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Current Affairs - 03 August 2025

IMPACT OF TRUMP'S TARIFFS ON INDIA

U.S. President Donald Trump announced a 25% tariff plus an additional penalty on Indian imports, ending months of speculation. However, this move has introduced fresh uncertainty over the prospects of a bilateral trade agreement between India and the U.S., complicating future trade negotiations.

Trump Imposes Tariffs on India

- U.S. President Donald Trump announced a **25% tariff on Indian imports**, citing India's **tariff and non-tariff barriers** and its **energy and defense dealings with Russia** as key reasons.
- While details of the additional penalty remain unclear, Trump has previously threatened a **10% extra tariff on BRICS nations**, which could raise India's effective tariff rate to **35%**.
- Additionally, pending U.S. legislation proposes a **500% tariff on India, China, and Brazil** for their continued engagements with Russia, adding further uncertainty to India-U.S. trade relations.

Impact of Trump's Tariffs on Indian Economy and Key Export Sectors

- While U.S. importers will bear the direct cost of the new tariffs, Indian goods will become less competitive and more expensive in the U.S. market.
- On a macroeconomic level, the tariffs are expected to reduce India's GDP growth by 0.2%, lowering forecasts from 6.6% to 6.4%, according to Bank of Baroda research.
- However, the real impact will be sector-specific, hitting industries like garments, precious stones, auto parts, leather goods, and possibly electronics.
 - These sectors may face pricing disadvantages compared to competitors from Vietnam, South Korea, and Indonesia, who benefit from lower tariffs.
- Exporters in these sectors will need to rework their strategies to stay competitive.

The Breakdown of India-U.S. Trade Talks Leading to Tariffs



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- In February 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump announced plans to finalise the first tranche of a bilateral trade deal by fall, a move seen as a positive commitment to strengthening ties.
- This announcement came ahead of Trump's broader reciprocal tariffs strategy, which pressured other countries to enter negotiations with the U.S.
- However, on April 2, Trump launched his Liberation Day tariffs, imposing a 10% baseline tariff globally and additional country-specific tariffs, with India facing a 26% total tariff.
- Following backlash, Trump announced a 90-day pause to allow for bilateral negotiations aimed at reducing trade deficits.
- The pause, initially set to expire in July, was extended until August 1, but no breakthrough was reached, leading to the imposition of tariffs.

Multiple Frictions Strain India-U.S. Trade Relations

- While no single incident has soured India-U.S. ties, several points of friction have built up in recent months.
- President Trump has consistently **criticised India's tariff and non-tariff barriers** and has also raised concerns about **India's continued energy and defense dealings with Russia**, accusing it of indirectly financing the Ukraine war.
- India, however, has defended its **energy security strategy**, with Russia supplying 35-40% of its oil imports.
- Additionally, **India's refusal to open its agriculture and dairy sectors** to foreign competition remains a major sticking point, as it protects vulnerable domestic farmers.
- Tensions escalated further when **Trump claimed credit for the India-Pakistan ceasefire** (Operation Sindoor), a claim firmly rejected by India.
- In response to U.S. tariffs on Indian goods like steel and aluminium, India has informed the WTO of its right to impose retaliatory tariffs.
- These cumulative issues have set the stage for Trump's recent tariff imposition, reflecting the growing strains in bilateral ties.



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MATRI VAN INITIATIVE



- It is an initiative under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' Programme of Government of India.
- It is a **theme based urban forest** dedicated to nurturing generations through mother-nature-inspired green efforts - would be developed in an area of 750 acres in the Aravalli Hill area.
- It is envisioned as a **unique ecological and cultural space** that will contribute to **biodiversity, public well-being, and urban sustainability**.
- This vision would be achieved through a multi-stakeholder collaboration involving CSR partners, **Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs)**, **NGOs**, **multinational corporations (MNCs)**, school children and government organizations.
- The main components of the 'Matri Van' would include removal of existing bushes like Kabuli Kikar (*Prosopis juliflora*) and plantation of Dhak/Amaltash Trees along Gurugram-Faridabad Road, while creating theme-based Plantation Groves to restore local ecology in the Aravallis.
- It would further include **nature trails, cycle track, yoga places, sitting places/gazebos**, public facilities, parking at four corners, treated water irrigation system/misting/sprinkling, waterbodies at selected locations for conservation of water and to check urban flooding.

PM NATIONAL DIALYSIS PROGRAMME



- It was rolled out in 2016 to provide **dialysis services free of cost** to Below Poverty Line (BPL) beneficiaries at the district hospitals in the country.



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- It is being **implemented under the National Health Mission (NHM)** to provide free dialysis services to patients **suffering from end-stage kidney failure in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.**
- **Components:** The programme supports both **Haemodialysis and Peritoneal Dialysis services.**
- Under this initiative the **PMNDP portal** was launched which will **integrate all the dialysis centres operational** in the state under NHM and facilitate **building of renal registry** and ensuring **portability within the state** (One State One Dialysis) and later throughout the country (One Nation-One Dialysis).
- **Funding:** The NHM **provides financial assistance to States and UTs** for establishing and operating dialysis centres to ensure equitable access to kidney care services for all, regardless of geography.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

WHAT IS THE APNA GHAR INITIATIVE?



- It is an initiative of the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India.**
- It aims to provide comfortable and hygienic **resting spaces for truckers across major highways** in the country.
- As of July 1, 2025, a total of 368 'Apna Ghar' units with 4,611 beds have been **set up by Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) at retail fuel outlets along national and state highways.**
- The **facilities at 'Apna Ghar' include:**
 - **Dormitories** (10-30) beds
 - **Restaurants/Dhabas**
 - **Self-cooking areas**
 - **Clean toilets**



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- Dedicated **bathing areas** (Houdas)
- Purified drinking water facilities
- **Other Features:**
 - **Tech Integration:** ‘Apna Ghar’ mobile application introduced for reservations, reviews, and driver interaction.
 - **Public-Private Execution:** Developed and overseen by OMCs at retail fuel outlets.
 - **User-Focused Design:** Tailored to the requirements of truckers, guided by their feedback and insights from **mobile app data analysis**.

INVESTOR EDUCATION AND PROTECTION FUND AUTHORITY



Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA Authority)

- The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) was established in **2016 under the Companies Act, 2013**.
- It manages the **Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF)** and promotes investor awareness and financial protection.
- It makes refunds of shares, unclaimed dividends, matured deposits/debentures etc. to investors and promotes awareness among investors.
- It is dedicated to **safeguarding investor interests** by facilitating the return of unclaimed shares and dividends and advancing financial literacy nationwide.
- **Initiatives:** Through flagship initiatives such as **Niveshak Didi, Niveshak Panchayat, and Niveshak Shivir**, IEPFA empowers individuals to make informed financial choices and fosters a financially aware citizenry.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- The IEPF consists of amounts that remained **unclaimed for 7 years, including:**
 - Unpaid dividends,
 - Application money due for refund,
 - Matured deposits and debentures,



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- Interest on investments from the fund,
- Grants or donations received from the government or other entities

DE-NOTIFIED, NOMADIC AND SEMI-NOMADIC TRIBES



- **Denotified Tribes (DNT)** also known as **Vimukta Jati**, are the tribes that were **listed originally under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871** as criminal tribes.
 - Once a tribe becomes "Notified" as a criminal, all its members were required to register with the local magistrates, failing which they would be charged with a 'crime' under the Indian Penal Code.
- **After Independence, this Act was repealed in 1952**, and the communities were **“denotified”**, hence the name.
- **Nomadic Tribes** are the communities who usually **do not have land and move from one place to another** for livelihood.
- The DNT/NT/SNTs are among the most neglected, marginalised, and economically deprived communities.
- Historically, these communities never had access to private land or home ownership and used forests and grazing lands for their livelihood and residential use.

Status of DNT/NT/SNTs in India:

- In India, roughly **10 percent** of the **population is Denotified and Nomadic**.
- While the number of **Denotified Tribes** is about **150**, the population of **Nomadic Tribes** consists of about **500 different communities**.
- In **2014**, the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** constituted a **National Commission** for DNT/NT/SNTs under the **chairmanship of Bhiku Ramji Idate** for a period of three years-
 - to **prepare a State-wise list** of castes belonging to DNT/NT/SNTs



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- to **suggest appropriate measures** in respect of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes that may be undertaken by the Central Government or the State Government.
- **In 2017**, the commission prepared draft lists of DNT/NT/SNTs.
- **Based on the Commission's recommendations**, the ministry constituted the **Development and Welfare Board for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DWBDNCs)** in 2019.
 - The Board has been **mandated** to formulate and **implement welfare and development programmes** for these communities.
- The **Renke Commission (2008)** was earlier commissioned to **identify and list the DNT communities**.

Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED):

- It was launched by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** for the welfare of De-notified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic (DNT) Communities.
- It has been formulated **for families having income** from all sources of **Rs 2.50 lakh or less per annum** and **not availing any such benefits** from a similar scheme of Centre or state government.
- **Aim:** To provide **free competitive exam coaching, health insurance, housing assistance and livelihood initiatives** at the community level, and **financial assistance for construction of houses** will be provided to the members of DNT/NT/SNT Communities.
- An amount of **200 crore** has been allocated for this scheme — to be **spent over five years** from FY2021-22 to FY2025-26.

KEY FACTS ABOUT MAHANADI RIVER



- It is one of the major **east-flowing peninsular rivers** located in the states of **Chhattisgarh and Odisha**.



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- It ranks **second to the Godavari River** among the **peninsular rivers** in respect of **water potential**.
- **Course:**
 - **Origin:** The river originates from the **Sihawa range of hills** in the Dhamtari district of **Chhattisgarh**.
 - It then flows in the eastward direction, **cutting a ravine in the Eastern Ghat**.
 - **Before joining the Bay of Bengal at False Point** through several channels near the major seaport town of Paradip, the river **enters the plains of Odisha near Cuttack and forms a delta**.
- **Length: 860 km**
- The river is **bounded** in the north by **Central India hills**, in the south and east by the **Eastern Ghats**, and in the west by the **Maikal hill range**.
- The Mahanadi **basin extends** over the states of **Chhattisgarh and Odisha** and comparatively **smaller portions of Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh**, draining an area of 1,41,589 sq.km., which is nearly **3%** of the total **geographical area of the country**.
- It passes through several **major cities** and towns, including **Raipur, Sambalpur, and Cuttack**.
- It is considered to be one of the **most active silt-depositing streams in India**.
- **Tributaries:** Its main tributaries are **Seonath, Jonk, Hasdeo, Mand, Ib, Ong, and Tel**.
- **Hirakud Dam:**
 - The Hirakud Dam, the **world's longest earthen dam** (26 km), is constructed across the Mahanadi River, about 15 km from Sambalpur in Odisha.
 - The dam is used for irrigation, flood control, and power generation.
- **Chilika Lake:** Chilika, named a **wetland** of international importance **under the Ramsar Convention**, gets 61% of its inland flow from the Mahanadi River system, mainly from its distributaries – Daya and Bhargabi.



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WHAT IS MARKET COUPLING?



- Market coupling is an economic model used in energy markets to create a single, uniform price for electricity across different trading platforms or exchanges.
 - **India has three power exchanges**—Indian Energy Exchange (IEX), Power Exchange India Limited (PXIL), and Hindustan Power Exchange Limited (HPX).
 - These are **voluntary markets**, and each of them collects buy and sell bids on their own and, thus, comes up with **their own market clearing prices (MCPs)**.
 - In simple terms, currently, **each power exchange has a different cost of electricity**, even though they usually differ from each other only by a few paisa.
 - **Market coupling is a model** where buy bids and sell bids from all power exchanges in the country will be **aggregated and matched to discover a uniform MCP**.
 - It means there will be **only one price for the electricity** that is to be traded at any point of time through these exchanges.
 - If implemented, **power exchanges will be rendered as a platform** where only buy and sell bids will be received and power dispatched to the buyer.
 - **Advantages:**
 - It can be used to **improve the efficiency and integration of multiple interconnected markets** in the electricity sector.
 - This could **potentially enable higher utilisation and reduce energy loss**.
 - It can help enhance market liquidity by **allowing participants to trade electricity across borders**.
 - This also helps **boost the number of participants and the overall trading volumes** in the power market.
-