

India reduced Basic Custom duty (BCD) on major imported Crude edible Oils from 20% to 10%

This adjustment aims to address the escalating edible oil prices, thereby strengthening and revitalizing the domestic refining sector.

Edible Oils Scenario in India

- **About:** Edible oils are mainly vegetable oils that are subjected to several processes to remove undesirable constituents.
 - ⊕ To make them suitable for human consumption, most edible oils are subjected to **refining processes, such as neutralization, bleaching and deodorization.**
- **Major 9 edible oil crops in India:** Groundnut, rapeseed-mustard, soybean, sunflower, sesame, safflower, nigerseed, castor and linseed.

➤ Status:

- ⊕ India accounts for approx.**15-20%** of the global oilseed area, **6-7%** of vegetable oil production, and **9-10%** of total consumption.
- ⊕ India is **heavily dependent on imports** to meet its edible oil requirements and is the **world's largest importer** of vegetable oils, followed by **China and the USA.**
 - ◆ Of all the imported edible oils, the share of palm oil is about **57%**, followed by **soybean oil (29%) and sunflower (14%).**
- ⊕ Among 9 major oilseeds, **soybean (34%), rapeseed & mustard (31%) and groundnut (27%)** contribute to more than **92% of total oilseeds production** in the country.

Other initiatives taken to increase domestic edible oil production

- **National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP):** Launched in 2021 aimed at boosting domestic oilseed production and achieving self-reliance in edible oils.
- **National Food Security Mission- Oilseeds & Oil palm (NFSM-OS&OP)** Launched in 2018-19 for increasing the production and productivity of 9 oilseed crops and area expansion under Oil Palm & Tree Borne Oilseeds.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) completes Nine Years

PMUY is a **flagship welfare scheme** that provides **domestic Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)** to enhance access to **clean energy** for households.

About Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

- **Launch Year: 2016.**
- **Ministry:** Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG).
- **Objective:** To make clean cooking fuel such as LPG available to the rural and deprived households which were otherwise using traditional cooking fuels such as firewood, coal, cow-dung cakes, etc.
- **Original target:** The target under the scheme was to release **8 Crore** LPG Connections to deprived households by **2020.**
 - ⊕ **Ujjwala 2.0:** Additional allocation of **1.6 Crore** LPG Connections by **December 2022** under **PMUY scheme** with special facility to migrant households.
- **Eligibility Criteria**
 - ⊕ **Applicants (woman only)** must have attained **18 years** of age.
 - ⊕ **Adult women** belonging SC, ST, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin), Most Backward Classes (MBC), Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), Tea and Ex- Tea Garden tribes, Forest Dwellers, People residing in Islands and River Islands, enlisted under SECC Households, etc.
- **Achievements**
 - ⊕ **As of March 2025,** there are **10.33 crore PMUY** connections across India.
 - ⊕ Total number of **LPG distributors** increased from 13,896 in 2014 to **25,481** in 2024, marking an **83%** growth.



India's social security coverage jumps to 64.3%, ranks 2nd globally: ILO

India's social security coverage has increased from 19 per cent in 2015 to 64.3 per cent (**Over 94 crore**) in 2025 as per the latest data from the International Labour Organisation's ILOSTAT with a **45 percentage point surge** over the past decade.

What is Social Security/Protection?

➤ **Definition:** Social security is the protection that a society provides to individuals and households to ensure **access to health care and to guarantee income security**, particularly in cases of **old age, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, maternity, etc.**

⊕ The three pillars of social protection are social assistance, social insurance and labor market programs to help self-reliance and independence.

Initiatives taken for social protection

- **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-SYM) (Old Age Protection) (18-40 years):** 50% monthly contribution by the beneficiary and equal contribution by the Central Government.
- **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) (18 to 50 years):** Rs.2 lakh on death due to any cause.
- **Atal Pension Yojana (18-40 years):** Can attain a pension of 1000-5000 rupees.
- **Other: Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) (18 to 70 years), Public Distribution system, Ayushman Bharat, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin, etc.**



ICG intensifies Operations to control burning Cargo ship off Kerala Coast

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is conducting rescue of crew members and facilitating towing operations of the vessel, which caught fire off Kerala and drifted within **India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**.

➤ Previously, last month, a container ship sank off the coast of Kerala with hazardous cargo washed ashore raising concerns about maritime disasters and safety.

Risks of disasters associated with Maritime Shipping

- **Sea and its hazards:** Risks may be **predictable** (storm, frost) or **unpredictable** (tsunami, a submarine or a piece of wreckage, a contact with a mine).
 - ⊕ Risks get bigger in **straits, channels (Panama, Suez) and the "sea highways"**, due to numerous wrecks in shallow waters.
- **State of the ship:** The growing density of ferries with higher tonnage and old age and technology of ships.
- **New risks:** Transport of hazardous chemical products, dangerous cargo, nuclear wastes, submarines and weapons, etc.
- **Others:** Human error, wars, maritime piracy, terrorism, etc.



Consequences

- **Environment:** Marine pollution such as oil spills, loss of biodiversity, ballast water contamination, etc.
- **Health:** Toxic exposure from chemicals/oil can cause long-term health issues for cleanup workers and locals, etc.
- **Economic loss and safety:** Devaluation of the shores, beach cleanup operations, loss of coastal livelihoods, deteriorating tourism, etc.

Related International Conventions

- **Bunker Convention, 2001:** Holds shipowners liable for bunker oil pollution, ensures victim compensation, and compulsory insurance coverage.
- **Wreck Removal Convention, 2007:** Legal basis for States to remove shipwrecks that may affect the safety.
- **HNS Convention, 1996:** To ensure compensation for damage, costs of clean up and reinstatement measures.
- **MARPOL (1973):** International convention preventing marine pollution from ships specifically addressing oil pollution prevention and control.

Note: Of the above conventions, India is signatory only to the MARPOL convention.

UGC issues Show-Cause Notice for non-compliance with Anti-Ragging Regulations

Recently, University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued notice to multiple Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) who failed to comply with **UGC Regulations on Ragging, 2009** and directed them to **submit compliance within 30 days**.

- Ragging is defined as any disorderly conduct, whether by words spoken or written or by an act, that **has the effect of teasing, treating, or handling with rudeness a fresher or a junior student**.

Salient provisions of UGC Anti-Ragging Regulations, 2009

- **Before admissions:** Institutions must include anti-ragging warnings in all admission materials, **collect signed undertakings from students and parents**.
- **On admission:** Fresh students must **receive comprehensive information leaflets about their rights and participate in joint sensitization programs** with seniors.
- **Setting up of Committees and their functions:** Three key bodies must be established - the **Anti-Ragging Committee, Anti-Ragging Squad and Monitoring Cell on Ragging**.
- **Punishments:** Punishments range **from suspension, expulsion to fines**.

Other Anti-Ragging measures in India

- **Anti-Ragging Monitoring Committee:** Constituted in the Union Ministry of Education to prevent ragging in higher educational institutions.
- **National Anti-Ragging Helpline:** Support is provided for queries related to ragging, **compliant registration, among others**.
- **Raghavan Committee (2007):** Recommended making ragging a criminal offense, **collective responsibility** among faculty, staff, and the anti-ragging body to address ragging cases, etc.
- **Supreme Court judgment (2009):** Setting up a toll-free anti-ragging helpline/ call center, engaging an independent non-government agency as the monitoring agency, etc.

Review of the State Of World Marine Fishery Resources 2025 released by FAO

The report highlights the unique challenges deep-sea species pose for sustainable exploitation, including late maturation, slow growth, long life expectancies, low natural mortality rates, and infrequent spawning.

- It also highlights the threat of overfishing as well as **Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing as major concerns**.

Key Findings

- **Only 29% of deep-sea fish stocks are being sustainably fished, making them highly vulnerable.**
- Globally, **64.5% of all fishery stocks are exploited within sustainable levels, while 35.5% are overfished.**
- Over half of highly migratory shark stocks are considered unsustainable, **with 43.5% of 23 assessed shark stocks being overfished.**

The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies creates three key prohibitions:

- Bans subsidies for vessels or operators involved in **IUU fishing**.
- Prohibits subsidies for fishing overfished stocks **unless measures are in place to rebuild them to sustainable levels**.
- Forbids subsidies for fishing activities **outside coastal state jurisdiction and beyond regional fisheries management organization oversight**.

About IUU fishing

It is a broad term that captures a **wide variety of fishing activity, occurring both on the high seas and in areas within national jurisdiction**.

- **Illegal fishing:** Conducted without permission in State waters or violating national laws.
- **Unreported fishing:** Not reported or misreported to national authorities, violating **national regulations**.
- **Unregulated fishing:** Conducted by stateless vessels or non-party States in regional organization areas, violating conservation measures.

Also In News



Lokpal

The Full Bench of Lokpal of India has adopted a new motto "**Empower Citizens, Expose Corruption**".

About Lokpal

- **Legal provision:** Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013 to investigate allegations of corruption against public functionaries.
 - ⊕ It shall apply to public servants **in and outside India and Prime Minister**.
- **Composition:** Chairperson and eight Members.
 - ⊕ S/he should not be
 - ◆ Member of Parliament or State legislature
 - ◆ Convicted of any offence
 - ◆ Less than forty-five years of age.
- **Chairperson:** CJI or a Supreme Court judge, or an eminent person.
- **Term:** Five years or until they attain the age of 70 years.



Schengen Area

An Indian employee at the French Embassy in New Delhi scammed hundreds of people, **by promising them Schengen visas**.

About Schengen Area

- **The Schengen area is composed of 29 countries:** 25 EU Member States and 4 non-EU countries (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein).
- These countries engage in **closer cooperation allowing them to achieve greater benefits that would be impossible to attain individually**.
- The checks at **internal borders between them have been abolished**.
- Schengen is also a major **driver of competitiveness for 32 million European businesses, contributing significantly to the Single Market**.



Exercise Khaan Quest

Indian Army contingent reached Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia for the **22nd Multinational Military Exercise Khaan Quest**, which is scheduled to be conducted from 14th to 28th June 2025.

About Exercise Khaan Quest

- **Genesis:** Bilateral initiative between the United States and Mongolia in 2003.
 - ⊕ **First multilateral exercise KHAAN QUEST: 2006.**
- **Objective:** To prepare Indian Armed Forces for peacekeeping missions under **Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter**.
 - ⊕ **Chapter VII** of the United Nations Charter mentions **Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression**.



International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA)

India, as the Vice President of IALA actively participated in the 2nd Session of the **IALA Council**, held in Nice, France.

About IALA

- **Established:** In 1957, as International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA).
 - ⊕ **In 2024:** Officially changed its status from a **Non-governmental Organization (NGO)** to an **Intergovernmental Organization (IGO)**.
- **Objective:** To navigate authorities, manufacturers, consultants, and scientific and **training institutes from all parts of the world** and offer them the opportunity to exchange and compare their experiences and achievements.



Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone

A solid-waste incinerator installed at Gangotri, **inside Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone (BESZ)** has concerned social activist groups.

- **Eco-sensitive Zones** are **ecologically fragile areas** around Protected Areas and wildlife corridors notified under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.
- Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone (BESZ)**
 - It is created to protect **River Ganga's most pristine stretch covering 4179.59 sq. km. between Gaumukh and Uttarkashi town.**
 - Notification, issued in 2012, **mandates the State Government of Uttarakhand to prepare the Zonal Master Plan (ZMP) to be implemented** under the supervision of the Monitoring Committee.



Reasoning-based language model (RLM)

French AI startup Mistral launches Europe's first reasoning-based language model.

- **Large language models (LLM)** are AI systems capable of understanding and generating human language by processing vast amounts of text data.
- About Reasoning-based language model**
 - **RLMs** redefined **AI's problem-solving capabilities** by extending LLMs with advanced reasoning mechanisms.
 - **These models** employ chain-of-thought techniques, breaking down problems step by step to reach more accurate and contextually aware solutions.
 - ⊕ **Unlike traditional large language models** that rely heavily on vast datasets and computational power.
 - **Concerns:** High costs, proprietary nature, and complex architectures.



Merchant Discount Rate

Ministry of Finance clarified that there is no plan to impose MDR on UPI payments.

About Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)

- MDR is a **fee** that banks **charge merchants** for processing payments in real time.
 - ⊕ Earlier, merchants used to pay an MDR fee amounting to 1 % of the total transaction value on card payments.
- But in 2020, the **government waived off MDR** charges to promote digital payments in the country.



Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism

India has voiced "deep reservations" about the European Union (EU)'s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

About the CBAM

- It is the EU's tool to put a **fair price on the carbon emitted during the production of carbon intensive goods (steel, aluminium, cement etc)** that are entering the EU, and to encourage cleaner industrial production in non-EU countries.
 - ⊕ It is part of its **"Fit for 55" strategy** aiming at reducing EU greenhouse gas emissions by at least **55% by 2030**.
- **Enforcement: From 2026** while transitional phase lasts between 2023 and 2025.

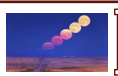


Eurasian Otter

Recently, a rare sighting of Eurasian otters has now been reported in south Kashmir.

About Eurasian Otter (Lutra lutra)

- It is a **semiaquatic mammal** native to Eurasia and the Maghreb (Africa).
- **Distribution: 3 continents** (Europe, Asia and Africa).
 - ⊕ In India, it occurs in northern, northeast, and southern India.
- **Characteristics**
 - ⊕ It has **sleek brown fur** and a **long lithe body** with a thick tail and short legs.
 - ⊕ **Adaptations for an aquatic lifestyle:** Include webbed feet, ability to close small ears and nose when under water.
 - ⊕ Very dense, short fur that traps a layer of air to insulate the animal.
- **Conservation status**
 - ⊕ **IUCN Status :** Near threatened
 - ⊕ **CITES :** Appendix I



Major Lunar standstill

A rare major lunar standstill phenomenon was seen recently with the radiant lunar spectacle the Strawberry Moon.

- **June's full moon, known as the Strawberry Moon;** traditionally named after the strawberry harvest season in North America.

About Major Lunar standstill

- It occurs when the Moon's orbit reaches its **maximum tilt relative to Earth**.
- This causes the Moon to rise and set at its **most extreme points along the horizon**; as a result, the Moon appears lower in the sky than usual in the Northern Hemisphere.
- Major lunar standstill, a rare astronomical event that happens **only once every 18.6 years**.