



# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition

## Current Affairs - 22 May 2026



### RUSSIA–CHINA PROXIMITY AND INDIA’S SECURITY CHALLENGE

Russian President Vladimir Putin’s visit to Beijing, coming just days after US President Donald Trump’s trip, highlights China’s growing role as a central hub of global diplomacy.

While the US seeks to stabilise strained relations with China, Russia is looking to secure continued economic support from Beijing and maintain its strategic relevance amid global geopolitical shifts.

Given that the US, China, and Russia are key **systemic powers**, the nature of their interactions will significantly shape the future global order.

Putin’s visit is therefore important not just for bilateral ties, but for regional and global strategic stability, raising questions about whether the deepening Russia–China partnership could eventually evolve into a formal military alliance.

#### **Deepening Russia–China Strategic Partnership**

- Russia and China have developed strong political and economic interdependence, driven by complementary strengths.
- While China provides markets, technology, and capital, Russia supplies energy and defence products.
- Western sanctions after the Ukraine war significantly **increased Russia’s dependence on China**, which now accounts for about 32% of Russia’s total trade (\$228 billion out of \$700 billion in 2025).
- Chinese firms have filled the vacuum left by Western companies in automobiles, telecom, and electronics, while Russia increasingly relies on Chinese semiconductors and industrial technology.
- Energy ties have deepened through the Power of Siberia gas pipelines.
- Politically, frequent leadership interactions reflect strategic closeness, while bilateral trade in yuan and ruble signals growing de-dollarisation of economic ties.

### Are Russia and China Moving Towards a Military Alliance

- Russia and China are drawing closer due to changing global geopolitics, particularly their shared perception of the United States as a structural rival.
- However, they are **not natural allies** in terms of culture, ideology, political systems, or historical affinity.
- A military alliance involves a formal commitment to defend each other against external threats. Despite growing cooperation, both countries are cautious about the risks associated with such alliances.
- China does not want to be dragged into Russia's confrontation with the West, especially over Ukraine. Russia, likewise, is reluctant to become entangled in China's tensions with the US over Taiwan.
- While strategic and military cooperation between Russia and China is expected to deepen, a formal military alliance appears unlikely in the near future, as both seek flexibility rather than binding security commitments.
- Recent US-China diplomatic engagement has further reduced the likelihood of such an alliance in the short term.

### Implications for India's Security

- Russia's growing dependence on China poses a significant strategic challenge for India. For the past two decades, India has maintained a balancing strategy by deepening security ties with the United States while preserving strong relations with Russia.
  - However, this diplomatic space is shrinking as both Washington and Moscow seek closer engagement with Beijing.
  - As a result, India may need to recalibrate its strategic approach, as reliance on the US for continental security balancing appears increasingly uncertain, particularly under the current geopolitical circumstances.
-

### RUPEE DEPRECIATION, RBI INTERVENTION AND INDIA'S EXTERNAL SECTOR CHALLENGES

- The Indian rupee has witnessed a sharp depreciation, sliding close to **₹97 per US dollar** amid rising oil prices, geopolitical tensions in West Asia, foreign capital outflows, and global financial uncertainty.
- The debate has intensified over whether the Reserve Bank of India should actively intervene or allow the rupee to “find its market level”.

#### Why is the Rupee Falling?

- **Pressure from the capital account:**
  - Contrary to conventional explanations, the recent depreciation is not primarily due to weak macroeconomic fundamentals.
  - India continues to record relatively **strong GDP growth**, manageable inflation, and fiscal consolidation.
  - The core issue lies in the capital account:
    - Persistent Foreign Institutional Investor (FII) outflows since mid-2025.
    - Negative net Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows during several months.
    - Rising **US interest rates** making dollar assets more attractive.
    - Heightened global risk aversion due to the West Asia crisis.

This has reduced dollar inflows into India while increasing demand for foreign currency.

#### Debate on RBI Intervention:

- **Argument for a market-determined rupee:**
  - Economists argue that excessive intervention distorts markets.
  - A weaker rupee theoretically discourages imports, boosts exports, and **restores** external balance **naturally**.
  - They caution that defending a currency level can deplete forex reserves, delay necessary adjustments, and create future instability.

- **Argument for RBI intervention:**
  - Some economists argue that uncontrolled depreciation, especially when driven by speculative finance rather than fundamentals, can become dangerous.
  - **Risks of unchecked depreciation:**
    - **Imported inflation**, especially through crude oil.
    - Higher production costs due to import dependence.
    - Rising inflation expectations.
    - Panic-driven capital flight.
    - Adverse investor sentiment.
  - The RBI therefore intervenes not to target a fixed exchange rate, but to prevent “excessive and disruptive volatility.”

### Way Forward for India:

- **Allow:** Gradual market-driven adjustment while preventing speculative volatility.
- **Strengthen:** Long-term capital inflows through manufacturing and technology reforms (globally attractive AI and advanced-tech investment opportunities).
- **Reduce:** Import dependence, particularly in energy and critical intermediates.
- **Expand:** Export diversification and competitiveness under initiatives like “Make in India”.
- **Deepen:** Domestic financial markets to reduce vulnerability to external shocks.
- **Maintain:** Adequate forex reserves as a buffer against global uncertainty.

### Conclusion:

- India should avoid both extremes — neither rigidly defending the rupee nor allowing disorderly depreciation. A **calibrated strategy** is essential.
- Ultimately, exchange-rate stability cannot rest solely on RBI intervention. Sustainable rupee strength will depend on improving India’s structural competitiveness, external resilience, and investor confidence in the long run.

### REGULATION, NOT BANS, CAN PROTECT ONLINE GAMERS

- The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming (**PROG**) Act, 2025 was enacted to protect individuals, particularly youth and vulnerable populations, from the harmful social, economic, and psychological effects of online gambling.
- The Act aimed to reduce addiction, financial losses, and privacy-related concerns associated with online games involving money.
- However, instead of eliminating gambling activities, the law has unintentionally encouraged users to shift toward illegal **offshore platforms**, creating new concerns related to **cybercrime**, **money laundering**, and weak **consumer protection**.
- The growing evidence suggests that a complete ban may not be the most effective solution in the digital era.

#### Rise in Offshore Platform Use

- **Shift from Domestic to Illegal Platforms**

Following the implementation of the PROG Act in October 2025, many users moved from regulated Indian gaming platforms to illegal offshore gambling websites.

- In **Delhi NCR**, offshore usage rose from 68.3% to 82%.
- In **Tamil Nadu**, it increased from 67.8% to 83%.
- In **Maharashtra**, the figure rose sharply to 91.7%.
- Instead of abandoning online gambling, users increasingly relied on foreign platforms operating outside Indian laws and regulations.
- **Technological Challenges**
  - Offshore operators use advanced technologies such as **VPNs**, **proxy servers**, and encrypted applications like **WhatsApp** and **Telegram** to bypass restrictions.
  - When one domain is blocked, users are quickly redirected to mirror websites with minimal interruption.
  - As a result, users continue to access illegal gambling services despite repeated enforcement efforts.

- **Threats from Offshore Operators**

- Offshore gambling platforms are associated with serious risks such as **financial fraud, terror financing**, and illegal money transfers.
- Since these platforms operate outside Indian jurisdiction, users have limited access to **grievance redressal** and legal remedies.

### Need for a Balanced Regulatory Framework

- **Advantages of Regulation**

- A regulated domestic framework could provide stronger **consumer safeguards**, effective monitoring mechanisms, and improved accountability.
- Regulation would also enable authorities to track suspicious transactions and reduce illegal financial activities linked to offshore networks.
- Moreover, a regulated gaming ecosystem could generate significant **tax revenue**.
- These funds could be used to strengthen enforcement systems, improve offshore monitoring, and conduct public awareness campaigns about gambling addiction and financial risks.

- **Cooperation Between Governments**

- Addressing illegal online gambling requires coordination between the **Centre and State governments**.
- A balanced approach combining regulation, technological monitoring, and public awareness would be more sustainable than relying solely on prohibition.

### Conclusion

- The experience following the implementation of the PROG Act, 2025, demonstrates that outright bans are often ineffective in controlling online gambling.
- Instead of eliminating gambling activities, the ban has encouraged the growth of illegal offshore platforms that operate beyond domestic oversight.
- In the long run, **strong regulation**, combined with **technological safeguards** and public awareness, is likely to be a more effective solution for addressing the challenges posed by online gambling in India.



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

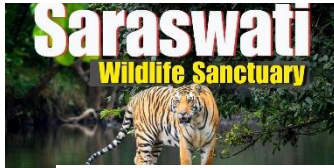
School of Research Based Learning & Competition

## Current Affairs - 22 May 2026



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

### SARASWATI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



- Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary, also known as the **Seonsar Forest**, is located in the districts of Kaithal and Kurukshetra, in **Haryana**.

- Culturally and ecologically significant, the sanctuary is **tied to the mythical Saraswati River**, believed to have flowed through the region.
- The sanctuary is also home to **ancient archaeological remains**, with **bricks** found here **dating back to the Kushan and Gupta periods**, suggesting the **area was inhabited over 1,500 years ago**.
- There is also a **400-year-old Water well** made of small lakhauri bricks associated with the **Mughal empire era**.
- **Flora:** The forest is characterized by "**Sub-group 5B tropical deciduous forest**" vegetation, featuring dense clusters of Kikar, Neem, Shisham, and Peepal trees.
- **Fauna:**
  - It is a critical habitat for a variety of wildlife, including the **Blue Bull (Nilgai)**, **Wild Boar, Spotted Deer, and the rare Hog Deer**.
  - It hosts over **250 species of resident and migratory birds**, especially during the winter months.



## MUGA SILK

### MUGA SILK



- It is known as the "**golden silk**" of Assam.
- It is a **rare and prestigious textile** from the **Brahmaputra Valley**.
  - It is obtained from **semi-domesticated multivoltine silkworm, Antheraea assamensis**. These silkworms feed on the **aromatic leaves of Som and Soalu plants** and are reared on trees similar to that of tasar.

- It is valued for its **natural golden hue**, durability and eco-friendly production **without artificial dyes**.
- Muga culture is specific to the state of Assam and an integral part of the tradition and culture of that state.
- The muga silk, an high value product is used in **products like sarees, mekhalas, chaddars, etc.**
- It was received the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2007**.

### Key Facts about Shirui Lily silk

- It draws its inspiration from the misty heights of **Shirui Kashong peak in Manipur**.
- It is inspired by **the rare Shirui Lily**, (a delicate **bell-shaped flower** with pale pinkish-white petals that blooms nowhere else in the world).
- For the **Tangkul Naga community** of Manipur, the Shirui Lily symbolises purity, identity, and cultural pride.
- The lily also **holds deep cultural resonance in Italy**, where it has long symbolised purity, grace and artistic refinement, frequently appearing in Renaissance art.

### KIWI FRUIT



- The Kiwi fruit (*Actinidia deliciosa* also known as **Chinese Gooseberry**) is a **small, edible, oval-shaped fruit**.
- **Appearance:** It has fuzzy brown skin and bright green or golden flesh with edible black seeds.

### Required Climatic Conditions for Kiwi:

- It grows well **between 900 to 1600 m above mean sea level** wherever the climate is **warm and humid**.
- **Rain:** It requires a well distributed rainfall of **about 150 cm** for its growth.
- **Soil:** Deep, rich, **well-drained sandy loam** soils are ideal for cultivation of kiwi.

- It requires **700-800 chilling hours** (no. of hours during which temperature remains at or below 70 C during the winter season).
- **Nutritional Value:** It is a rich source of **vitamin B & C** and minerals like **phosphorus, potassium & calcium**.
- **Distribution:** It is grown widely in **New Zealand, Italy, USA, China, Japan, Australia, France, Chile and Spain**.
- In India, it is mostly grown in **Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Kerala**.

### PULICAT LAKE



- It is a vast **coastal shallow, brackish water lagoon** along the **coast of Bay of Bengal** into which streams drain.
- It is the **second largest brackish water lagoon** in India after Chilika, sprawling across **Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu**.
- This lagoon is separated from the **Bay of Bengal** by the **Sriharikota island**.
- It is **fed by the Aarani River** at the southern tip and the **Kalangi River** from the northwest. The **Buckingham Canal**, a navigation channel, passes through the lagoon.
- It was designated as a **Ramsar site in 2002**.
- **Biodiversity:** It is a **unique ecotone** that supports rich biodiversity — from aquatic life such as mudskippers, seagrass beds, and oyster reefs to more than 200 avian species,

**Flora:** The green kingdom is represented with about 132 plant species like Walsura piscida; Manilkara elengi, Excoecaria agalloca, Spinifex littoreus, Calamus viminalis, etc.

**Fauna:** It includes migratory birds such as Flamingo, **Eurasian curlews, oystercatchers**, bar-tailed godwits, sand plovers, and greater flamingos.