

## India Reaffirms Commitment to World Trade Organisation (WTO) Centered Fair Trade System

India emphasized on an **open, fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory** multilateral trading system with **WTO** at its core during the SCO Trade Ministers' meeting.

**About WTO (HQ: Geneva, Switzerland)**

➤ **Genesis:** 1995 post the **Marrakesh Agreement**. Successor to the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**.

➤ **Members:** 166 (India has been a member since 1995).

➤ **Principles of WTO:** Trade without discrimination, free trade through negotiation, promoting fair competition, etc.

**Issues Facing WTO:**

➤ **Public Stockholding (PSH):** The stockholding programmes are considered to **distort trade** when they involve **purchases from farmers at prices fixed by the governments (like MSP regime in India)**.

➤ **Special & Differential Treatment (S&DT):** The special provisions which give countries (developing and Least Developed) special rights and allow other members to treat them more favourably.

⌚ **Solution:** Developed nations **argue to phase them out**.

➤ **Dispute Settlement System:** Appellate Body (AB) of the WTO ceased to function in 2019 due to USA blocking appointments and reappointment affecting resolution of trade disputes between countries.

➤ **Geopolitical Shifts:** E.g., USA tariff policies, Russia-Ukraine war.

➤ **Others:** Data privacy, data flows, taxation of digital services, climate change, EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.



## Need to build climate-resilient cities in India

**Heavy monsoon rains and overflowing of rivers** have caused severe **urban flooding in cities of Punjab**.

➤ Going forward, urban population in India is expected to **nearly double from 480 million in 2020 to around 951 million by 2050**.

➤ This highlights the need to build **climate-resilient cities in India**.

**Key Challenges & Solutions for Indian Cities**

➤ **Flooding:** By 2070, two-thirds of urban residents may face floods with \$30B losses.

⌚ **Solution:** Stronger drainage, nature-based solutions, flood warnings (e.g., Kolkata city based flood forecasting model).

➤ **Extreme Heat:** Urban heat islands raise temperatures by 3–5°C, affecting health and productivity.

⌚ **Solution:** Heat action plans, urban greenery (e.g., Ahmedabad's heat action plan).

➤ **Transportation:** Flooding of 10–20% of roads can cripple >50% of networks.

⌚ **Solution:** Risk mapping, improved drainage, resilient and green public transport (e.g., Delhi Metro).

➤ **Municipal Services:** Waste management and energy recovery systems need major upgrades.

⌚ **Solution:** Modernise waste systems, expand waste-to-energy, improve environmental quality (e.g., Indore's waste management model).

➤ **Governance & Finance:** Weak institutional capacity and limited private investment.

⌚ **Solution:** Strengthen institutions, ensure citizen participation, and expand private sector financing.



## India's Defence Theaterisation Plan

Differing opinions on India's proposed theaterisation plan were observed at Ran Samwad 2025.

**What is Theaterisation?**

- Theaterisation is a plan to **integrate resources** of the Army, Navy, and Air Force into specific geographical commands under a **single, unified command structure**.
  - ⊕ It represents India's **biggest post-Independence military restructuring**, aiming to move away from the current system of 17 service-specific commands.
  - ⊕ The **Chief of Defence Staff**, that heads the **Department of Military Affairs (DMA)** is mandated for establishment of joint/theatre commands.

**Challenges with Theaterisation**

- **IAF Reservations:** Fearing the division of scarce combat assets would compromise its core doctrine and operational flexibility.
- **India-Specific Model:** There is caution against "blindly following" foreign models like the US, emphasizing the need for an **India-specific solution** tailored to its unique threats and requirements.
- **Structural Disruption:** Dismantling existing command structures is seen as a potentially **disruptive impact** on combat readiness during transition.
- **Domain Knowledge & Command:** Concerns exist regarding a theatre commander from one service effectively commanding and understanding the intricacies of another service's assets, particularly air power.
- **Cost and Industrial Base:** Skepticism about huge expenditure with doubtful returns and the absence of a robust domestic military-industrial complex.

## Significance of Theaterisation



### Streamline Forces

Reduce duplication, cut expenditure



### Unity of Command

Faster decisions, optimal resources



### Coordinated Military Operations

Jointness, efficiency in conflicts

## Undersea Cables Targeted in the Red Sea

It led to internet outages in parts of the Middle East and Asia, including India, shedding light on India's **Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA)**.

- UDA refers to the **capability of a nation or an organization** to monitor, detect, and assess activities occurring beneath the surface of water bodies like oceans and seas.

**Need for UDA in India**

- **National Security and Regional Stability:** (Eg China's **Underwater Great Wall project**).
- **Protecting Critical Infrastructure:** Such as **submarine communication cables** (which are fibre-optic cables), which transmit over 95% of global internet traffic.
  - ⊕ Fibre optic cables transmit data as **pulses of light** through strands of glass or plastic fibres using the principle of **total internal reflection**.

**Challenges for India**

- **Technological Gaps:** The development of **Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUVs)** is at an early stage.

- ⊕ DRDO's phosphoric acid fuel cell-based **Air Independent Propulsion (AIP)** system for submarines compares poorly to lithium-ion fuel cell-powered AIP.
- ⊕ Bharat Electronics Limited's **Unmanned surface vehicle (USV)**, designed for bathymetric surveys, has **only a 30-kilogram payload capacity**.
  - ◆ This results in import dependency for critical underwater equipment.
- **Financial Constraints:** Lack of long-term support to startups hinders the prototype development.
- **Operational Difficulties:** Due to India's vast coastline, Chinese submarine incursions, seasonal monsoons, and fragmented inter-agency coordination.

### India's Initiatives

- **Indigenous Development:** Development of UUVs like **MAYA**, **AMOGH**, and **ADAMYA**, enhancing naval surveillance.
  - ⊕ **Matsya 6000** a manned submersible is being developed under Samudrayaan project.
- **Infrastructure:** Deployment of the **Integrated Underwater Harbour Defence and Surveillance System (IUHDSS)** in Port Blair.
- **International Partnerships:** cooperation with the US for co-developing autonomous undersea technologies and equipping **MQ-9B Sea Guardian drones** with sonobuoys.



## GST Reform 2025 to Be Implemented from 22nd September

Next-Gen GST reforms build on GST's success with a simplified **2-tier structure (5% and 18%)**, **fairer taxation**, and **digital filing for ease and faster refunds**.

➤ **A new 40% tax rate** has been introduced for luxury and sin goods like pan masala, cigarettes, etc.

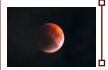
### Benefits of the Recent Changes

- **Social Protection:** Exemption of GST on insurance and essential medicines strengthens household security and access to healthcare.
- **Lower Prices, Higher Demand:** Cheaper goods and services increase household savings and stimulate consumption.
- **Support for MSMEs:** Reduced rates on inputs like cement, auto parts, and handicrafts lower costs and make small businesses more competitive.
- **Ease of Living:** A two-rate structure means fewer disputes, quicker decisions, and simpler compliance.
- **Wider Tax Net:** Simpler rates encourage compliance, expanding the tax base and improving revenues.

### Key Challenges in Recent Changes

- **Revenue Foregone:** It could lead to a revenue loss of ~₹48,000 crore (on the FY23-24 consumption base), as per the Finance Ministry.
- **Removal of Input Tax Credit (ITC):** From goods such as healthcare products and insurance may lead to the problem of cascading taxes.
- **Lack of clarity over revival of National Anti-profiteering Authority:** It was initially set up for two years (that can be extended by the GST Council) to ensure businesses passed on the benefits of GST rate cuts to consumers.

## Also in News



### Total Lunar Eclipse (Blood Moons)

A total lunar eclipse that turned the moon **blood red** was witnessed across the globe.

#### About Total Lunar Eclipse

- An eclipse happens when a planet or a moon **gets in the way of the Sun's light**.
- A lunar eclipse occurs when the **Sun, Earth, and Moon align** so that the **Moon passes into Earth's shadow**.
- The entire Moon falls within the darkest part of Earth's shadow, called the **umbra**.
- When the **Moon is within the umbra**, it will turn a reddish hue, thus called **Blood Moons**.



### Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+)

OPEC+ agreed to accelerate the **Oil output**.

#### About OPEC+

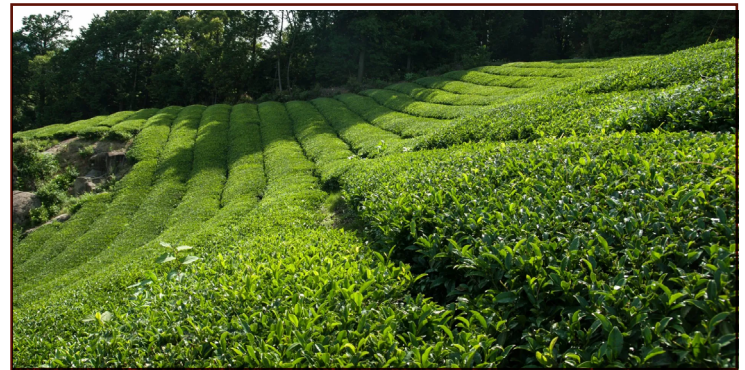
- OPEC signed an agreement with **10 other oil-producing countries** to create what is now known as **OPEC+**.
- **OPEC and OPEC+ countries** combined produced about 59% of global oil production.
- Largest oil producer **USA** is not part of OPEC+.
- **OPEC was formed in 1960** by Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.



### Tea

Due to Increased imports, **Assam Tea Industry is facing a crisis**.  
**About Tea as a crop**

- **Temperature: 18°C to 30°C.** Extreme temperatures can **adversely affect growth** and yield.
- **Rainfall: 1200 to 2500 mm.** Adequate rainfall during the **growing season is crucial**.
- **Humidity:** High humidity levels (**above 70%**).
- **Soil:** Well-drained, **acidic soils, rich in organic matter** and have **good water-holding capacity**.
- **Major Tea Growing Regions:** Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, etc.



### Account Aggregator

India's account aggregator system now has **112 million users**, according to the government.

- The **Account Aggregator (AA) framework** was launched in 2021.
- It is one of the country's fastest-growing pillars of **Digital Public Infrastructure**.

#### About Account Aggregator

- In India, they are entities licensed by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**.
- They facilitate the **collection and sharing of financial data**.



### Katchatheevu Island

Recently, the **President of Sri Lanka** visited Katchatheevu Island amid renewed calls by Indian politicians for its return to India.

#### About Katchatheevu Island

➤ **Location:** It is a tiny, uninhabited island in Palk Strait.

➤ It lies to the northeast to Tamil Nadu's Rameswaram town and southwest of Sri Lanka's Jaffna city.

➤ The island is barren, with no drinking water or sanitation with St. Anthony's Catholic Shrine being the only permanent structure.

➤ **Political Dispute:** The island was disputed between India and Sri Lanka.

➤ In 1974, agreement was signed between both countries delineating an **International Maritime Boundary Line**, which placed Katchatheevu on the Sri Lankan side.

➤ In return India gained Wadge Bank, located near Kanniyakumari.



### Carbon capture and storage (CCS)

A new study warns of the limitations of **CCS to store carbon**.

#### About CCS

➤ CCS processes capture carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from industrial processes, power generation, and other sources, and then store them underground.

#### Challenges:

➤ **Commercial:** Expensive technology.

➤ **Storage:** Capacity of underground geological formations to store CO<sub>2</sub> is limited, and not all sites may be suitable for long-term storage.

♦ Earth can only safely hold about 1,460 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> underground.

➤ **Infrastructure:** Cost of building and maintaining pipelines to transport can be high, and face public resistance.

➤ **CO<sub>2</sub> Impact:** Corrosion, degradation, leakage.



### Protein Language Models

A team of researchers at MIT has developed a new technique to understand how language models predict protein structure and function.

#### About Protein language models (PLMs)

➤ PLMs are a type of **large language model (LLM)**, adapted from **natural language processing (NLP)**.

➤ Instead of words, they treat amino acids like tokens and proteins like sentences.

➤ By training on millions of protein sequences, they learn the grammar of proteins.

➤ This helps speed up drug and vaccine development by avoiding traditional, time-consuming lab experiments.



### Witness Protection Scheme, 2018

Recently The Supreme Court observed that the **Witness Protection Scheme, 2018** cannot be treated as a substitute for not cancelling bails when conditions are violated.

#### About Witness Protection scheme 2018

##### Objective

➤ Ensure safety of witnesses and their families so they can testify freely without fear or intimidation.

➤ It aims to promote law enforcement by facilitating the protection of persons in providing assistance to **criminal law enforcement agencies**.



## Personality in News



### Sree Narayana Guru (1856-1928)

The Birth anniversary of Sree Narayan Guru celebrated.

➤ He was a **saint & social reformer** of India.

#### Key Contribution

➤ He propagated the idea of '**One Caste, One Religion, One God**'.

➤ He founded the '**Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam**' (SNDP) for upliftment and education of Ezhava community.

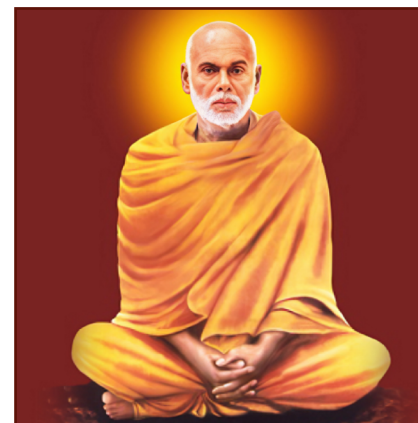
➤ He launched the "**Aruvipuram movement**", one of the first moments for equal rights to temple entry.

➤ He lent support to **Vaikom Satyagraha for temple entry (1924-25)** in Travancore.

➤ Founded Ashram dedicated to principle - **Om Sahodaryam Sarvatra** (all human beings are equal in the eyes of God).

#### Values

Equality, Non-violence, Compassion, Integrity, Courage etc.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI