology.

5. More than 16,000 Ervebo vaccines have arrived in the Republic of the Congo as part of efforts to control the country's fastest-intensifying Ebola outbreak in history.

- i. Of the 70,000 vaccine doses announced by the World Health Organization and its partners, the first batch of 16,250 doses has arrived in the capital, Kinshasa.
- ii. There is currently no approved treatment or vaccine specifically for the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola virus spreading in Congo. However, the World Health Organization has expressed hope that the Ervebo vaccine, which helps protect against Ebola, may also provide some degree of protection against this strain.

6. Australia has passed a new bill imposing a 2.5% tax on social media companies that do not share revenue with local news organisations.

7. The Central Government has approved a 492-member Indian contingent to

participate in the Asian Games to be held in Japan in September.

- i. The Asian Games will be held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, during September and October. India will participate with a total contingent of 492 athletes, comprising 265 men and 227 women. Athletics alone accounts for 73 athletes.
- ii. The contingent includes Neeraj Chopra, Murali Sreeshankar, Gulveer Singh, Tejaswin Shankar and Jyothi Yarraji in athletics; P.V. Sindhu, Ayush Shetty and Lakshya Sen in badminton; Gayatri Gopichand–Treesa Jolly and Satwik–Chirag in badminton doubles; Lovlina Borgohain, Narender Berwal and Jadumani in boxing; 15 athletes in e-sports; and 22 rowers.

8. The Patna High Court has ruled that although people have the right to practise their religion, reasonable restrictions may be imposed to maintain public order.

- i. A petition was filed before the Patna High Court challenging restrictions on the number of people participating in an annual religious procession in Siwan district of Bihar. The petitioner sought permission for 300 devotees to participate. During the hearing, the State Government said that the restriction had been imposed for law-and-order reasons and that violence had occurred during the 2024 procession, including stone-pelting at police personnel and the setting fire to a government vehicle
- ii. Justice Alok Kumar recently delivered the judgment. He observed that the right to openly profess and practise one's religion, including conducting religious processions, is protected under Article 19(1)(b) and Article 25 of the Constitution. However, reasonable restrictions may be imposed in the interests of public order and social morality. The petition was therefore dismissed.

9. According to a NITI Aayog report, 8.7 crore young people aged between 15 and 29 in India are neither studying nor working nor undergoing training.

- i. NITI Aayog has prepared a report titled "Rebuilding the Potential for a Developed India

by 2047.” The report is based on data from the 78th National Sample Survey conducted in 2021. It states:

- Around 8.7 crore young people in the country are neither studying, working nor undergoing training. There is an urgent need to provide them with training at low cost or with fee concessions in order to encourage self-employment.
- Financial constraints are also a reason for their inactivity. Therefore, they should be provided with assured financial support. Training opportunities, along with wages, should be provided across all sectors. Only 8.25% of graduates in the country are employed in jobs corresponding to their educational qualifications.
- Achieving the goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047 depends on enabling citizens to learn, earn and continuously progress.
- NITI Aayog stated that more than 7.67 crore people have been provided training since 2014–15.

10. The United Nations has welcomed Sri Lanka's efforts to facilitate the return of refugees in Tamil Nadu to their homeland.

- i. Ethnic conflict began in Sri Lanka in 1983, following which the armed conflict between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) intensified.
- ii. The conflict continued for nearly 30 years, forcing large numbers of people to flee Sri Lanka and seek refuge in Tamil Nadu.
- iii. Around 18,000 refugees returned to Sri Lanka between 2002 and 2022, while approximately 90,000 refugees continue to live in Tamil Nadu.
- iv. Earlier this month, the Sri Lankan Government introduced special arrangements to facilitate their return. The UN has now welcomed Sri Lanka's decision to simplify immigration procedures so that refugees who left the country without proper documentation during the war and took refuge in Tamil Nadu can voluntarily and quickly return to Sri Lanka.