

**Current Affairs 27<sup>th</sup> August 2025 by Right IAS****Guidelines for regulating speech on social media**

**Supreme Court's Intervention:** The Supreme Court asked the Union government to prepare guidelines for regulating speech on social media. This arose from a petition against derogatory remarks made online about disabled persons. **Judicial Overreach Concerns** Such directions expand executive power in restricting speech. **Consequences of Expanding State Power to Police Speech** Partisan misuse: Ruling parties may suppress political or critical voices. **Fear and self-censorship:** Citizens may hesitate to express freely. **Stifled democracy:** Critical truths and ideas are silenced. **Creative impact:** Filmmakers avoid socially progressive subjects. **Journalistic impact:** Reporters face FIRs for professional duties. **Existing Government Regulations**

The IT Rules, 2021 already give government control over digital speech. Amendments allow government to demand removal of user content flagged by it. These rules are under challenge before the Supreme Court for being excessive.



**Existing Legal Safeguards** Indian law already criminalises hate speech and incitement to violence. Disadvantaged

groups have legal recourse when genuinely targeted. **Judicial Misperception of Role** Courts cite “misuse of freedom of speech” as grounds for regulation. This suggests a shift towards paternalistic control rather than rights protection. **Judiciary's proper role** is protector of constitutional rights, not facilitator of executive power. **Core Argument** Giving more authority to an executive that has already misused speech laws is dangerous. **Judicial directions** risk legitimising further curbs on

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**The gender angle to India's economic vulnerabilities**

**India's Growth and New Challenge** India's economy is now worth \$4.19 trillion and is set to become the third-largest economy in the world. But U.S. President Donald Trump has proposed 50% tariffs on Indian exports worth \$40 billion. This could reduce India's GDP by about 1% and badly hit industries like textiles, gems, leather, and footwear, which employ many women



**India vs. China:** China could manage U.S. tariffs because of its large manufacturing base and diverse exports. India is more vulnerable: The U.S. takes 18% of India's exports.

Higher tariffs will make Indian goods 30–35% costlier compared to competitors like Vietnam. Women and the Economy Sectors most at risk employ about 50 million people, mostly women. India's Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) is low only 37–41.7%, compared to China's 60% and the global average. The IMF says closing the gender gap could increase India's GDP by 27% in the future. But women's participation is held back by cultural barriers, weak policies, and lack of support systems.



**Demographic Dividend – The Time Pressure** India's demographic dividend (large working-age population) will last only till 2045. To benefit, India must bring more women into the workforce. Current trends: Rural women work more but mostly in unpaid, low-value family work. Urban women's participation is stuck due to safety issues, poor transport, lack of sanitation, and unpaid household work. If ignored, India could end up like Italy and Greece, where low female workforce participation slowed growth. Lessons from Other Countries U.S. (WWII): More women joined work with childcare support and equal pay. China: Post-1978 reforms raised women's participation to 60%. Japan: Boosted FLFPR from 63% to 70%, raising GDP per capita by 4%. Netherlands:

Flexible part-time jobs with equal benefits. Key lesson: Invest in skills, childcare, safety, and equal rights. Indian Solutions and Experiments Karnataka's Shakti Scheme (2023): Free bus travel → women's travel rose 40% → better access to jobs, schools, and independence. Policy Suggestions: Focus spending on entrepreneurship incentives, digital inclusion, and women's skill training. Recognise gig and part-time work with social security.



Good Examples from India Urban Company (gig platform): 15,000+ women workers. Earn ₹18,000–₹25,000 monthly. Benefits: insurance, maternity leave, skills training, safe work environment.



Rajasthan's Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme: Created 4+ crore person-days of work. 65% women

workers, many first-time earners. Flexible, local jobs like sanitation, greening, care work.

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### ***Big Picture – A Wake-Up Call***

The U.S. tariff threat shows India's weakness lies inside the country, not just outside. The biggest gap is not using women's economic potential. Empowering women is essential for growth, exports, and long-term prosperity. India must choose: Invest in women strong, inclusive economy.

Ignore women → missed demographic dividend, fragile economy

Examine the barriers that restrict women's participation in India's workforce. Suggest policy interventions, with examples, that can improve female labour force participation in both rural and urban areas

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### **Play-based learning for India's future**

Starting Point for Viksit Bharat A strong and developed India must begin with children. Anganwadi centres, where children play, learn, and grow, are being transformed into the first step of education.



Shift in National Priorities Prime Minister Narendra Modi has placed children at the centre of India's development. The

government now sees play and early learning as part of national policy, not just leisure.

**Why Early Childhood Matters:** The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 notes that 85% of brain development happens before the age of six. Research from CMC Vellore shows that structured Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) raises IQ levels significantly, with long-lasting benefits. Nobel laureate James Heckman's global research shows early childhood investments give high returns (13–18%).

Government Initiatives Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi: Transforms Anganwadi Centres into learning hubs. Anganwadi workers are trained in play-based, activity-oriented education. Budgets for teaching-learning materials have been increased. ECCE days are celebrated to promote learning activities.



Curriculum for Young Learners Aadharshila: A national curriculum for children aged 3–6. Focuses on overall growth – intellectual, emotional, physical, and social. Uses play, both free and structured, as the main method of learning.

Daily Learning Approach A balanced schedule is followed at Anganwadi centres:

1. Free play (30 minutes), structured



learning activities, nutritious lunch, rest, outdoor play, and conversation. This method ensures children are school-ready in line with NEP 2020, which sets school entry at 6 years. Parental Trust Growing Parents now see Anganwadi centres as schools that prepare their children for life, not just nutrition centres. Focus on 0–3 Years

Navchetna: A framework to guide parents and caregivers with simple play-based activities at home. Helps bridge the gap for children from low-income families who may not have access to toys and books. Vision for Viksit Bharat Every child deserves a strong start. Play is a foundation of learning, not a luxury. By investing in early years, India ensures smarter, healthier, and more productive citizens. Building the nation starts with nurturing its youngest generation.

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### **IADT-1 and Gaganyaan mission**

What is IADT-1? ISRO conducted its first Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-1) on 24 August 2025. Purpose: To check whether the parachute system of the Gaganyaan crew module can slow down the capsule safely for splashdown. A dummy crew capsule (~5 tonnes) was dropped from a helicopter at about 3 km height. The parachutes opened in a planned sequence and slowed the capsule to around 8 m/s, making a safe touchdown. This test copied the last stage of a real space mission, when astronauts return to Earth.



Where does IADT fit in Gaganyaan's roadmap?

Goal of Gaganyaan: Send Indian astronauts to Low Earth Orbit (LEO) using human-rated LVM3 rocket. Before sending humans, ISRO must do many safety tests: Crew Escape System (CES) tests – to save astronauts if Important technologies under development Life support system (ECLSS): Provides oxygen, controls temperature, removes waste, and ensures fire safety. Health management system (IVHMS): Detects faults and can trigger emergency actions. Strengthened LVM3 rocket: Modified to carry humans safely. Indigenous technologies: India developed many systems on its own (like escape motors, special materials) due to lack of foreign access. India's long-term human space goals First human flight (H1): Targeted for 2027, but may be delayed. Indian Space Station (Bharatiya Antariksh Station): Planned by 2035. Crewed lunar landing: Targeted by 2040. Supporting missions: SpaDeX mission (2025): Successfully showed in-orbit docking, needed for future space station and lunar missions. Each test (like IADT-1) builds capability for bigger projects.

launch fails. TV-D1 (Oct 2023) – first escape test successful. TV-D2 (next) – more complex escape test. Uncrewed Gaganyaan-1 (G1) – will carry humanoid robot Vyommitra to space. IADT-1 success

prepares ground for TV-D2 and G1. By the first human mission (H1), ISRO will have done thousands of tests to ensure safety.



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### **Why has the import duty on cotton been suspended?**

Importance of Cotton Cotton is the main raw material for India's textile industry. Nearly 6 million farmers in India cultivate cotton. Textile industry depends heavily on cotton for both domestic use and exports.



Why was the Import Duty Introduced (2021)? In 2021, India was producing 350 lakh bales (requirement: 335 lakh bales). Despite surplus production, India was also importing cotton. To protect farmers' interests, the government imposed an 11% import duty. Duty Removal and Imports Surge In 2022, to help the textile industry

facing raw material shortage, the duty was temporarily removed (April Sept) and later extended. Imports surged by 107% — from \$579.2 million (FY 2023-24) to \$1.2 billion (FY 2024-25). Major suppliers: Australia, U.S., Brazil, Egypt.

Current Situation (2024–25 Cotton Season)  
Domestic cotton production: 294 lakh bales (lowest in 15 years). Requirement: 318 lakh bales (including non-mill use). Estimated shortage: 24 lakh bales. Imports expected to reach 40 lakh bales. Cotton Corporation of India (CCI): Bought 100 lakh bales at MSP (₹37,500 crore). Sold 73 lakh bales in market. Government increased MSP by 8% for 2025–26 season. What Does Withdrawal of Duty Mean? Duty removed till September 30, 2025. Only 2 lakh bales in transit may benefit (duty-free). Textile industry view: Removal helps exporters compete globally (reduces input cost).



Provides a level playing field internationally. Farmers' view: Removal discourages cultivation. Farmers don't benefit as they lack government support. Fear of being undercut by cheaper imports. Long-term Solutions Suggested Stable policy on cotton import duty: Suspend duty only in non-peak season (April–Sept) when most domestic produce is sold. 5% interest subvention for textile mills: Helps mills (especially MSMEs) buy cotton during peak season. Reduces government's need to

intervene via MSP. Balance needed between farmer protection and industry competitiveness.



**What Is the Lobito Corridor?** The Lobito Corridor, also known as the Lobito Atlantic Railway (LAR) corridor, is a key rail link in Central and Southern Africa. It stretches approximately 1,300–1,700 km from Porto de Lobito in Angola to Kolwezi in the DRC's Copperbelt region. This corridor enables efficient export of critical minerals like copper and cobalt from landlocked Central African nations to global markets via the Atlantic Ocean.



**What Is the Heroes' Cross?** The Heroes' Cross (Crucea Eroilor de pe Muntele Caraiman) is a monumental memorial erected between 1926 and 1928 on Caraiman Peak, part of Romania's Southern Carpathians (Bucegi Mountains) at an altitude of 2,291 meters. It commemorates the Romanian soldiers (railway heroes) who perished during World War I, fighting against the Central Powers.

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### ***Kuttiyadi Coconut and GI Tag Effort***

GI Tag Initiative Kuttiyadi coconut, a unique variety from Kozhikode, Kerala, may soon get a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) and Kavalumpara gram panchayat are leading the process. The panchayat started the effort 3 years ago, allocating ₹3 lakh in its budget for documentation. **Special Features of Kuttiyadi Coconut**  
**High-yielding:** Starts producing within 5 years of planting. **Strong trunk:** Resists pests and drought better than other varieties. **Long life:** Trees can live more than 100 years. **Fruit quality:** Bigger, heavier coconuts with thicker kernels, leading to higher oil production. **Popularity and Demand** Farmers say it performs better than other coconut types in the local climate. Agriculture Department sources saplings from Kuttiyadi every year for wider distribution. **Farmers' Challenges** Main problem: 'Mandari' (coconut mite) damages crops. Government has not provided enough support or compensation. Even the Agriculture Department does not accept mite-affected coconuts.



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