

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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INDIA-NEW ZEALAND RELATIONS

Context

- The New Zealand Prime Minister highlighted the need for India and New Zealand to work together to strengthen a rules-based international order amid growing geopolitical uncertainties.

Changing Global Geopolitical Landscape

- New Zealand described the current global situation as an “**inflection point**”, where the world is shifting from a **rules-based system** to a power-based system and from a predominantly multilateral framework towards a more multipolar world order.
- There were many key global challenges were highlighted like;
 - The increasing strategic influence of China in the **Indo-Pacific region**.
 - The conflict was caused by **Russia's invasion of Ukraine**.
 - Changing priorities of the **United States in global affairs**.
- According to New Zealand, smaller countries have benefited from the **Post-World War II** rules-based order because it ensures that international rules apply equally to both small and large nations.
- He also outlined the **defence, security, and people-to-people ties** as the **three pillars** of India and New Zealand ties.

India-New Zealand Relations

- Diplomatic Relations:** India and New Zealand established their diplomatic relations in **1952**. Both countries are members of the Commonwealth, sharing democratic values and governance principles.
 - New Zealand identified India as a priority country in its ‘**Opening Doors to India**’ policy notified in **2011**, which was reiterated in **2015**.
- Economic Cooperation:** Currently, New Zealand is **India's second-largest trading partner in Oceania**.
 - In 2024, New Zealand's imports stood at **USD 47 billion**, while exports were **USD 42 billion**.
 - Services Trade:** India's services exports to New Zealand grew by **13% in 2024**, reaching **USD 634 million**. Major sectors include travel, IT, and business services.
 - In **2024-25**, the exports from India to New

Zealand were higher than imports from New Zealand, maintaining a positive trade balance with the country.

- India and New Zealand signed the India-New Zealand **Free Trade Agreement (IN- NZ FTA)**.



- Customs Cooperation:** In **2024**, New Zealand and India signed a Customs Cooperative Arrangement, aimed at enhancing trade ties and intensifying collaboration against transnational organized crime.
- Diaspora:** There are **292,092 persons of Indian ethnicity in NZ**.
 - India is the **2nd largest** source of international students in NZ. Currently, there are approximately **8,000 Indian** students in NZ, pursuing higher education in various disciplines such as IT, hospitality, science, engineering, and architecture.
 - Hindi** is the fifth most spoken language in NZ.
- Defence Cooperation:** Signed in **2025**, the **Defence Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding** provided a formal institutional framework for bilateral defence engagement.
 - The inaugural **India-New Zealand Defence Strategic Dialogue** was held in New Delhi in **2025**.

Challenges in Relations

- Immigration and FTA Concerns:** Recent debates over New Zealand's immigration policy have created concerns in India, with allegations that **new rules may disproportionately affect Indian migrants**.
 - Differences over labour mobility remain a key challenge in finalising a comprehensive **India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.

- **Dairy Market Access Dispute:** Dairy remains the most sensitive issue in trade negotiations. New Zealand **seeks greater access to India's dairy market**, while India protects the interests of millions of small dairy farmers.
- **Khalistan Issue:** India has raised concerns over activities of pro-Khalistan groups in New Zealand. Differences exist between India's security concerns and New Zealand's approach based on freedom of expression.

Way Ahead

- India and New Zealand, despite being geographically distant, share converging interests in democracy, trade, security and a stable Indo-Pacific.
- At a time when global institutions face challenges, a stronger partnership between the two countries can help promote a more inclusive, equitable and rules-based international order.

Source: [IE](#), [MEA](#)

AUSTRALIA-INDIA PARTNERSHIP ON CYBER, CRITICAL TECHNOLOGIES AND SUPPLY CHAINS (PACTS)

Context

- **India and Australia** launched the **Australia-India Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies and Supply Chains (PACTS)**.

About

- The framework will replace the **2020 cyber cooperation arrangement**.
- **PACTS is built around five areas of cooperation:**
 - ♦ **Supply chain resilience:** The two countries will work on trusted technology supply chains, semiconductor collaboration, critical minerals, undersea cable security and trade diversification.
 - ♦ **Critical technologies:** The partnership covers artificial intelligence, space technologies, telecommunications, biotechnology and advanced materials. It also includes research collaboration and work on international standards for safe and secure AI.
 - ♦ **Cybersecurity:** Both will cooperate on tackling cybercrime, protecting critical infrastructure, strengthening cyber diplomacy, expanding cybersecurity investments and building cyber skills.

- ♦ **Digital resilience:** Both countries will promote India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) model across the Indo-Pacific and work on digital solutions for sectors such as health, education, clean energy and connectivity.
- ♦ **Defence research collaboration:** The framework provides for joint defence science research, innovation partnerships, collaboration between defence research organisations and work on maritime technologies.

Significance:

- ♦ The framework gives India a broader platform to work with Australia on technologies and supply chains that have become increasingly important for economic and national security.
- ♦ It also provides a structured mechanism for joint research, investment, standards development and technology partnerships across government, academia and industry.

Brief on India-Australia Ties

- India and Australia upgraded their bilateral relationship from a '**strategic partnership**' in 2009 to a '**Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**' in 2020.
- **Bilateral mechanisms include:** 2+2 Defence and Foreign Ministers' Dialogue, Joint Trade & Commerce Ministerial Commission, Defence Policy Talks, Australia-India Education Council, Defence Services Staff Talks, Energy Dialogue, JWG's on different issues etc.
- **Bilateral Trade:** Bilateral trade reached \$24.1 billion in FY25, with India's exports valued at \$8.58 billion and imports at \$15.52 billion. India ranks as Australia's 8th largest trading partner, while Australia is India's 14th largest.
 - ♦ Negotiations are underway for a more **comprehensive Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)** to further deepen trade relations.
- **Defence and Security:** The '**Quadrilateral Security Dialogue**' (QSD) is an **informal strategic forum** comprising four nations - the **United States of America (USA), India, Australia and Japan**.
 - ♦ Two Navies had signed the '**Joint Guidance for the India – Australia Navy to Navy Relationship**' document in 2021.

- ♦ **Defence Exercises:** In 2020, Australia participated in the MALABAR naval exercise and thus **joined India, the U S and Japan.**
 - **AUSINDEX:** It is a naval exercise between the Royal Australian Navy and the Indian Navy
 - **The Pitch Black exercise:** The Indian Air Force joined Exercise Pitch Black in Darwin in 2018.
- ♦ **Mutual Logistic Support Arrangement and Defence Science & Technology Implementing Arrangement 2020:** The pact enables complex military engagement and excellent collective receptiveness to regional disasters.
- **Critical Minerals and Technology:** Australia-India Critical Minerals Investment Partnership was signed in 2022, establishing the Australia-India Critical Minerals Research Hub in late 2023.
 - ♦ The Hub aims to drive innovation in sustainable mining and processing, with government-approved funding of \$5 million for collaborative research and scholarships.
- In 2023, Australia and India entered into a **Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (MMPA).**
 - ♦ It is a bilateral framework that supports migration and mobility between the two countries, while addressing issues pertaining to illegal and irregular migration.
- **New Roadmap for Australia's Economic Engagement with India:** Australia launched it in 2025, identifying nearly 50 targeted opportunities across defence, sports, culture, space, and technology.
 - ♦ **Clean Energy:** Leveraging Australia's renewable energy expertise to support India's sustainability goals, including the establishment of the India-Australia Rooftop Solar Training Academy in 2025 to train 2,000 women and young people as solar technicians.
 - ♦ **Education and Skills:** Strengthening academic partnerships and vocational training programs for knowledge exchange and workforce development.

- ♦ **Agribusiness:** Expanding agricultural trade to meet India's increasing demand and improve food security.
- ♦ **Tourism:** Promoting cultural exchanges and simplifying visa processes to strengthen people-to-people ties.

Significance of Australia for India

- **Strategic Partner in the Indo-Pacific:** Australia is crucial for maintaining a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific, aligning with India's maritime and regional security interests.



- **Key Source of Critical Minerals & Energy:** Australia supplies lithium, cobalt, rare earths, coal, and LNG, strengthening India's energy and industrial security.
- **Trade & Economic Partner:** Under the India-Australia ECTA (2022), bilateral trade is expanding with reduced tariffs, and negotiations toward a broader CECA are underway.
- **Education and Research Hub:** Australia is a major destination for Indian students, with growing collaboration in STEM, innovation, and mutual recognition of qualifications.
- **Geopolitical Convergence:** Close cooperation in QUAD, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), East Asia Summit (EAS), and other multilateral forums helps India diversify partnerships and balance China's regional influence.

Areas of Concerns

- **Trade Imbalance & Limited Diversification:** India's exports remain limited compared to Australia's resource-heavy exports, creating a persistent trade imbalance and slow progress on a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).
- **Indian Diaspora & Safety Concerns:** Occasional incidents involving Indian students and community tensions raise concerns about safety and societal integration.

- **Visa, Mobility & Skill Recognition Issues:** Despite progress, challenges remain in mutual recognition of skills, work visas, and post-study opportunities for Indian students.
- **Agricultural Market Access Issues:** India faces barriers in exporting agricultural products due to Australia's stringent sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards.
- **Slow Progress in Defence Tech Collaboration:** While exercises are strong, cooperation in defence manufacturing, technology transfer, and joint R&D remains underdeveloped.
- **Greenfield Investments in India:** The value of announced greenfield investments fell to **\$74.12 billion in 2025** from \$111.14 billion in 2024.
 - ♦ However India attracted the world's largest announced greenfield investment project in 2025. **US-based Alphabet Inc** announced a **\$14.5 billion** investment in a data centre in India, topping the global list.

Way Ahead

- **Deepen Strategic & Defence Cooperation:** Expand collaboration in maritime security, intelligence sharing, joint defence production, and strengthen QUAD-driven initiatives in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Fast-Track CECA & Diversify Trade:** Conclude the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) and promote diversification in goods, services, critical minerals, and digital trade.
- **Strengthen Critical Minerals & Clean Energy Ties:** Build long-term supply chains for lithium, rare earths, and collaborate on green hydrogen, renewable energy, and climate resilience projects.
- **India's Outward FDI**
 - India's outward FDI increased by **47%**, rising from \$24.26 billion in 2024 to **\$35.66 billion in 2025**.
 - India improved its position as a major investing economy, ranking **18th globally among FDI source countries**.
 - Announced overseas greenfield projects by Indian companies rose **41% to \$25.29 billion**.
 - Rana Group announced a **\$10 billion** automotive manufacturing facility in the **UAE**, among the world's top five greenfield project announcements.

Year	Inward FDI		Outward FDI	
	Inflows (\$ bn)	Rank*	Outflows (in \$ bn)	Rank**
2021	44.8	8th	17.3	25th
2022	49.4	8th	14.6	23rd
2023	28.1	16th	13.9	23rd
2024	27.1	13th	24.3	20th
2025	38.9	11th	35.7	18th

*Among FDI destinations; **Among FDI home economies

Source: Unctad

Source: PIB

INDIA RISES TO 11TH POSITION AMONG GLOBAL FDI RECIPIENTS

Context

- According to the **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) World Investment Report 2026**, India has moved up two places to become the **11th-largest recipient** of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) globally, with inflows rising significantly in 2025.

India's FDI Performance

- India attracted **\$38.89 billion in FDI inflows in 2025**, registering a **44%** increase compared to \$27.09 billion in 2024.

International Investment Trends

- Global FDI flows remained uneven due to geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions and weak investment sentiment.
- Developing economies witnessed only a **2% rise in FDI inflows**.
- Developing Asia recorded a modest **3% increase**.
- **Major FDI destinations:**
 - ♦ **The United States** remained the largest recipient with **\$277 billion inflows**, despite a **2% decline**.
 - ♦ China retained the **4th position** with \$104.66 billion, though inflows declined from \$116.24 billion in 2024.

What is Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)?

- It refers to **investments made by foreign entities** (individuals or companies) in the business interests of another country, typically in the form of **ownership or control of enterprises**.
- At present, **FDI is prohibited** in lottery, gambling and betting, chit funds, Nidhi company, real estate business, and manufacturing of cigars, cheroots, cigarillos and cigarettes using tobacco.
- Net FDI:** It represents the difference between **foreign investment entering the country and capital flowing out** through disinvestment and repatriation.
 - A **decline in net FDI** does not necessarily imply a fall in investor interest, as gross inflows may remain strong.

Routes for FDI in India

- Automatic Route:** It means the entry route through which investment does **not require the prior approval of the Reserve Bank of India** or the Central Government.
 - Most sectors, such as manufacturing and software, fall under this route.
- Government Approval Route:** It means the entry route through which investment **requires prior Government approval** and foreign investment received under this route shall be in accordance with the conditions stipulated by the Government in its approval.
 - Sectors such as telecom, media, pharmaceuticals, and insurance fall under this route.

Sectors/Activities in Which FDI is Prohibited

- Lottery Business** including Government/private lottery, online lotteries, etc.
- Gambling and Betting** including casinos etc.
- Chit funds, Nidhi company, Trading in Transferable Development Rights (TDRs).
- Real Estate Business or Construction of Farm Houses;**
 - 'Real estate business' shall not include development of townships, construction of residential /commercial premises, roads or bridges and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) registered and regulated under the SEBI (REITs) Regulations 2014.

- Manufacturing of cigars, cheroots, cigarillos and cigarettes, of tobacco or of tobacco substitutes.

Source: BS

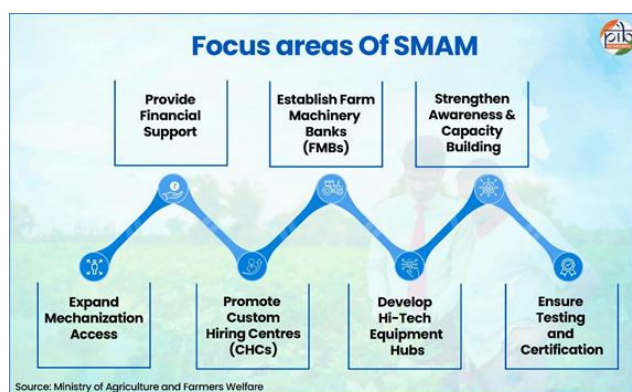
SUB-MISSION ON AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION

Context

- The **Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)** expands access for small farmers, women, and disadvantaged groups through **targeted mechanization support nationwide**.

About

- Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)** was launched in **2014–15**.
- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** under the **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)**.
- SMAM aims to **"reach the unreached"** by extending the benefits of mechanization to underserved sections.
 - It includes small and marginal farmers, including women, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Farmer-Producer Organizations (FPOs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and rural entrepreneurs.
- The scheme promotes the establishment of **Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs)**.
 - These are units comprising a **set of farm machinery, implements, and equipment** meant for hiring by farmers.



Status of Agriculture Mechanization in India

- As per the estimates of **2020-21** of **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**, agricultural mechanization level varies across different crops and their farm operation in the country.

- **Mechanization Levels:**
 - ♦ **Seedbed Preparation:** Highly mechanized (70%+) for major crops.
 - ♦ **Harvesting and Threshing:** Least mechanized (<32%) for most crops, except rice and wheat.
 - ♦ **Sowing:** Highest mechanization in wheat (65%).
 - ♦ **Planting/Transplanting:** Mechanization levels are 20% (sugarcane) and 30% (rice).
 - ♦ **Harvesting/Threshing in Rice & Wheat:** >60% mechanized; very low in cotton.
- **Across States :**
 - ♦ **States like Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh** which have widespread use of machines, lack adoption of weeding machines.
 - ♦ **Irrigation technologies** adoption is higher in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu but not in other states.
 - ♦ **Assam and Odisha** are still relying on manual operations for majority of the activities.
- **In the United States, Western Europe, Soviet Union, Brazil, Argentina, China, India, Africa** the level of farm mechanisation is at 95%, 95%, 80%, 75%, 75%, 38%, 40% and 20% respectively.

Need for Mechanization in Indian Agriculture

- **Labour Shortage:** In 2017, the number of people employed in agriculture were 145.66 million which dropped down to 143.4 million during the pandemic.
 - ♦ The rural to urban migration trend has been observed in all parts of the country which led to situations like labour shortage in agriculture.
- **Rise in Labour Wages:** With growing demand of labour in the non-agricultural sector due to urbanization and increasing infrastructural capabilities, labour wages have been rising.
- **Mechanization of farms** is essential to meet the growing food demand.
- **Improvement in Efficiency:** There is a need for technologies to improve labour efficiency and reduce drudgery for labour intensive methods of production.
- **Gap in India:** The level of agriculture mechanization in India stands at 40% which is less when compared to China (59.5%), Brazil (75%) and U.S (95%).

- ♦ The gap has to be filled with mechanization of agriculture to ensure sustained productivity of the sector.

Challenges

- **High Initial Investment:** The cost of purchasing modern farm machinery is high, which makes it difficult for small and marginal farmers to afford them.
- **Lack of Access to Financing:** While government schemes provide financial assistance, many farmers still face challenges in accessing loans or subsidies for purchasing machinery, especially in rural areas.
- **Geographical and Climatic Constraints:** India's diverse geography and climate conditions require different types of machinery, which might not always be available or suitable for all regions.
- **Labor-Intensive Farming Practices:** Many farmers are still accustomed to traditional methods and may resist shifting to mechanized farming, due to cultural reasons or fear of technology.
- **Inconsistent Power Supply:** Rural areas often face irregular electricity supply, which hinders the use of electric-powered machinery.
- **Seasonal Demand:** Demand for certain machinery is seasonal, which makes it harder for machinery owners to maintain consistent utilization throughout the year, leading to low returns on investment.

Government Initiatives

- **Custom Hiring Centers (CHCs):** The government encourages the establishment of Custom Hiring Centers where farmers can access expensive agricultural machinery on a rental basis, thereby reducing the cost burden on individual farmers.
- **Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institutes (FMTTIs):** FMTTIs provide training to farmers and technicians in the operation and maintenance of agricultural machinery.
 - ♦ They also conduct testing and certification of agricultural machinery to ensure quality and performance standards.
- **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY):** PMKSY includes provisions for promoting mechanized irrigation systems such as sprinkler and drip irrigation, which contribute to water conservation and efficient water use in agriculture.

- **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY):** RKVY supports the adoption of modern agricultural practices including farm mechanization through financial assistance to states for promoting agricultural growth and development.
- **Promotion of Innovation and Research:** The government encourages research and development in agricultural mechanization through institutions like the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and supports innovation and indigenous development of agricultural machinery.

Source: PIB

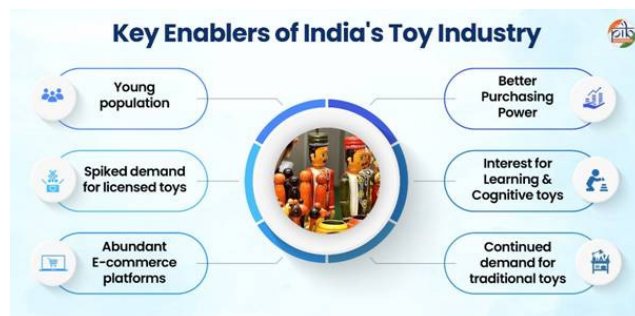
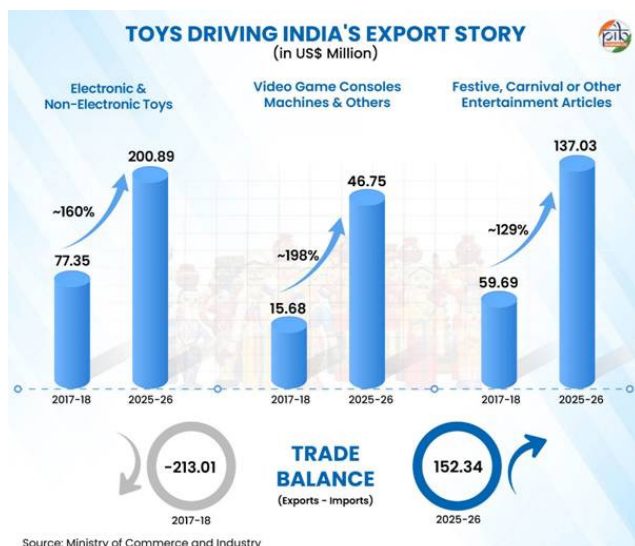
INDIA'S TOY ECOSYSTEM

Context

- The Union Finance Minister stated that **India is building a globally competitive toy manufacturing ecosystem** through higher quality standards, policy support, skilling, and improved market access.

India's Toy Manufacturing Ecosystem

- **India's toy exports** reached 186 million dollars in 2025-26 with Indian toys now reaching 153 countries.
- **Toy imports** have declined by 71% since 2019 reflecting the success of quality-focused and self-reliant manufacturing.
- **India's toy market is projected to reach** five billion dollars by 2034.
- **Employment in Games and Toys** more than doubled, rising from 8,685 in 2018–19 to 17,693 in 2023–24.



Significance

- **Import substitutions:** Toy imports have fallen sharply since 2018-19 thereby reducing India's dependence on Chinese manufacturers who earlier dominated over 80% of India's toy market.
- **Rise in Export growth:** A shift from a net importer to a competitive exporter in select segments.
- **Employment potential:** Labour intensive sector offering employment opportunities to both men and women particularly in traditional toy making clusters like Channapatna (Karnataka) and Kondapalli (Andhra Pradesh).
- **Role in cultural Soft power:** Indigenous toys rooted in Indian mythology, freedom struggle themes and traditional games offer a channel for cultural soft power alongside economic gains.
- **MSME driven growth:** Over 90% of India's toy manufacturing units are in the MSME sector this will align with the sector's growth.

Government Initiatives

- **National Action Plan for Toys (NAPT), 2020:** NAPT was formulated to promote the design of toys based on Indian values, culture, and history.
 - ♦ The initiative monitors the quality of toys and restricts imports of sub-standard and unsafe products.
- **Quality Control Order (2020):** It mandated BIS certification for toys to curb substandard and unsafe imports, particularly from China.
- **Toy Biz International B2B Exhibition:** The exhibition provides a platform for toy manufacturers to showcase their products to domestic and international buyers.
- **Toycathon:** Launched in 2021, Toycathon supports the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. It encourages collaborative development of innovative toys and games by students, teachers, designers, experts, and start-ups.

- ♦ To strengthen the electronic toy segment, the Government also organised the Electronic Toy Hackathon (e-Toycathon) for the first time in 2025.
- **e-Toys Lab:** The e-Toys Lab, established by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) at C-DAC, Noida, aims to strengthen India's indigenous electronic toy industry.
- **Manak Manthan:** In 2026, BIS organized a Manak Manthan, it focused on the mechanical and physical safety requirements for toys. It is a BIS initiative aimed at promoting the adoption of Indian Standards across industries.
- **ODOP (One District, One Product):** The ODOP initiative aims to promote district-specific products by identifying, branding, and supporting unique products from each district of the country.
- **Geographical Indication (GI) Tagged Toys:** Several traditional Indian toys have received GI status, recognizing their unique craftsmanship and regional identity.
 - ♦ GI Tagged toys include Channapatna Toys and dolls of Karnataka, Leather Toys of Indore, Madhya Pradesh, Thanjavur Doll of Tamil Nadu, etc.
- **GST reduction:** The reduction of GST on toys from 12% to 5% has made toys more affordable and accessible for consumers.
- **Free Trade Agreements (FTA):** India has signed trade agreements with UAE, Australia, European Union, Oman, United Kingdom and New Zealand, under these agreements, partner countries provide zero-duty market access for exports of Indian toys.

Challenges

	1. Technology gap Manufacturers largely remain small and traditional, lacking the automation and design sophistication of global competitors.
	2. Raw material dependence Plastics, electronic components and specialised materials used in toy making are often imported.
	3. Weak R&D and design innovation Limited toy design institutes and innovation ecosystems restrict presence in high value segments like electronic and educational toys.
	4. Compliance burden on small units Mandatory BIS certification raises compliance costs that smaller artisanal units struggle to absorb, risking their exclusion from the formal market.
	5. Competition from re-routed imports Toys reportedly continue entering India through mislabelling or route diversion via third countries to bypass higher duties.

Conclusion

- India's toy industry is successfully blending its rich cultural heritage with modern advancements, emerging as a vibrant contributor to manufacturing, exports and employment.
- Supported by strategic policy interventions and initiatives promoting indigenous production, the sector has transitioned from import dependence to global competitiveness.

Source: AIR

NEWS IN SHORT

PERFORMANCE GRADING INDEX 2.0

Context

- The Union Ministry of Education released the Report on Performance Grading Index 2.0 for States/UTs (PGI-S) and Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D) for 2025-26.

Performance Grading Index 2.0 for States/UTs (PGI-S)

- The PGI- States/UTs structure comprises total weightage of **1000 points across 70 indicators**, which are grouped under **2 Categories** viz., Outcome category and Governance & Management category. These categories are further divided into **16 domains**, viz.,
 - ♦ Learning Outcomes and Quality,
 - ♦ Access
 - ♦ Infrastructure & Facilities,
 - ♦ Equity,
 - ♦ Governance Processes, and
 - ♦ Teachers Education & Training.
- The framework is fully aligned with data from the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+), PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024, PM POSHAN Portal, PRABAND Portal, and Vidyanjali Portal.

Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D)

- The PGI-D framework comprises a total weightage of **600 points across 70 indicators**, which are grouped under **6 categories** viz., **Outcomes, Effective Classroom Transaction, Infrastructure Facilities & Student Entitlements, School Safety & Child Protection, Digital Learning and Governance Process.**

- These categories are further divided into **11 domains, viz.,**
 - ♦ Learning Outcomes and Quality (LOQ),
 - ♦ Access Outcomes (AO),
 - ♦ Teacher Availability and Professional Development Outcomes (TAPDO),
 - ♦ Learning Management (LM),
 - ♦ Learning Enrichment Activities (LEA),
 - ♦ Infrastructure, Facilities, Student Entitlements (IF&SE),
 - ♦ School Safety and Child Protection (SS&CP),
 - ♦ Digital Learning (DL),
 - ♦ Funds Convergence and Utilisation (FCU),
 - ♦ Attendance Monitoring Systems (AMS) and
 - ♦ School Leadership Development (SLD).
- The data for PGI-D are drawn from several sources, viz., Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE +), PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024 (PRS 2024) and the PRABANDH Portal.

Source: PIB

HUMMUS TRAIL

Context

- A rights organisation has filed a ‘**war crimes**’ complaint **with India against an Israeli soldier spotted along ‘hummus trail’**.

About

- The **Hummus Trail** is an informal term for a network of destinations in India that are especially popular among **young Israeli travellers**.
- These places often have **Hebrew signboards, Israeli cafés, Chabad houses, and hostels**, creating a familiar environment for visitors.

Background

- Every year, around **80,000 Israelis** visit India, many after completing their **mandatory military service**.
- This long post-service journey, known as **Tiul Gadol** (“The Big Trip”), usually lasts **6–12 months** and is considered a cultural rite of passage.
- In **2026**, Israel allocated **4 million NIS** to strengthen tourism cooperation with India.

Legal Aspect

- India is a party to the **Fourth Geneva Convention**.
- Under the **Geneva Conventions Act, 1960**, Indian courts can prosecute persons accused of **grave breaches** of the Geneva Conventions if they are found in India, regardless of where the alleged offence took place.

Key Features

- Major destinations include **Kasol, Old Manali, Dharamkot, Pushkar, Goa, Hampi, Kerala, and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands**.
- Many visitors use the trail as a period of **rest and recovery** after military service, including coping with combat-related stress.
- Some locations have also witnessed concerns over **rave parties, drug abuse, and narcotics-related activities**, prompting closer monitoring by authorities.

Source: IE

GUWAHATI DECLARATION

In News

- Recently, the BRICS nations have adopted the Guwahati Declaration.

About

- The declaration called for closer **cooperation among BRICS countries** to address the evolving nature of illicit drug trafficking.
- They expressed concern over the **proliferation of synthetic drugs and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)**, misuse of emerging technologies and digital platforms, apart from the exploitation of maritime routes by transnational criminal syndicates.
- The Guwahati meeting brought together Brazil, China, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia and the United Arab Emirates.

Source: TH

WHAT IS THE RIGHT TO BE FORGOTTEN?

In News

- The Delhi High Court has laid down the **principles governing the right to be forgotten**.

More about the News

- In **Laksh Vir Singh Yadav v. Union of India**, the court held that the right to be forgotten flows from **Article 21's guarantee of dignity and informational privacy**.
- The HC followed the Supreme Court's judgment in **K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)** that held privacy is a fundamental right under Article 21, including the right to informational privacy.
- The court said the structured proportionality test is that retention must have a legitimate purpose and that the **harm to privacy must be balanced against the public interest**.

What is the 'right to be forgotten'?

- The "right to be forgotten" is the right to have **information erased or de-indexed from the public digital environment** when its continued accessibility is harmful and serves no public interest.
- The concept came to the **fore in 2014, when a Spanish citizen, Mario Costeja González**, complained to the European Court of Justice that Google continued to display an old newspaper notice about the auction of his repossessed house even though the debt had been settled.
- The court ruled in his favour, laying the groundwork for the right to erasure, which was later incorporated into **Article 17 of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**.

What are the challenges?

- De-indexing can benefit at the search level, but it won't prevent mirrors, archive copies, or social media sharing.
- Without effective technical compliance and coordination among platforms, the right may remain largely symbolic.

Source: TH

PINAKA LONG RANGE GUIDED ROCKET (LRGR)

Context

- The DRDO successfully conducted the flight-test of the **Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket (LRGR)** at the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha.

About Pinaka

- **Pinaka** is an indigenous **Multi Barrel Rocket Launching System (MBRL)** named after the mythical bow of **Lord Shiva**.
- It was developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** as a replacement for the Russian-origin **Grad** rocket system.
- The system was first used operationally during the **Kargil War (1999)**.

Key Features

- An all-weather artillery rocket system with a strike range of about **120 km**, capable of firing a salvo of **12 rockets** in just 44 seconds.
- Designed with **shoot-and-scoot capability**, enabling quick relocation after firing to avoid enemy counterattacks.

Do you know?

- Pinaka has also achieved export success, with **Armenia** becoming its first foreign customer, while several other countries have expressed interest in procuring the system.



Source: DDNews

ASTRA MISSILE

Context

- Indonesia became the first country that signed a pact to import India's ASTRA missiles.
 - ♦ These missiles will arm Indonesia's Su-30 fleet.

About the Astra Missile

- **Developed by:** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- **Type:** Advanced Beyond-Visual-Range Air-to-Air Missile (**BVRAAM**).
- **Range:** Capable of engaging aerial targets over **100 km** away.
- **Features:**
 - ♦ Advanced guidance and navigation systems for high precision.

- ♦ All-weather, day-and-night operational capability.
- ♦ Maximum speed: **exceeds Mach 4**.
- ♦ Operational ceiling: up to **20 km** altitude.
- **Significance:** Enhances India's indigenous air combat capabilities and aligns with Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence production.



Source: IE

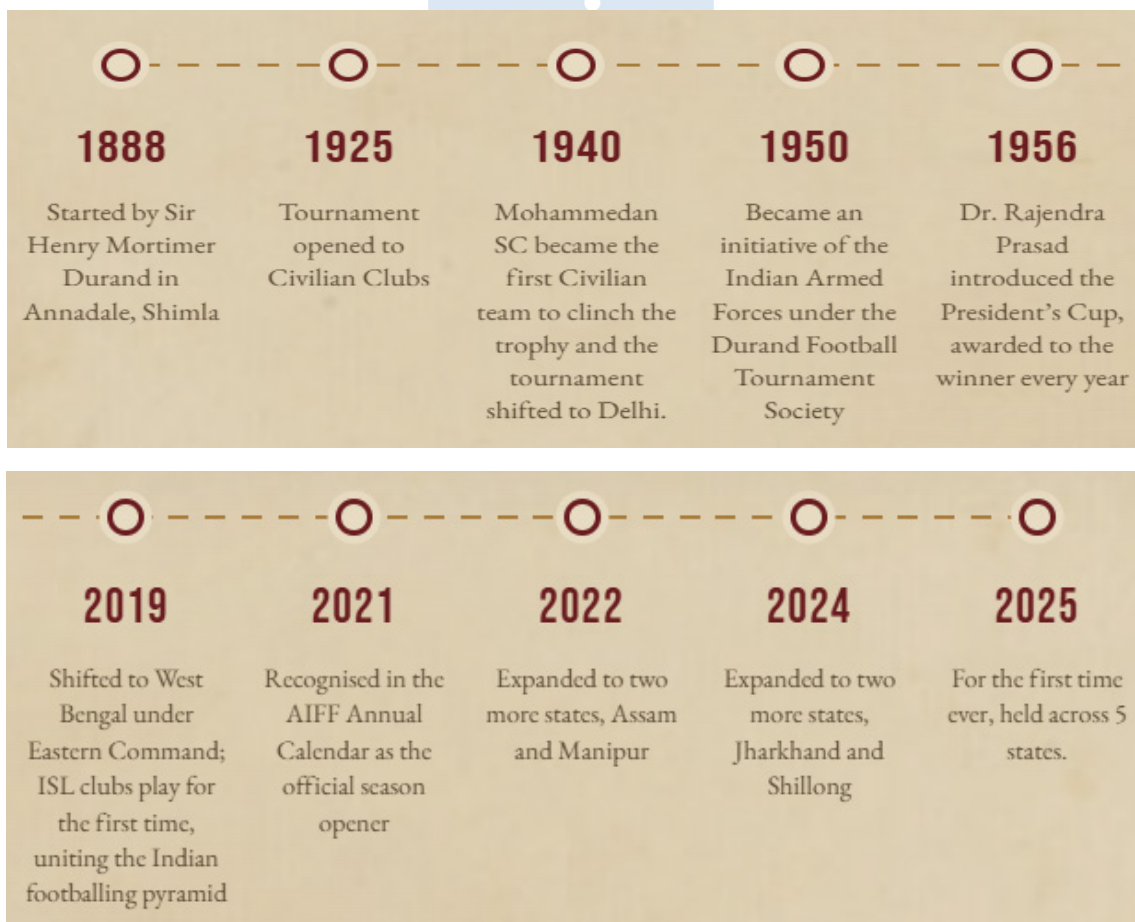
DURAND CUP

Context

- The President of India, unveiled and flagged off the Trophies of the Durand Cup Tournament 2026.

About Durand Cup

- **Established in 1888**, the Durand Cup stands as **Asia's oldest and the world's third-oldest** football tournament.
- It is organized by the **Indian Army** on behalf of the three Services.
- The inaugural edition was held in **Simla in 1888**, before the tournament moved to **New Delhi in 1940**.
- The tournament champions **receive three trophies**: the Durand Cup and the Simla Trophy, both rolling honours, and the President's Cup, crafted afresh each year and awarded for permanent keepsake.



Source: PIB