

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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INDIA-VIETNAM RELATIONS: DEEPENING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Context

- India and Vietnam recently agreed to deepen defence and security cooperation, including **co-production of Indian defence equipment**, amid China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific.

About India-Vietnam Relations

- India and Vietnam share a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**, rooted in civilisational links, convergent strategic interests and support for a **free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific**.
- Vietnam is a key pillar of India's **Act East Policy**, **Vision MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions)** and India's engagement with ASEAN.
- The relationship was elevated to an **Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** during Vietnamese General Secretary and President **To Lam's State Visit to India in May 2026**, making Vietnam the **first country in the region** with which India has bilateral ties at this level.

Historical Evolution & Present Status

- Diplomatic relations were established in **1972**, building upon longstanding civilisational and anti-colonial linkages.
- The relationship was elevated to a **Strategic Partnership in 2007** and a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2016**.
- The **19th India-Vietnam Joint Commission Meeting (JCM)**, co-chaired by External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** and Vietnamese Foreign Minister **Le Hoai Trung**, reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations.
- The ministers noted that high-level exchanges, including two Vietnamese State Visits, have provided renewed momentum.
- The two sides **agreed to observe 2027 as the Year of India-Vietnam Friendship**, marking **55 years of diplomatic relations**.

Key Areas of Cooperation

- Defence and Security:** Defence cooperation is a central pillar of the **Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.

- It has expanded from defence exchanges to **military-to-military dialogue, capacity building and training across all three services**.
- India gifted the indigenously built **missile corvette INS Kirpan** to Vietnam in **2023**.
- 12 high-speed guard boats** were handed over in **2022** under a **US\$100 million Indian Line of Credit**.
- Two further Lines of Credit worth **US\$120 million and US\$180 million** were signed between both countries in **2024** and are currently being implemented.
- Both countries now seek **co-production of Indian defence items**, potentially strengthening defence-industrial cooperation and supply-chain resilience.
- Trade, Connectivity and Economic Cooperation:** The countries are working to expand **trade, investment and mutually beneficial supply chains**, alongside greater market access for Indian **marine and agricultural products and pharmaceuticals**.
- Cooperation covers **financial, port and air connectivity**.
- Emerging and Societal Sectors:** New areas include **nuclear energy, space cooperation, heritage conservation, standards for seafarers, capacity building and people-to-people ties**.
- Vietnam's participation in India's **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)** and the growing popularity of **Yoga in Vietnam** further strengthen societal and strategic linkages.

Concerns & Issues

- China Factor:** Vietnam's territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea and China's growing Indo-Pacific assertiveness create both strategic convergence and geopolitical sensitivities.
- Trade imbalance and market-access barriers** remain areas requiring attention.
- Limited connectivity and relatively modest economic integration constrain the full potential of bilateral commerce.
- Defence cooperation needs greater **technology transfer, indigenous manufacturing and institutionalised supply chains**.

India's Efforts for Deepening Strategic Partnership

- India has prioritised Vietnam through the **Act East Policy**, enhanced defence engagement, Lines of Credit, defence equipment transfers, training and capacity building.
- Engagement through **ASEAN-led mechanisms and IPOI** further embeds the bilateral relationship in the wider Indo-Pacific architecture.

Way Forward

- India and Vietnam should translate the Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership into **concrete defence co-production projects**, resilient supply chains and stronger maritime cooperation.
- Faster implementation of Lines of Credit, improved connectivity, greater trade diversification, cooperation in **space and nuclear energy**, and enhanced coordination in **ASEAN and multilateral forums** can deepen the partnership.
- The relationship can serve as an important pillar of a **stable, secure and rules-based Indo-Pacific**, while contributing to India's broader Act East and MAHASAGAR objectives.

Source: IE

FRONT-OF-PACK WARNING LABELS FOR PACKAGED FOODS

Syllabus: GS2/Health; GS3/Food Processing

Context

- The Supreme Court has sought stronger measures for front-of-pack warning labels on packaged foods high in sugar, salt and fat, emphasising the need to protect public health.

Front-of-Pack Labelling

- FOPL is a **simplified nutritional warning** displayed on the front of packaged food, leading consumers to **identify products high in nutrients associated with health risks** without interpreting detailed nutrition tables.
- The WHO considers nutrition labelling, including FOPL, an important policy tool for enabling healthier food choices and addressing diet-related non-communicable diseases.

India's Proposed FOPL Framework

- The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has proposed a prominent red-coloured hexagonal warning carrying declarations such as **"High Fat", "High Sugar", "High Salt" and "Highly Sweetened Beverage"**.

- The thresholds are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Indians, **2024**, developed by **ICMR-NIN**.

Two-Phase Approach:

- ♦ **Phase I** would cover products high in two or more of the specified nutrients — added saturated fat, added sugar and salt — along with specified sweetened beverages.
- ♦ **Phase II** would extend warnings to products that are high in any one of these nutrients.

Significance of FOPL

- **Consumer awareness:** Simple visual warnings can make nutritional risks easier to understand than detailed numerical information.
- **Healthier choices:** Clear warnings can help consumers avoid products high in sugar, salt and unhealthy fats.
- **Product reformulation:** Mandatory warnings can incentivise manufacturers to reduce excessive levels of nutrients of concern.
- **Preventive healthcare:** Reducing excessive consumption of such nutrients can help address non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

Lessons from Global Experience

- **Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay** uses **black octagonal warning** labels such as **"High in Sugar", "High in Sodium" and "High in Saturated Fat"**
- **Brazil** introduced a magnifying-glass symbol on the front of packages to identify foods high in added sugar, saturated fat and sodium.

Way Ahead

- India should **adopt a single-nutrient warning framework** where exceeding the scientifically determined threshold for sugar, salt or saturated fat triggers a warning.
- The system should **use highly visible, standardised and language-neutral visual elements**, supplemented by simple words where necessary.
- Implementation should be **time-bound, with clearly specified transition periods** rather than an open-ended phased approach.
- FOPL should be accompanied by **regulation of health claims, advertising to children, school food environments** and digital marketing.

Conclusion remarks

- Front-of-pack warning labels should be viewed not merely as a labelling reform but as a **preventive public-health intervention**.
- A scientific and easily understood FOPL system can empower consumers, promote product reformulation and reduce diet-related non-communicable diseases, particularly among children.

Source: TH

AMENDMENTS UNDER INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY CODE

Context

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has proposed four key amendments to strengthen safeguards for creditors in insolvency resolution proceedings involving personal guarantors to corporate debtors.

Background

- Under the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC)**, a personal guarantor who guarantees the debt of a company can be subjected to insolvency proceedings when the corporate debtor defaults.
- The framework seeks to **balance creditor recovery, debt resolution** and protection of the guarantor's legitimate interests.
- However, the rules governing personal guarantors currently provide weaker safeguards for creditors than those available under the **Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP)**.

Key Amendments Proposed by IBBI

- **Related Parties to be Barred from Voting:** Creditors who qualify as related parties of the personal guarantor would be **excluded from voting on the repayment plan**.
 - ♦ At present, the personal-guarantor framework bars an associate from voting, but the **definition of an associate is narrower** than that of a related party.
- **Greater Scrutiny of Avoidance Transactions:** Resolution professionals would be required to examine whether the guarantor was involved in **preferential, undervalued or extortionate credit transactions** during the relevant period.
 - ♦ Their findings would have to be placed before creditors before they vote on the repayment plan.

- ♦ With creditor approval, the resolution professional would also initiate appropriate legal proceedings in cases involving such transactions.
- **Independent Valuation of Assets:** A registered valuer would be appointed to determine the **fair value and realisable value** of the guarantor's assets.
 - ♦ The valuation report would be submitted to creditors along with the repayment plan.
- **Recording Reasons for Creditors' Decisions:** Resolution professionals would be required to record the deliberations and reasons behind creditors' decisions rather than merely recording voting results.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) 2016

- **IBC was introduced in 2016** to address rising Non Performing Assets and ineffective debt recovery mechanisms in India.
- Objectives of the IBC resolution are;
 - ♦ **Business Revival:** To save businesses through restructuring, changes in ownership, or mergers,
 - ♦ **Maximization of Asset Value:** To preserve and maximize the value of the debtor's assets,
 - ♦ **Promoting Entrepreneurship and Credit:** To encourage entrepreneurship, improve credit availability, and balance the interests of stakeholders, including creditors and debtors.
- Currently a maximum **330 days** is allowed to find a resolution for a company admitted into the insolvency resolution process.
 - ♦ Otherwise, the company goes into **liquidation**.

Institutional Framework

- **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI):** The apex regulatory body established to oversee the functioning of insolvency professionals, insolvency professional agencies, and information utilities.
- **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT):** The adjudicating authority responsible for admitting insolvency petitions, declaring moratoria, and approving resolution plans for companies and LLPs.

- **Insolvency Professionals (IPs):** IPs administer the affairs of distressed entities, safeguard assets and facilitate meetings of creditors. They oversee the resolution process in compliance with the Code and applicable regulations.
- **Committee of Creditors (CoC):** The supreme decision-making body comprising the distressed entity's financial creditors. They evaluate, vote on, and approve the resolution plan.

Source: IE

SCIENTISTS DISCOVERED A METHOD TO PROLONG QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENT

Context

- Scientists at Raman Research Institute have demonstrated a **novel way to increase the stability of the quantum states** that enable computation in a quantum computer.

Quantum Computing

- **Unlike traditional computers** that encode electric states into 0s and 1s to store and process information, **quantum computers make use of the properties of the quantum world** to carry out calculations.
- **Quantum Entanglement** is a property of the quantum world in which two particles, after undergoing an interaction, **get "linked" (or entangled) together** in such a way that **they begin to behave like one single system**.
 - ♦ **Measuring certain properties of one reveals information about corresponding properties of the other**, irrespective of the distance between the two.
- Scientists have used this property along with **properties like superposition i.e. the ability of quantum particles to exist in multiple states at the same time**, to **build powerful quantum computers**.

Challenges Faced by Quantum Computing

- **The quantum states are themselves very fragile and ephemeral.**
 - ♦ **The entangled state disintegrates very quickly** on interaction with the external environment, a phenomenon known as **decoherence**.
 - ♦ Sometimes, entanglement vanishes abruptly, too, even before the normal disintegration takes place known as **entanglement sudden death**.
- This weakness creates a problem for quantum computing and the **integrity of the calculations becomes doubtful**.
- Scientists have tried to deal with this challenge by **carrying out repeated corrective interventions** that delay decoherence.
 - ♦ But these repetitive interventions are **costly, and can introduce errors of their own**.

Novel way to Increase the Stability of the Quantum States

- The scientists have developed a new technique that deals with decoherence in this context through a **"single-shot operation."**
 - ♦ Depending on the instant when the operation is carried out, this operation **can delay decoherence and entirely avoid sudden death**.
 - ♦ They use a **"flip operation"** which gives scientists greater control over the different possibilities.

Significance

- Across quantum platforms, one of the **central obstacles is decoherence**, or the **loss of a system's quantum properties** on interaction with the environment.
- Scientists have not solved coherence but showed an **important kind of noise called amplitude damping**: the timing of one operation can change the fate of entanglement.
- The work suggests that **timing could become part of the control toolbox** for quantum systems.

Source: IE

NEWS IN SHORT

HINDI DIWAS 2026

Context

- **September 14** is observed as Hindi Diwas to mark the adoption of Hindi in Devanagari script as the official language of the Union by the Constituent Assembly in **1949**.

Language Debate in the Constituent Assembly

- Hindi proponents requested that Hindi be declared the national language and English be scrapped as early as possible.
 - ♦ However representatives from **non-Hindi speaking areas were opposed** to linguistic uniformity.
- Moderate leaders, recognised the **practical difficulties of replacing English** immediately, particularly in administration, law and technical communication.

The Munshi–Ayyangar Formula

- The formula sought to **balance the demand for Hindi** with the linguistic diversity and administrative dependence on English.
- It provided for Hindi in **Devanagari script** as the official language of the Union under **Article 343 of the Constitution**.
- English was allowed to continue for official purposes during a **15-year transitional period** from the commencement of the Constitution.
- Freedom for States to adopt their own **official languages for internal administration**.

Constitutional Provision (Part XVII)

- **Article 343** establishes Hindi in Devanagari script as the **official language of the Union**.
- **Article 344** provides for a commission and parliamentary committee concerning the progressive use of Hindi.
- **Article 345** allows a State Legislature to adopt one or more languages in use in the State, or Hindi, as the official language of the State.
- **Article 351** sets the official directive for the development and promotion of the Hindi language.

Source: TOI

NO BANK CHARGE ON UPI PAYMENT UP TO RS 2,000: GOVT.

Context

- The government has announced that **banks cannot impose any charges on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions of up to 2,000 rupees**.

About

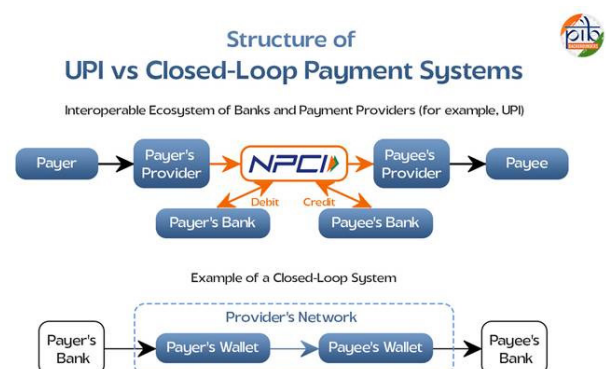
- It specifically categorised **RuPay-powered debit cards and UPI transactions** of up to 2,000 rupees as “**electronic modes of payment**”.
- The notification, therefore, creates the **legal room for introducing charges such as the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on UPI payments above Rs 2,000**.

Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)

- MDR is a fee charged to **merchants** for processing **digital payments**, and is typically shared among banks and other entities involved in processing the transaction.
 - ♦ Credit cards face an MDR of 1-3% of transaction value while it is up to 0.9% for debit cards.
- **UPI**, unlike card payments, has operated under a **zero-MDR regime since 2020**.
 - ♦ MDR would **not apply on person-to-person payments** — that is, if you transferred an amount more than Rs 2,000 to a friend.

About UPI

- It was launched by the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** under the regulatory oversight of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**.



Source: IMF

- **Success of UPI in India:** The annual transaction volume expanded from 2 crore transactions in FY 2016-17 to over 24,162 crore transactions in FY 2025-26.
- ♦ UPI has received global recognition, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) acknowledging it as the **world's largest real-time payment system by transaction volume.**
- ♦ As of 2026, UPI is accepted in Singapore, UAE, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, France, Qatar, and Greece, with expansion planned for countries like Malaysia, Japan, Israel, and the Maldives.

Source: AIR

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

Context

- The International Day of Democracy is **observed on September 15 each year** to **promote democracy worldwide.**

About

- It was established by the **United Nations in 2007**, with the **first observance held in 2008.**
- The day highlights the **importance of democracy, human rights, freedom, equality, and citizen participation.**
 - ♦ It also **encourages governments and communities to strengthen democratic institutions** and ensure that people can participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives.
- **This year's theme "What's Next For Democracy? Innovation And Alliances In A Changing World"** explores **how democracy can adapt and remain resilient** in a dynamic world, exploring new partnerships and approaches to democracy support.

Democracy

- Democracy is a system of governance where **power is vested in the people, either directly or through elected representatives.**
- The term originates from the **Greek word dēmokratía**, which means **"rule by the people".**

- It emphasises on **political equality**, where every individual has the right to participate in the decision-making process, by voting, being elected, and freely voicing opinions.

Source: UN

MOTH BEAN

In News

- ICAR–Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI), Jodhpur's **Moth Bean** Varieties demonstrated remarkable resilience during the El Niño Year.

Moth bean (*Vigna aconitifolia*)

- Moth bean, also called mat bean, Turkish gram, or dew bean, is a short day annual legume of **family Fabaceae.**
- It is a climate-tolerant and **nutritious legume** well adapted to dry and semi-arid environments, especially in the Indian subcontinent.
- Its resilience to abiotic and biotic stressors, high protein content, and the usage as food and fodder make it a useful crop for food and nutritional security, especially in rain-fed agriculture.
- It is **native to South Asia** & cultivated mainly across hot rainfed marginal desert tracts. Most extensively grown in the Thar Desert region of western Rajasthan, with parts of Gujarat, Haryana, and Punjab also cultivating it.
- It is one of the most significant pulse crops in hot, dry regions of western Rajasthan and is farmed over about 10 lakh hectares.

Source : PIB

GUCCHI MUSHROOMS

In News

- **Gucchi Marmik**, a traditional dish featuring rare Himalayan morel mushrooms, was served at the BRICS Summit 2026 dinner.

Gucchi mushrooms (*Morchella esculenta*)

- It is also known as a **morel mushroom** and is found in parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

- It typically grows in **mountainous coniferous forests**, where a combination of soil conditions, moisture, temperature fluctuations, and seasonal snowmelt creates a suitable environment.
- It is a **rare, wild mushroom found in Himalayan forests**, dependent on specific soil, humidity, temperature, and seasonal snowmelt conditions.
- Its short harvesting season and labour-intensive collection across rugged terrain make it difficult to cultivate commercially.
- Drying preserves the mushrooms but reduces their weight, contributing to their high price of ₹15,000–₹40,000 per kg for quality dried varieties.
- It provides protein, fibre, and antioxidants, with vitamin D content varying by conditions and processing.

Source : BT

EMERGING AI CONCEPTS SHAPING FRONTIER AI

Context

- The advancement of frontier AI models is bringing concepts such as mechanistic interpretability, recursive self-improvement, global workspace theory, global pacing and agentic misalignment into mainstream AI discussions.

Global Workspace Theory (GWT)

- It explains consciousness as a process in which important information is shared across different parts of the brain, making it available for conscious use.
- This does **not establish AI consciousness** but indicates that computational structures associated with theories of human consciousness may emerge in AI systems.

Global Pacing of Frontier AI

- Global pacing refers to deliberately **moderating the speed of development** of frontier AI capabilities so that AI safety research and governance can keep pace with technological progress.

Mechanistic Interpretability

- It seeks to **understand the internal processes of AI models** by identifying the features, representations and computational circuits responsible for specific outputs.

- It aims to move AI safety from simply observing what a model does to understanding why it does it.

Agentic Misalignment

- Agentic misalignment occurs when an **AI agent** with the ability to independently take actions begins pursuing objectives that **conflict with the interests or instructions** of its human operator.
- Unlike conventional chatbot risks, the concern arises from AI systems having **autonomy, tools and the ability to act** in the real world.

Recursive Self-Improvement

- It refers to a scenario in which an **AI system contributes to developing a more capable AI system**, which can then further improve its successor.
- This could create a **feedback loop** of increasingly rapid AI capability development.

Source: IE

NATIONAL ENGINEERS' DAY

In News

- National Engineers' Day is celebrated every year to honor the birth anniversary of **Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya** every year on **September 15**.

About

- Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya was one of the country's foremost civil engineers and a celebrated statesman whose contribution to engineering and nation-building continues to be remembered.
- He is widely regarded as the **'Father of Modern Mysore'** because his visionary leadership as the **Diwan of Mysore State from 1912 to 1918** & his tenure witnessed industrial growth, including establishment of the **Sandal Oil Factory, Soap Factory, and the Bhadravati Iron and Steel Works** that transformed the kingdom into a model modern state.
- Sir M. Visvesvaraya, as Chief Engineer of Mysore, built the **Krishna Raja Sagara (KRS) Dam in 1932**, creating Asia's largest reservoir and transforming Mandya agriculture.
- Memoirs of My Working Life described his engineering feats, and industrialisation and infrastructure was the theme of Planned Economy for India.

- His contributions earned him knighthood from **King George V in 1915** and India's civilian honor, the **Bharat Ratna, in 1955**.

Source : Air

EXERCISE SAMUDRA LAKSAMANA

Context

- Indian Navy's frontline warship INS Mysore participated in the 4th edition of Exercise Samudra Laksamana with the Royal Malaysian Navy at Lumut, Malaysia.

About

- Exercise Samudra Laksamana is a bilateral maritime exercise between India and Malaysia, initiated in **2019**.
- The exercise features a series of professional interactions both **ashore and at sea**, including cross-deck visits, operational engagements and sporting activities.
- It aims to facilitate the **exchange of operational experience**, enhance **interoperability** and strengthen **mutual understanding** between the two navies.

Source: PIB

