

NEWS TODAY

India pushes for WTO Reforms at Paris Ministerial

During a **high-level mini-ministerial meet** of 25 WTO members, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry outlined **India's vision for a modernized WTO**, emphasizing the need to **address trade distortions** and **bolster multilateral governance**.

India's reforms agenda for WTO

India's proposals	Issues regarding WTO Functioning
 Tackling non-tariff barrier	Sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical standards, antidumping suits, import quotas, import licensing, etc., restrict market access. ➤ e.g., EU's Maximum Residue Levels (MRL) for non-basmati par-boiled rice of India .
 Addressing distortions caused by non-market economies	Governments market intervention to distort competition and drive preferred outcomes to benefit certain domestic actors. ➤ e.g., China Export Quota on Rare Earths .
 Revival of WTO dispute settlement system	Due to US' opposition to appointment of members, WTO's appellate body remains dysfunctional since 2019. ➤ India, however, opposed the alternative mechanism of Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement (MPIA) .
 Opposed to bringing plurilateral initiatives under the ambit of the WTO.	Plurilateral initiatives/ agreements , which are negotiated by sub-groups of WTO Members, not all. ➤ e.g., Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) - not agreed upon by all, including India and South Africa .
 Opposed the expansion of the WTO's mandate beyond traditional trade issues.	Non-trade issues would deepen differences. ➤ e.g., India's opposition to any EU Carbon Tax .

Conclusion

India's assertive stance at the WTO ministerial meeting in Paris underscores its commitment to revitalizing the multilateral trading system. A collective resolve among participating countries to strengthen the WTO, respect its core principles, and promote global trade growth can result in pragmatic solutions within existing frameworks.

Security Forces launched operations along India-Myanmar border

According to the Defence Ministry, Indian security forces **launched operations in Arunachal Pradesh** along the border following specific information about the **movement of unknown armed individuals**.

Cross-border security threats in India's Northeast

- **Insurgent activities:** Several **insurgent groups** like NSCN-K, ULFA (I), PLA, and NDFB have **used Myanmar as a safe haven for training, regrouping, and launching attacks** on Indian security forces.
- **Ethnic conflict and refugee influx:** Political **turmoil in Myanmar**, especially after the **2021 military coup**, led to a **spillover of refugees**, especially ethnic Chins and Rohingyas causing **law and order issues**, strain on resources fueling local resentment.
- **Arms and drug trafficking:** Entry of drugs from **Golden Triangle (Myanmar-Laos-Thailand)** - a major source of heroin and synthetic drugs - through Myanmar into Manipur and Mizoram, aggravates the drug abuse issues.

Measures taken to counter these threats

- **Legal and policy:** **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** in Assam to identify illegal migrants, **scrapping of Free Movement Regime** with Myanmar, etc.
- **Counter insurgency operations:** Joint ops (**Operation Sunrise**) by Indian Army and Myanmar Army to destroy cross-border insurgent camps, active operations by **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** and **Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)** to intercept drug smuggling, etc.
- **Border infrastructure and surveillance:** Smart fencing under **Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS)**, strengthening of border outposts, etc.

5 Years of India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

Marking 5th anniversary of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), both the countries emphasized on the **shared vision for a stable, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific** continues to guide collaboration.

- Both the countries also welcomed signing of **Australia-India Joint Research Project** and agreed to work together to combat **terrorism** in all its forms.

About India - Australia CSP

- In 2020, the two nations decided to upgrade bilateral relationship from 'Strategic Partnership' to **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)**.

How India-Australia CSP help in India's foreign policy objectives?

- Free and open Indo-Pacific:** India and Australia are part of the **QUAD** (with the US & Japan), collaborating on maritime security and regional stability; participation in **military exercises** like **AUSINDEX** and **Malabar** can enhance interoperability and naval cooperation, etc.
- Diversification of Strategic and Economic Partnerships:** Trade diversification through **Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)**, **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative** (with Japan), etc.
- Multilateral and regional engagement:** Joint participation in platforms like **East Asia Summit**, **Indian Ocean Rim Association**, etc.

Key Areas of Cooperation under CSP		
 <p>Science, Tech & Research Collaboration: e.g., Australia – India Strategic Research Fund for COVID-19.</p>	 <p>Maritime Cooperation for an Open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific: Support to Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).</p>	 <p>Defence Cooperation: e.g., Mutual Logistical Support Agreement, 2+2 Dialogue, etc. Regional and Multilateral Cooperation: E.g., Collaboration in East Asia Summit (EAS), UN etc.</p>
 <p>Terrorism: E.g., Advocacy for early adoption of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT).</p>	 <p>Economic cooperation: E.g., Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA).</p>	 <p>Others: People-to-People ties, Agriculture Cooperation, etc.</p>

India-Kyrgyzstan Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) Officially Enters into Force

The Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) signed in **June, 2019**, enters into force with effect from **5th June 2025**.

- This new BIT **replaces the earlier agreement enforced in 2000**, ensuring continuity in the **protection of investments between the two nations**.

India-Kyrgyzstan Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)

- The BIT balances the investor rights with the sovereign regulatory powers of both countries, and reflects a shared commitment to create a resilient and transparent investment climate.

Key Features of the BIT

- Definition of Assets:** **Enterprise-based definition** with an inclusion and exclusion list & clarifies investment characteristics: capital commitment, profit expectation, risk assumption, etc.
- Exclusions for Policy Space:** Excludes local government, government procurement, taxation, compulsory licenses, etc.
- Removes the Most Favored Nation (MFN) clause:** Which previously allowed investors to selectively import favorable provisions from other treaties signed by the Host State.
 - This removal will ensure more consistent treatment.
- The BIT contains General and security exceptions: The attempt is to carve out a policy space for the State.
 - General exceptions** E.g., Protection of environment, ensuring public health and safety, etc.
- Revised dispute resolution mechanism:** Requires investors to first use local remedies before international arbitration, promoting alternative dispute resolution.

About Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)

- Definition:** Also referred to as International Investment Agreements (IIAs), they are a tool for providing assurance to foreign investors against measures that may adversely impact their investments while assuring state's sovereign right to regulate.
- They allow investors or home countries to sue the host country for investment-related disputes.
- India approved **new Model BIT Text in 2015**, which replaced **Indian Model BIT, 1993**.
- Since 2015 India signed BITs with: **Uzbekistan (2024), UAE (2024), Brazil (2020), Belarus (2018)**.

India Showcases World's Largest Disaster Risk Reduction Financing System at the 8th GPDRR 2025

At the 8th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) 2025 in Geneva, India identified the absence of a dedicated international financial mechanism to support establishment of DRR financing systems.

- In this regard, India called for the creation of a global facility, backed by the UN system & multilateral financial institutions, to provide catalytic funding, technical assistance, and a platform for knowledge exchange.

India's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Financing System

- **India's Philosophy:** India believes in a strong and responsive DRR financing architecture as a cornerstone of resilience.

➤ India's Progress in DRR Financing:

- ⊕ **Initial Allocations:** Early Finance Commissions allocated **INR 60 million (~USD 0.7 million)**.

- ⊕ **Current Allocations:** Under the 15th Finance Commission, the allocation exceeds **INR 2.32 trillion (~USD 28 billion)**.

- **DRR Finance Mechanism:** India follows a **pre-determined, rule-based allocations** flowing from **national to state and district levels**, supported by the **Disaster Management Act of 2005**.

- ⊕ This transformation ensured that disaster financing is **structured and predictable** rather than **reactive**.

➤ India's DRR financing approach built on four key principles:

- ⊕ **First**, Dedicated financial windows for preparedness, mitigation, relief, and recovery.
- ⊕ **Second**, Prioritization of the needs of affected people and vulnerable communities.
- ⊕ **Third**, Accessibility of financial resources across all government levels—central, state, and local.
- ⊕ **Fourth**, Accountability, transparency, and measurable outcomes guiding all expenditures.

About CDRI			
 Launched Launched at UN Climate Action Summit (2019) by India.	 CDRI Partnership CDRI is a global partnership of nations, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, and the private sector.	 Objective To promote the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks ensuring sustainable development.	 Secretariat New Delhi (India).

Related News

African Union Joins Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) as 54th Member

- This announcement came on the margins of the 8th GPDRR 2025 in Geneva.
- **About GPDRR (established in 2006)**
 - ⊕ **Theme of the GPDRR, 2025:** "Every Day Counts, Act for Resilience Today."
 - ⊕ **It is a global forum** where participants take stock of progress, share new knowledge, exchange best practice and discuss the latest developments and trends in reducing disaster risk.
 - ⊕ **The UN General Assembly recognizes the GPDRR** as a critical mechanism to review progress on the implementation of the **Sendai Framework for DRR**.

Also In News



Index Cards

Election Commission of India has introduced a streamlined, technology-driven system to generate Index Cards and statistical reports, replacing the older manual, time-consuming methods.

About Index Cards

- **Description:** It is a **non-statutory, post-election statistical reporting format** developed by ECI as a suo moto initiative.
- **Objective:** To make constituency-level election data easily accessible to stakeholders such as researchers, academia, journalists, policymakers, and the general public.
- It **shares detailed election data** - like candidates, voters, votes, party and candidate vote shares, gender voting patterns, and regional differences.
- **Significance:** enhances transparency and supports in-depth electoral research, contributing to informed democratic discourse.



Greater Flamingo Sanctuary

Tamil Nadu notified Greater Flamingo Sanctuary at Dhanushkodi to preserve a critical stopover point along the Central Asian Flyway for thousands of migratory wetland birds.

About Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*):

- **IUCN Status:** Least Concern
- **Distribution:** Africa, western Asia (India), and southern Europe.
- **Habitat:** Breeds in shallow wetlands that are either saline or alkaline.
- **Features:** This species has a great dispersal capacity outside of the breeding season, but it is highly philopatric (to return to or remain near a particular site or area).
- **The Kachchh Desert Wildlife Sanctuary in the Great Rann of Kachchh (GRK) in Gujarat State**, is a unique Protected Area, that supports **South Asia's only breeding ground of Greater Flamingos**, internationally renowned as the "**Flamingo City**".



Indian Council of Arbitration

ICA organized the 3rd edition of its International Conference on "Arbitrating Indo-UK Commercial Disputes" during the London International Disputes Week (LIDW) 2025.

About Indian Council of Arbitration

- **Overview:** The ICA is India's premier arbitration institution, established in 1965.
- **Status:** It operates as a non-profit registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860,.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi and 10 branches across India.
- **Objective:** To promote quick, affordable, and amicable settlement of commercial disputes.
- **Features:**
 - ⊕ ICA mainly ensures cost-effective and efficient arbitration. It follows its own rules for the entire process.
 - ⊕ It specializes in maritime arbitration and offers education and training in alternative dispute resolution (ADR).



International Criminal Court

U.S. hits ICC judges with sanctions over investigation into Israel

About ICC

- **Origin:** Established under Rome Statute 2002
- **Headquarters:** The Hague, the Netherlands.
- **Jurisdiction:** Genocide, War crimes, Crimes against humanity and Crime of aggression, Prosecutes Individuals and not State or groups.
- **Members:** India is not its member.



National Plastic Waste Reporting Portal

The Environment Ministry launched the National Plastic Waste Reporting Portal on the eve of World Environment Day 2025.

About National Plastic Waste Reporting Portal

- **Comprehensive Waste Tracking:** The portal captures the complete plastic waste management ecosystem from waste pickers to waste processing to disposal.
- **Nationwide Data Access:** The data on plastic waste management for all Urban Local Bodies and District Panchayats from across the country will become available for better planning and waste management.



NAMASTE Scheme

Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) launched a **Nationwide Digital Application - Waste Picker Enumeration App** - for Profiling Waste Pickers under the **NAMASTE Scheme**.

About National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Scheme

- **Launched:** In 2023-24 as a **Central Sector Scheme**.
- **Objective:** To formalize and rehabilitate the persons engaged in hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks.
- **Jointly implemented:** By the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE)** and **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.
 - ⊕ **National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFCDC)** is the implementing agency for sewer and septic tank workers (SSWs).
- Its **mandate was expanded** in June 2024 to include **Waste Pickers**.



Rafale

Dassault Aviation partners with Tata Advanced Systems for Rafale fighter fuselage production in India.

- **India is set to become the first nation** other than France where the Rafael fuselage will be manufactured.
- **The fuselage:** It is the central body structure of an aircraft that serves as the main housing unit.

About Rafale Aircraft:

- **Characteristics:** It is a Twin-jet, 4.5 generation fighter aircraft.
- **The distinguishing capabilities of '4.5 Generation' fighters include:**
 - ⊕ low-observability to radar
 - ⊕ ability to supercruise (fly at supersonic speed without using afterburners)
 - ⊕ extreme manoeuvrability at all speeds.
- The Indian Air Force already operates 36 Rafales & the Indian Navy will induct 26 Rafale Marine jets by 2030.



Aravalli Green Wall Project

On the occasion of World Environment Day, Prime Minister highlighted the importance of **reforesting the Aravalli range under the Aravalli Green Wall project**.

- He also said that the **plantation activities** in the **Aravalli range and beyond** will be **geo-tagged and monitored on the Meri LiFE portal**.

About Aravalli Green Wall Project

- It is **part of Environment Ministry's vision** to create **green corridors** across the country to combat land degradation and desertification.
- **Project aimed** at creating a **continuous green belt (5 km buffer area) across the 700-km stretch of Aravalli range**.
 - ⊕ **Aravalli range is one of the oldest on the planet**, spanning **Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi**.
- **Objectives:** To prevent eastward expansion of Thar Desert; Carbon sequestration; Contribute to **India's commitments to UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC, etc.**



Fusarium graminearum

Recently, a Chinese national was charged with conspiracy and smuggling a **potent plant pathogen - Fusarium graminearum** - into the US raising concerns of **agro-terrorism**.

- **Agroterrorism** means deliberate use of **biological agents to destroy agriculture**.

About Fusarium graminearum

- It is an **ascomyceteous fungus** that causes **Fusarium head blight (FHB)** in cereal crops, including wheat, barley, rice, and oats.
- It leads not only to **yield and quality losses** but also **contaminate grains by producing mycotoxins** that are **hazardous to livestock and humans**.

Global framework against bioterrorism

- **Biological Weapons Convention** (entered into force in 1975);
- **Australia Group:** Informal group to coordinate national export control laws to minimize the risk of proliferation of chemical and biological weapons.

