

Ministry of Power releases draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Bill introduces key reforms to modernise India's power sector. It promotes competition in distribution, strengthens regulatory oversight, and supports fair pricing mechanisms.

Key Features of the Bill

► Structural Reforms:

- ⊕ **Facilitate regulated competition** in electricity distribution, allowing multiple licensees to operate in the same area using shared and optimized infrastructure.
- ⊕ **Mandates Universal Service Obligation (USO)** for all licensees, ensuring non-discriminatory access and supply to all consumers.
 - It also enables SERCs to make Distribution licensees free from USO, in consultation with State Governments, for large consumers eligible for Open Access (>1 MW).

► Tariff and Cross-Subsidy Rationalisation:

- ⊕ **Promotes cost-reflective tariffs** while protecting subsidised consumers (e.g., farmers, poor households) through transparent budgeted subsidies..
- ⊕ **Seeks elimination of cross-subsidy** for the Manufacturing Industry, Railways, and Metro railways within five years.

► Governance and Regulatory Strengthening:

- ⊕ **Establishes an Electricity Council** for Centre-State policy coordination and consensus-building.
- ⊕ **Empowers State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs)** to enforce standards, penalise non-compliance, and determine tariffs suo moto if applications are delayed.

► Sustainability and Market Development:

- ⊕ **Strengthens obligations for non-fossil energy procurement**, with penalties for non-compliance.
- ⊕ **Promotes power market development**, including new instruments and trading platforms.

Bill seeks to resolve key issues persisting in power sector i.e.

- **Persistent financial losses in distribution companies (discoms):** Due to poor billing efficiency, high aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses.
- **Lack of competition in electricity supply:** With consumers tied to a single discom, limiting service quality and innovation.
- **Cross-subsidisation distortions:** Where industrial users pay inflated tariffs to subsidise other categories, making Indian manufacturing less competitive.

Centre for Research & Planning, Supreme Court of India publishes the Prisons in India 2025 Report

This report examines prison manuals, stereotypes, mental health support, wages, and technological reforms, proposing a human-rights-based approach to prison administration.

Key Issues in Indian Prisons

- **Governance:** There is diversity in prison governance as prisons fall in the legislative and administrative domain of the States under List II, Schedule 7 of the Constitution.
 - ⊕ India follows the **United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners**, known as 'The Nelson Mandela Rules', which advocates the humanisation of prison institutions.
- **Overcrowding:** Prisons have an occupancy rate of 131.4% and 3 out of every 4 prisoners are undertrials.
 - ⊕ Open prisons remain underutilised with an occupancy rate of 74%.
- **Stereotypes:** Many prison manuals refer to prison work related to conservancy and sanitation as 'menial' or 'work of degrading character', which perpetuates a hierarchical view of labour.
- **Caste Bias:** Some prison manuals continue to retain provisions assign prison work based on caste identity.
 - ⊕ This has been held unconstitutional in **Sukanya Shantha Case**.
- **Wage Disparity:** Disparity ranges from Rs. 20 (much lower than lowest minimum wage) in Mizoram to Rs. 524 in Karnataka.
- **Women Prisoners:** Prison manuals do not explicitly provide for the right to reproductive choice and limit women prisoners to predominantly domestic tasks like cooking, denying them equal access to work.
- **Ineffective legal aid:** Quality of legal aid for prisoners suffers due to the lack of physical and digital infrastructure.

Way Forward

- **Replace stereotypical terminology** like "menial" and "degrading" associated with certain types of work.
- Ensure a **rotational/roster system for allocation of prison tasks** to eliminate caste discrimination.
- States must review and **revise prisoner's wage every three years**.
- **Cases of undertrial prisoners** can be marked as 'URGENT CASES' for the judges to prioritise them.
- **Real time data updation** on various platforms of Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) to ensure the success of e-Prisons.

The G20 Summit 2025 in Johannesburg, South Africa Concluded with adoption of Declaration

It was the **first ever G20 Summit** held on **African soil**, with the theme **Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability**.

➤ The G20 declaration was adopted by world leaders **despite the US boycott**.

Key Highlights of Declaration

- **Disaster Resilience & Debt Sustainability:** People-centred disaster response, support for **debt-burdened countries**, and emphasis on sustainable industrialisation and jobs.
- **Climate & Energy Transition:** Push to expand **renewables**, **endorsed the G20 Critical Minerals Framework (voluntary)**, and reaffirmed the Paris 1.5°C and global biodiversity goals.
- **Institutional Reform:** Call for UNSC reform and **stronger multilateral cooperation rooted in the spirit of Ubuntu (Emphasizing interconnectedness and shared humanity)**.
- **Reaffirmed commitment on empowerment of women and girls and condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.**

Major Ideas Proposed by India at Summit

- **Global Traditional Knowledge Repository:** To harness collective human wisdom.
- **Africa Skills Multiplier:** Aimed to create 1 million certified trainers fostering youth skills in Africa.
- **Global Healthcare Response Team:** G20 healthcare experts to respond to **global health crises**.
- **Open Satellite Data Partnership:** Sharing satellite data for agriculture, fisheries, disaster management.
- **Critical Minerals Circularity Initiative:** To promote recycling, innovation, and supply chain security.
- **Countering Drug Terror Nexus:** Initiative to combat drug trafficking and terrorism.
 - ⊕ On sidelines of G20 summit, India and Italy both adopted a **joint initiative to counter financing of terrorism**.

About G20

- **Founded in:** 1999 after the **Asian financial crisis of 1997 – 1998**.
- **Members:** Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, United States, the European Union, and the African Union.
- **Purpose:** Plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues.
- **Annual summit:** G20 Summit is held annually, under the leadership of a rotating Presidency. The Presidency is supported by the Troika (Previous, current and incoming Presidency).
 - ⊕ During South Africa's Presidency, the members of the G20 troika are Brazil, South Africa and the United States.

UNFCCC's 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) concluded with adoption of Belem Package

COP30's Belem Package

➤ Two New Initiatives:

- ⊕ **Global Implementation Accelerator:** Launched as a two-year programme to bridge the gap between national climate plans and the 1.5°C pathway.
- ⊕ **The Belém Mission to 1.5:** An action-oriented platform under the COP29-COP31 troika to foster international cooperation across mitigation, adaptation, and investment.

➤ **Global Mutirao Decision:** A high-level political text adopted by Parties. It includes:

- ⊕ **Scaling up climate finance** for developing countries to at least \$1.3 trillion annually by 2035 for climate action.
- ⊕ **Double adaptation finance** by 2025 and triple by 2035.
 - COP also adopted the **Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA)** with 60 indicators to assess global adaptation progress.
- ⊕ **Just Transition Mechanism:** Announced to boost cooperation, technical support, capacity-building and enable equitable, inclusive just transitions.
- ⊕ **Two Roadmaps:** The Forest and Climate Roadmap (to halt and reverse deforestation) and The Transitioning Away From Fossil Fuels Roadmap.

➤ **Other Announcements under COP30 Action Agenda:**

- ⊕ **Fostering Investible National Implementation (FINI) initiative:** Aims to unlock USD 1 trillion in adaptation project pipelines within three years, with 20% mobilized from the private sector.
- ⊕ **Belém Health Action Plan:** First global initiative targeting climate-related health threats.
- ⊕ **Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF):** First-of-its-kind mechanism to deliver long-term, results-based payments for verified conservation of standing tropical forests.
- ⊕ **Gender Action Plan:** Advances gender-responsive budgeting and finance, and promotes the leadership of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and rural women.

India–Brazil–South Africa (IBSA) Leaders' Meeting held on the sidelines of the G20 Summit 2025

India pushed for urgent UNSC reform, called for united action for global peace and prosperity and also highlighted IBSA's possible role in shaping safe, trustworthy, and human-centric AI norms.

Key Proposals of India at Meeting

- **Institutionalizing Dialogue:** Proposed institutionalizing the National Security Advisers-level dialogue between the three countries to enhance cooperation on security issues.
- **IBSA Digital Innovation Alliance:** For sharing **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** among three nations such as UPI, CoWIN-type health platform, Cybersecurity frameworks and Women-led tech initiatives.
- **Climate Resilience Fund:** Proposed establishing an IBSA Fund for Climate Resilient Agriculture.

About IBSA Forum

- **Founded:** In 2003 via the **Brasilia Declaration** and named as **IBSA Dialogue Forum**.
- **Members:** India, Brazil, South Africa; three **major Global South** democracies across **three continents**.
- **Objectives:** To contribute to the construction of a **new international architecture** and bring their voice together on global issues.
- **Cooperation in IBSA is on three fronts:**
 - ⊕ Forum for consultation and coordination on global and regional political issues;
 - ⊕ Trilateral collaboration on concrete areas/projects, through working groups and People-to-People Forums; and
 - ⊕ Assisting other developing countries by taking up projects in the latter through IBSA Fund.
- **Key Initiatives:**
 - ⊕ **IBSA Trust Fund (Operationalised in 2004):** It has allocated funds for Least Developed Countries (LDCs).
 - The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) is the Fund Manager and secretariat of the IBSA Fund.
 - ⊕ **IBSAMAR:** a joint multinational maritime exercise among Indian, Brazilian, and South African Navy.



Also In News



Parasocial

Cambridge Dictionary has named 'parasocial' as the **Word of the Year for 2025**.

About Parasocial

- The term has become **quite relevant in recent times, particularly with the rise of social media** and the advent of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots.
- It is a relationship **involving or relating to a connection that someone feels between themselves and a famous person** they do not know, a character in a book, film, TV series, etc.
- When people spend **many hours consuming their content, viewers develop parasocial bonds**, treating them more like close friends, family or cult leaders.



Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) signed MoUs to boost cargo movement, passenger transport and river-based tourism in the Northeast.

About IWAI

- **Genesis:** Established in 1986, it is the **nodal agency** under the Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, mandated to develop and regulate National Waterways (NWs) in India.
- **Headquarters:** Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Mandate & Functions:**
 - ⊕ **Development and regulation of inland waterways** for shipping and navigation.
 - ⊕ **Infrastructure development** such as dredging, river training, terminal construction, and navigation aids.
 - ⊕ **Ensuring safe and efficient movement** of cargo and passengers through inland water transport (IWT).
 - ⊕ **Development of National Waterways:** After the **National Waterways Act, 2016**, a total of **111 waterways** came under IWAI for development.



Asian and Pacific Centre for Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM)

10th Session of the APDIM on Inclusive Disaster Risk Data Governance held in New Delhi.

About APDIM

- **Established:** 2015.
- **Type:** Regional institution of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP).
- **Headquarters:** Tehran, Iran.
- **Governing Council:** Consists of eight ESCAP member countries elected for a period of three years and the Government of Iran.
- **Mandate:** APDIM **supports countries** in the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen disaster risk reduction (DRR) through improved information management.
- **Functions:** Data and knowledge sharing, Capacity building, Risk assessment and analytics, helping countries strengthen early warning systems, response coordination, and post-disaster recovery planning, Promotes regional cooperation.



Bharat NCAP

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has released a revised draft of Bharat NCAP 2.0.

- Under revised framework, a vehicle's rating will be based on five assessment areas – Crash Protection, Vulnerable Road User Protection, Safe Driving, Accident Avoidance and Post-Crash Safety.

About Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat NCAP)

- **Launched:** In October 2023 for **crashworthiness ratings**, and valid till 2027
- **Purpose:** Provides safety ratings for vehicles based on crash testing and evaluation criteria.
 - ⊕ The programme is voluntary in nature.
- **Designated Agency for Issuing Rating:** Central Institute of Road Transport (CIRT) in Pune.
- **Tests conducted:** As per Automotive Industry Standard (AIS)-197.



Auramine O

India continues to face recurring episodes of chemical adulteration in food, particularly through the use of non-permitted synthetic dyes, especially auramine O.

About Auramine O

- Auramine O is a **yellow, odorless, crystalline** (sand-like) powder or **flaky material**.
- It is used as a dye for paper, textiles, and leather, and is also used as an antiseptic and a fungicide.
- It is **not approved for use as a food colour** in India, the European Union, the United States.
- **Health risks:** Liver and kidney damage, enlargement of the spleen, mutagenic effects that can alter genetic material, and potential carcinogenic outcomes.
- The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classifies auramine as a substance that is **possibly carcinogenic** to humans.



Australia Canada India Technology and Innovation (ACITI)

India, Australia, and Canada announced a new trilateral framework **ACITI**, on the **sidelines of the G20 Summit in Johannesburg**.

About Australia Canada India Technology and Innovation (ACITI) Partnership

- **Purpose:** Enhance cooperation in **critical and emerging technologies and innovation domains**.
- **Key Focus Areas:** Including clean energy, diversified and resilient supply chains, particularly in critical minerals.
 - ⊕ Explore ways to **accelerate AI development and mass adoption to improve the lives** of their citizens.



Article 240

Home Ministry clarified that no Bill to change Chandigarh's status will be introduced in the upcoming Winter Session.

- Earlier, a bulletin of the Lok Sabha had stated that the Centre would introduce the Constitution Amendment to include Chandigarh under Article 240 of the Constitution.
- This would have opened the door to **an independent administrator in the Union Territory of Chandigarh**.
 - ⊕ The Punjab Governor is currently the Administrator of Chandigarh.

Article 240 of Constitution

- It grants the **power to the President** to make **regulations for the peace, progress and effective governance** of certain Union territories, including the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.



Sangai Festival

Sangai Festival begins in Manipur amid the protests.

About Sangai Festival

- It is an annual 10-day cultural festival of Manipur (21–30 November) named after **Sangai deer**.
 - ⊕ Sangai deer also known as the brow-antlered deer is a rare species found only in India's Keibul Lamjao National Park (**World's only floating national park**).
 - ⊕ Keibul Lamjao National Park is Located in **Loktak Lake, Manipur**.
- It showcases **Manipur's traditions through dance, music, handlooms, handicrafts, food**, and adventure activities.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI