DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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INDIA'S MANUFACTURING CHALLENGE AND THE LIMITS OF ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

Context

- India's experience with Russia and China has demonstrated that a lack of indigenous manufacturing competitiveness can negate the gains from economic diplomacy.

The Manufacturing Gap in India's External Economic Relations

- **India–Russia trade imbalance:**
  - India's exports to Russia remain relatively limited compared with its imports, which are **dominated by crude oil** and other commodities. India's exports to Russia are still under **$5 billion**, while imports from Russia were **$63.8 billion in 2024-25.**
  - Russia is a substantial **market for manufactured products,** including automobiles, machinery, electronics and industrial equipment.
  - However, India's limited manufacturing capacity **prevents it from fully exploiting this market,** even when diplomatic relations provide favourable conditions for greater bilateral trade.
- **Dependence on China:**
  - **India's trade relationship with China** reflects the opposite problem, as Chinese exports include electronics, machinery, chemicals, pharmaceutical inputs, auto components and other intermediate goods.
  - Bilateral trade between India and China reached about **$151 billion** in 2025-26, but India's deficit rose to around **$112 billion.**
  - Many Indian sectors rely on these imports as Chinese companies provide items at competitive costs with huge manufacturing scale and integrated supply chains.

Significance of Manufacturing for Economic Diplomacy

- **Diplomacy cannot substitute industrial capacity:** Trade agreements, diplomatic negotiations and investment partnerships can create opportunities, but they cannot by themselves generate globally competitive products.
- **Strengthens strategic autonomy:** A strong manufacturing base reduces excessive dependence on external suppliers for critical goods, technologies and industrial inputs.
- **Export competitiveness:** Large-scale manufacturing can help India diversify its export basket beyond traditional strengths such as petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, textiles and engineering goods.
  - Deeper domestic supply chains can also increase the domestic value added in Indian exports.

Manufacturing Sector of India

Challenge in India's Manufacturing Sector

- **High cost of doing business:** Complex regulations, compliance requirements, logistics costs and delays in obtaining approvals can reduce the competitiveness of Indian manufacturing.
- **Shallow domestic supply chains:** Several sectors continue to depend significantly on imported components, machinery, raw materials and intermediate goods.
  - This limits the extent to which India can capture value across the manufacturing chain.
- **Limited scale:** Chinese manufacturing benefits from **large production volumes**, extensive supplier networks and integrated industrial clusters.
  - Indian firms often **operate at smaller scales,** which can make it difficult to compete on cost and delivery timelines in global markets.
- **Technology and skill gaps:** Advanced manufacturing increasingly requires sophisticated machinery, research capabilities, digital technologies and skilled workers.
  - India needs **stronger industry–academia linkages** and greater private-sector investment in research and development.

Government Measures for Strengthening the Manufacturing Sector

- **National Mission on Manufacturing (NMM):** Announced in Budget 2025-26, it serves as a key catalyst for industrial growth, targeting a rise in manufacturing's **GDP share to 25% by 2035** and **expansion of merchandise exports to USD 1.2 trillion** through deeper global value chain integration.
- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme:** The primary aim was strengthening India's manufacturing capabilities by **offering financial incentives** to eligible companies based on their incremental sales.
  - The scheme initially targeted three sectors, and, over time, it has expanded to include **14 sectors,** ranging from electronics and textiles to automobiles and food processing.
- **Startup India:** The initiative aims to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and Startups in the country.
- **National Logistics Policy (NLP):** The policy aims to lower the cost of logistics from the existing **13-14%** and lead it to par with other developed countries.
- **PM Gati Shakti:** It was launched in 2021 to enhance the country's **infrastructure and promote seamless connectivity** across various sectors.
  - It will **incorporate the infrastructure schemes** of various Ministries and State Governments like Bharatmala, Sagarmala, inland waterways, dry/land ports, UDAN etc.
- **Innovation financing:** The government announced a **Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund** with a **₹1 lakh crore outlay over six years,** including **₹20,000 crore for FY26**, aimed at boosting private investment in high-tech R&D and operationalising a Deep-Tech Fund of Funds.

What India Needs to Do?

- **Move from incentives to competitiveness:** Production incentives can catalyse investment, but long-term manufacturing success requires firms to become competitive even without perpetual fiscal support.
- **Build complete supply chains:** India should develop domestic capabilities across the entire production ecosystem, including components, machinery, raw materials, logistics and specialised services.
- **Export-orientated manufacturing:** India needs to identify sectors where it can develop a durable comparative advantage and integrate them into global value chains.

Way Ahead

- India's economic diplomacy can create doors, but manufacturing competitiveness determines whether India can walk through them.
- The experience with Russia and China demonstrates that diplomatic influence cannot compensate for weak productive capacity.
- Therefore, India's long-term economic and strategic autonomy requires a manufacturing ecosystem based on scale, productivity, technology, competitive supply chains and an investment-friendly regulatory environment.

Source: IE

BRICS NATIONS SHOULD LINK PAYMENT SYSTEMS, TRADE IN LOCAL CURRENCIES

Syllabus: GS3/Economy

Context

- India has urged **BRICS members and partner countries** to deepen economic integration through **local-currency trade**, **linked payment systems** and easier market access ahead of the **18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi.**

About Trade in Local Currencies & De-Dollarisation

- **Trade in local currencies** means settling cross-border transactions directly in the currencies of trading countries rather than converting them into a vehicle currency such as the US dollar.
- **De-dollarisation** refers to reducing excessive dependence on the US dollar in **trade invoicing, payments, reserves and international finance**.
- BRICS' approach to create greater **currency diversification and payment-system autonomy**.

Significance of Local-Currency Trade

- **Lower Transaction Costs:** Reduces repeated currency conversions and dependence on intermediary currencies.
- **Greater Resilience:** Alternative payment channels can reduce vulnerability to external financial disruptions.

- **Boost to Intra-BRICS Trade:** Easier settlements can convert economic complementarities into commercial partnerships.
- **Financial Autonomy:** Provides emerging economies greater policy space amid geopolitical and sanctions-related uncertainties.
- **Digital Integration:** Linking UPI and other payment systems can promote faster, cheaper and more inclusive cross-border transactions.
- **Supply-chain Diversification:** Facilitates trade in critical minerals, raw materials and manufactured goods.

Concerns and Challenges

- **Exchange-rate volatility** can create risks for exporters and importers.
- Local currencies may have **limited convertibility and liquidity**.
- Persistent **trade imbalances** can make accumulation of partner currencies difficult.
- Differences in financial regulations, data standards and payment infrastructure hinder interoperability.
- Dollar-based markets retain advantages in **depth, liquidity and global acceptability**.
- Greater digital connectivity raises concerns over **cybersecurity, data protection and financial stability**.
- Excessive financial fragmentation could increase transaction complexity instead of reducing it.

Way Forward: Strengthening Measures

- BRICS should pursue **interoperable payment systems, currency-swap arrangements, transparent settlement mechanisms and common digital standards**, while strengthening financial regulation and cybersecurity.
- The **BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy 2030**, BRICS Connect, the **BRICS incubator network** and **BRICS Startup Innovation Fund** can support deeper integration.
- Cooperation should preserve the **WTO at the core of the multilateral trading system**, while improving logistics, affordable MSME finance, trade facilitation and mutual recognition of standards.

Conclusion

- India's 2026 BRICS Chairship theme **'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'** provides an opportunity to build a more diversified.

About BRICS

- **BRICS** is a major platform of **emerging economies** and the **Global South**, initially comprising **Brazil, Russia, India and China**, with **South Africa joining in 2010**.
- Its expansion has substantially increased its demographic, economic and geopolitical weight.
- BRICS seeks greater cooperation in areas such as **economy, finance, trade, technology, development and global governance**, while advocating a more representative and multipolar international order.

Historical Evolution: From BRIC to BRICS+

- BRICS has evolved from an economic grouping into a broader platform for **strategic autonomy, development cooperation and reform of global governance**.
  - **2001:** Economist **Jim O'Neill** coined the term **BRIC** for Brazil, Russia, India and China.
  - **2009:** First BRIC Summit was held at **Yekaterinburg, Russia**.
  - **2010:** South Africa joined, creating **BRICS**.
  - **2024: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and UAE** became full members.
  - **2025: Indonesia** joined BRICS as a full member, further widening its Global South representation.
  - Also, Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam joined BRICS as Partner Countries.
  - **2026:** India assumes the chairship and hosts the **18th Summit in New Delhi**.

Key Proposals at BRICS Business Forum 2026

- At the BRICS Business Forum, **India's Commerce and Industry Minister** called for:
  - **Opening markets** to each other's products, particularly **raw materials and critical minerals**, with resilient supply chains that 'run both ways'.
  - Reducing **non-tariff measures (NTMs)**, which impose higher export costs than tariffs for **88% of countries**.
  - **Linking payment systems** and expanding trade in **local currencies**.

- Leveraging India's **UPI**, now accepted in **11 countries**, for wider digital trade.
- Greater cooperation in **agriculture, agri-tech, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, electronics, automobiles, auto components and services**.
- Increasing participation of **women-led enterprises** in BRICS exhibitions and trade fairs. Over **45% of India's 250,000 recognised startups** have at least one woman partner/director.
- Cooperation in **AI, digital public infrastructure, data centres and semiconductors**, including India's **Semiconductor Mission 2.0**, through 'co-develop, co-invest and co-innovate'.
- Proposed **BRICS Connect, B2B partnerships, an annual BRICS Trade and Investment Expo** and digital trade documentation.

Source: TH

INDIA-RUSSIA BILATERAL MEET

Context

- Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in New Delhi for the BRICS Summit and held a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Modi.

Major Highlights

- Spoke about closer trade ties, including **implementation of the Programme for Economic Cooperation 2030.**
- Discussed steps to increase the **bilateral trade target to $100 billion by 2030 and projects on civil nuclear cooperation.**
- Prime Minister Modi gifted President Putin a **Russian translation of Thirukkural,** the classical Tamil poem collection authored by poet and **philosopher Thiruvalluvar.**
- **Critical minerals** are emerging as another strategic priority, the two sides are looking at cooperation across exploration, processing and recycling.
- **Civil nuclear cooperation:** Discussions also touched upon nuclear fuel-cycle cooperation and life-cycle support for existing Russian-designed reactors in India, while keeping alive talks on a second Russian-designed reactor site.

Brief on India-Russia Relations

- **Establishment and Timeline:**
  - **1947:** India and the USSR established diplomatic relations just months before India gained independence in August 1947.
  - **Cold War Period (1947-1991):** The USSR emerged as a reliable partner for India, especially during times of Western hostility.
  - **Both signed the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation (1971)** that laid the foundation for a strategic partnership.
  - **1991**: India recognised the Russian Federation after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.
  - **1993:** Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed.
  - **2000:** Declaration of Strategic Partnership.
- **Multi-Dimensional Cooperation Framework:** India and Russia are bound by a Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership (2010).
  - Over the years, it has expanded far beyond traditional military ties, integrating economic, energy, space, and educational cooperation.
- **Bilateral Trade:** The leaders agreed on a $100 billion bilateral trade target by 2030, up from the current $68.7 billion in FY 2024-25 and 59.863 billion for FY 2025-26.
  - Both sides are pursuing a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and have established mechanisms to address the trade imbalance.
- **Defence and Military Cooperation:** Defense cooperation remains the primary pillar of the partnership, having structurally shifted from a traditional buyer-seller relationship toward joint research, development, and co-production under India's Make in India initiative.
  - Russia remains India's largest arms supplier and India-Russia **Inter-Governmental Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-MTC)** continues to coordinate procurement, servicing, and joint R&D programs.
- **Nuclear Cooperation:** Russia's state-run nuclear corporation Rosatom delivered the first consignment of nuclear fuel for the third reactor at Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in 2025, marking a historic milestone.

- Russia is constructing six reactors at Kudankulam, with two already operational.
- Future discussions include small modular reactors and floating nuclear power plants.

- **Energy Partnership:** In 2023-24, Russia was India's fourth-largest trade partner, largely driven by discounted oil imports (over 35% of India's crude oil basket).
- **Payment Mechanism Innovation:** The two countries have shifted 96% of commercial transactions to national currencies (rupees and rubles), moving away from dollar-denominated settlements to circumvent Western sanctions.
- **Political Support and Multilateral Forums:** Russia constantly supports India's permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
  - Both countries coordinate in BRICS, SCO, and G20 to push for a multipolar global order.

Challenges

- **Russia–Ukraine conflict:** The prolonged war has complicated India's diplomatic balancing between its strategic partnership with Russia and its growing relations with the US and European countries.
- **Western sanctions on Russia:** US and European sanctions create difficulties in payments, banking, logistics, insurance and technology transfers, affecting bilateral trade and investment.
- **Defence dependence and diversification:** India's historical dependence on Russian defence equipment creates concerns regarding spare parts, maintenance and timely deliveries.
- **Growing Russia–China proximity:** Russia's increasing strategic and economic dependence on China may reduce strategic space to accommodate Indian interests, particularly in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Trade imbalance:** Bilateral trade has expanded significantly, particularly due to India's imports of Russian crude oil, but Indian exports to Russia remain comparatively limited, creating a persistent trade imbalance.
- **Technology and energy concerns:** Sanctions and Russia's reduced access to Western technology can affect advanced defence cooperation, joint ventures and long-term energy projects.

Conclusion

- The India-Russia partnership has been among the **steadiest in the contemporary era** with a shared commitment to a multipolar world as well to expand the engagement beyond the traditional military, nuclear and space cooperation.
- Both countries are also looking to **strengthen inter-regional cooperation,** especially with the Russian Far East and promote connectivity initiatives.

Source: TH

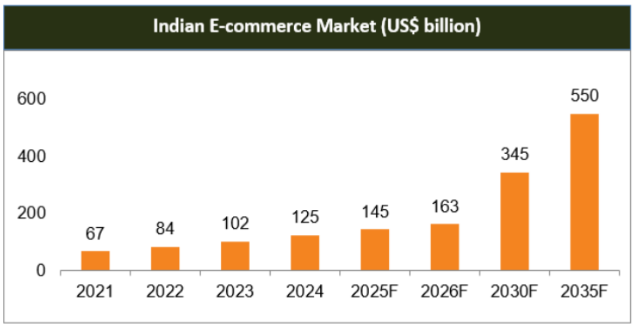
THE CONSUMER PROTECTION (E-COMMERCE) (AMENDMENT) RULES, 2026

Context

- The government has amended the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules 2020, to tighten norms on price transparency, sponsored listings, search result manipulation and dark patterns.

E-Commerce Market in India

- India's e-commerce industry, valued at **US$ 125 billion in 2024**, is projected to grow to US$ 345 billion by 2030, reflecting a **compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 18.4%.**
- India had nearly **290–300 million online shoppers in 2025,** with Tier-2+ cities contributing around 65% of incremental shoppers.
  - Shopper penetration remains only 25–30% of internet users in smaller cities, leaving significant room for future growth.
- **India has become the third-largest online shopper base** after China and the US.
- The sector has benefited from increased internet penetration, rising affluence, and affordable data prices.



Key Provisions of the Amended Rules

- E-commerce entities will be **prohibited from manipulating search results** in ways that mislead consumers or reduce the relevance of results to their search queries.
- The entities will have to **disclose the reduced price** and prior price whenever a price cut is announced.
    - The prior price has been defined as the lowest price at which the product was offered in the **30 days** before the discount was announced.
- Every e-commerce entity has to become a partner in the convergence process of the **National Consumer Helpline (NCH),** strengthening the integration of online platforms with the national consumer grievance redressal mechanism.
- E-commerce entities will be required to **comply with the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023.**
    - They will also have to conduct a yearly self-audit and prominently display a certificate of compliance.
- On consumer grievances, every e-commerce entity will be required to **provide complainants with a copy of the complaint** as recorded by its grievance officer, adding greater transparency to the complaint-handling process.
- Marketplace e-commerce entities will have to provide consumers with **key information** about products and services, including **best-before or use-before dates, return and refund policies, warranty details, delivery information and payment terms.**
- **For imported products**, platforms will also be required to **disclose the importer details** and country of origin, giving consumers greater information about the products they purchase online.

E-Commerce Model in India

- **Business to Consumer (B2C):** Platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra operate on this model
- **Business to Business (B2B):** It is particularly relevant for industries such as manufacturing, where companies procure raw materials, machinery, and other supplies from suppliers.
    - Platforms like **Udaan and Alibaba** cater to this segment, facilitating bulk transactions and supply chain solutions.
    - **100% FDI is allowed in B2B e-commerce.**
- **Consumer to Consumer (C2C):** Platforms like OLX and Quikr enable individuals to list and sell their items, providing a marketplace for peer-to-peer transactions.
- **Business to Administration (B2A) and Consumer to Administration (C2A):** The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) is an example of a B2A platform, facilitating government procurement of goods and services.

Other steps of government

- The **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** has also played a vital role in promoting e-commerce by providing a platform for government procurement.
- **Draft National E-Commerce Policy, 2019:** Focusing on data localization, consumer protection, intellectual property rights, and competition issues.
- **Open Network for Digital Commerce:** It is the decentralised online platform that will help reduce the cost of doing business for retailers.
- **100% FDI** is allowed in B2B e-commerce & marketplace model of E-commerce.
- Government initiatives like the **National Logistics Policy** and **Digital India** are boosting e-commerce by improving connectivity, streamlining logistics, and expanding digital access.

Way Ahead

- As India's e-commerce ecosystem grows beyond metropolitan markets, effective consumer protection will be at the core of sustaining trust in digital commerce.
- The modified rules can serve to create a regulatory environment where innovation, competitiveness and ease of doing business coexist with transparency and consumer welfare.

- But their success will depend on effective enforcement, consumer awareness and timely grievance redressal channels.

Source: DD News, IBEF

NEWS IN SHORT

RED SEA

Context

- The Iran-backed Houthis seized control of Yemen's entire Red Sea coast and captured three strategic islands, in a lightning offensive that cemented their hold on a vital shipping corridor.

About

- **Location:** The Red Sea is a seawater inlet of the **Indian Ocean**, located between **northeastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula in Asia**.
- **Borders:**
  - It connects to the Indian Ocean through **the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Gulf of Aden** in the south.
  - To its north lie the **Sinai Peninsula**, the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Gulf of Suez (leading to the Suez Canal).
  - It separates the coasts of **Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea** to the west from **Saudi Arabia and Yemen** to the east.
- **Trade:** The Red Sea is a crucial global shipping corridor, carrying around **15% of global trade** and nearly **30% of global container traffic**.

Source: TH

7 YEARS OF PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN MAANDHAN YOJANA (PM-KMY)

Context

- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PM-KMY) has completed seven years.

About the Scheme

- PM-KMY is a **voluntary and contributory old-age pension scheme** designed to provide financial security to small and marginal farmers during their later years.
  - Under the scheme, eligible subscribers receive a minimum assured pension of **₹3,000 per month** after attaining the age of **60 years.**
- It is a **Central Sector Scheme** administered by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare &** implemented in partnership with the **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).**
- The scheme also provides family pension support after the subscriber's death.
  - If a subscriber passes away while receiving the pension, the spouse is entitled to a **family pension equal to 50%** of the subscriber's pension.
  - This amounts to **₹1,500 per month.** The benefit is available exclusively to the spouse and applies only if the spouse is not already a beneficiary of PM-KMY.
- The scheme also provides an option in case a subscriber **dies before attaining** the **age of 60 years.**
  - If the beneficiary has made regular contributions, the spouse may join and continue the scheme by making the prescribed regular contributions.
  - Alternatively, the **spouse may exit the scheme** as per the exit and withdrawal provisions.
- The scheme is open to small and marginal farmers throughout the country with cultivable landholdings of up to two hectares.
  - Farmers must be between **18 and 40 years** of age to enrol.
  - To qualify, their names must appear in the land records of the respective states or union territories as of 1 August 2019.

Source: PIB

INDIA'S PUSH FOR OVERSEAS LITHIUM AND CRITICAL MINERALS

Context

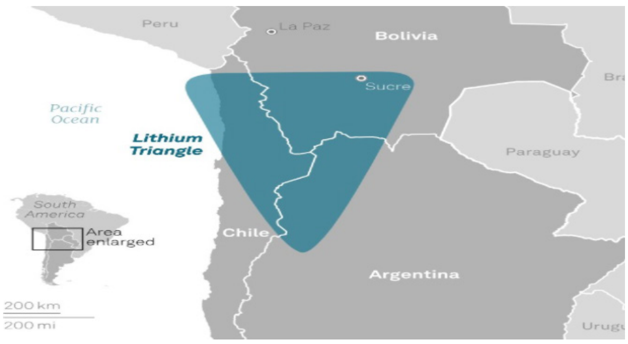
- The Ministry of Mines is in talks with Australia and Chile to acquire lithium blocks, while it is also seeking five additional blocks in Argentina, as India steps up its efforts to secure supplies of the critical mineral.

Lithium

- Lithium is a chemical element with the symbol Li and **atomic number 3**. It is a **soft, silvery-white alkali metal.**
- **Properties:** Like all alkali metals, lithium is highly reactive and flammable, and must be stored in vacuum, inert atmosphere, or inert liquid such as purified kerosene or mineral oil.
- **Significance:** Lithium is a key component of lithium-ion batteries, which are widely used in electric vehicles, energy-storage systems and portable electronic devices.

Global Reserves

- **Chile, Australia, Argentina, Bolivia and China** contain most of the reserves discovered so far globally.
- Argentina, Bolivia and Chile, also known as the '**Lithium Triangle**' contain **54%** of the world's Lithium reserves.
  - **In Argentina** the lithium is present in salt pans in the **Atacama desert** and neighboring arid zones in the region.



Lithium in India

- In India, there is some potential to recover lithium from brines of **Sambhar and Pachpadra areas in Rajasthan, and Rann of Kutch, Gujarat**.
- In **2023**, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) identified **5.9 million tonnes** of inferred lithium resources in J&K.

Source: TH

THE BANKERS' BOOKS EVIDENCE ACT, 2026

Context

- The Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026 will come into force from October 1, 2026, replacing the 1891 law.

About

- It will provide a modern legal framework for the use of banking records as evidence in legal proceedings.
- It adopts a **technology-neutral approach,** recognising banking records maintained in physical, electronic, digital, virtual, cloud-based and other contemporary forms.
- A key provision of the new law is the **simplification and standardisation of certification of banking records.**
  - Such certification can be carried out through **manual, digital or electronic signatures,** facilitating the use of banking records in judicial and other legal proceedings.
- The legislation also provides **greater clarity regarding the summoning of bank officials** when the bank is not a party to the proceedings.
  - A **court will be required to record a "special cause" in writing before summoning such officials.**
- The Act further empowers the **Central Government** to extend its provisions to **specified financial sector entities or classes of entities, enabling the legal framework** to adapt to developments in the wider financial sector.

Source: DD

FARAKKA TREATY

Context

- Janata Dal (United) has launched a campaign across 12 Ganga-side districts of Bihar, calling for the state's interests to be safeguarded in the **Farakka Treaty**, which is set to expire on 12 December 2026.

About

- The **Farakka Treaty**, also known as the **Ganga Water Treaty**, was signed on 12 December 1996 between Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda of India and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh.

- It governs the sharing of **Ganga waters** at the **Farakka Barrage**. During the **lean period** (11 March–11 May), 35,000 cusecs of water are allocated alternately to each country for 10-day periods, subject to water availability.
- The **Farakka Barrage**, built on the **Bhagirathi River** in **West Bengal**, was constructed to improve the navigability of the Kolkata Port by diverting water into the **Hooghly River**.
- **Article XII** provides that the treaty is **renewable by mutual consent** after the completion of its **30-year** term.

Source: IE

FRONT-OF-PACK WARNING LABELS (FOPL)

Syllabus: GS2/Governance

In News

- The Supreme Court has expressed concern over the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI)** proposed two-phase rollout of **front-of-pack warning labels (FoPL)** on packaged foods high in sugar, salt and fat.

Front-of-pack warning labels (FoPL)

- Front-of-pack warning labels have been debated in **India since 2018.**
- FSSAI has proposed a **red, hexagonal front-of-pack warning label for packaged** foods high in added sugar, saturated fat or salt, to help consumers quickly identify unhealthy products.
- The recommended nutrient based on thresholds specified under the Dietary Guidelines for Indians, 2024, issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Nutrition.
- The proposal envisions a **two-step implementation.**
  - In step 1, the warnings would be applied to products high in at least two of the three nutrients and to specified highly sweetened beverages.
  - In step 2, the warning would be applied to products high in any one of these nutrients.

Exclusions

- FSSAI's proposed front-of-pack labelling framework would exclude single-ingredient foods and naturally high-fat, sugar or salt products such as ghee, edible oil, salt, sugar, jaggery and honey, while continuing to apply other food-safety and labelling requirements.

Supreme Court's Observations

- The Supreme Court has raised concerns over the FSSAI's two-phase front-of-pack warning label (FoPL) plan, cautioning that the second phase could be indefinitely delayed with no clear timeline.
- It challenged the rationale of the original emphasis on foods high in two nutrients, and advocated a threshold-based approach and different standards for ultra-processed and minimally processed foods.
- It encouraged the education of children in nutrition and suggested the use of words in conjunction with pictorial symbols for ease of understanding.

Source: TH

COPPER

In News

- Copper prices have climbed to a record high of $14,708 a tonne amid uncertainty about global economic growth due to trade tensions and the conflict in West Asia.

Copper

- Copper (Cu) is a **reddish metal** of very high ductility and is an excellent conductor of heat and of electricity.
- It is found in **nature in the metallic state.**
- It is also found in minerals such as chalcocite, chalcopyrite and bornite.
- It is produced by **smelting or leaching, often followed by electrodeposition.**
- It was one of the first metals ever extracted and used by humans
- It has made vital contributions to sustaining and improving society since the dawn of civilization.

Use

- Copper is commonly used due to its excellent electrical and thermal conductivity, corrosion resistance, and malleability.

- Copper is alloyed with other metals such as zinc, tin, and nickel to produce brasses, bronzes, and nickel silvers.
- Tools, weapons, cooking vessels, household utensils, mirrors, and ornaments were all made of copper. Copper is also part of coinage metals
- It is resistant to corrosion and can be used for water pipes.

Data

- In 2025, the United States imported $16.2 billion worth of copper products.
- China accounted for 20% of these imports, followed by Mexico at 17%, the European Union at 14%, Canada at 10%, and Vietnam at 8%.

Source: IE

LIPULEKH PASS

In News

- India-Tibet border trade through **Lipulekh Pass** has resumed.

Lipulekh Pass

- It is located at an elevation of about 5,334 metres in the Kumaon region.
- It is a high-altitude Himalayan pass in Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand (India).
- It serves as a strategic **tri-junction connecting India, China (Tibet), and Nepal**.
- It is strategically and culturally important as a traditional route for Indian pilgrims on the **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.**

Source: IE

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