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## Current Affairs - 04 September 2025

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### GST 2.0 UNVEILED

- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, during its 56th meeting, decided to revamp the tax structure into a primarily two-rate system.
- The GST reforms seek to reduce the tax burden on common people, cut slabs, ease working capital issues, and improve business efficiency through automated refunds and registrations.
- All rate changes, except for tobacco-related products, will **take effect from September 22** (Navratri's first day).
- Despite state concerns over revenue loss, the meeting concluded in a single day under Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, with participation from ministers of 31 states and UTs.

### Key Highlights of GST Reforms

- PM Modi welcomed the GST Council's decision to approve sweeping **rate cuts and structural reforms**, calling it a pro-people move benefiting farmers, MSMEs, middle-class families, women, and youth.
- **Focus on Common-Use Goods and Services**
  - The reforms bring **major relief on daily-use items**:
    - Packaged food (juices, butter, cheese, coconut water, pasta, nuts) reduced to **5%**.
    - Medical items like oxygen, gauze, bandages, diagnostic kits lowered from **12% to 5%**.
    - Ultra-high temperature milk, paneer, pizza bread, chapati, khakra, and erasers made **GST-free**.
    - Household goods (hair oil, soaps, shampoos, bicycles, kitchenware) brought down to **5%**.
- **Tax Cuts on White Goods and Automobiles**
  - GST on ACs, TVs, dishwashers cut from **28% to 18%**.



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- **Small cars** (petrol up to 1200 cc/diesel up to 1500 cc) now taxed at **18%**.
  - **Motorcycles under 350 cc** and all auto parts also shifted to **18%**.
  - **Luxury cars** taxed at **40%**; **electric vehicles** remain at **5%**.
  - **Insurance and Services**
    - **Life and health insurance** (including term, ULIP, endowment, and family floater policies) made **GST-exempt**.
    - **Gyms, salons, barbers, yoga services** reduced from **18% to 5%**.
  - **Rationalisation of GST Slabs**
    - The Council replaced multiple slabs (5%, 12%, 18%, 28%) with a two-slab system (5% and 18%), plus a 40% demerit rate for sin goods (tobacco, pan masala, luxury cars).
    - This corrects the **inverted duty structure**, simplifies compliance, and reduces disputes.
  - **Financial Impact and States' Concerns**
    - Some states flagged potential revenue losses of **₹80,000–1.5 lakh crore**, but consensus prevailed.
    - The Centre estimates the reforms will have a **net fiscal implication of ₹48,000 crore** on 2023–24 consumption data.
  - **Sector-Specific Reforms**
    - **Textiles:** GST on manmade fibre cut from 18% to **5%**, yarn from 12% to **5%**.
    - **Fertilisers:** Inputs like sulphuric acid, nitric acid, ammonia reduced from 18% to **5%**.
  - **Industry Response**
    - Industry bodies like **CII** hailed the reforms as **pathbreaking**, promising to pass benefits to consumers, reduce litigation, and enhance compliance.
    - The reforms are expected to **lift demand, ease compliance, and support job creation**.
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### GLOBAL PEACE INDEX (GPI) 2025



- Produced by the **Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP)**, the GPI is the world's leading measure of global peacefulness.
- It ranks **163 independent states** and territories according to their level of peacefulness, **covering 99.7 percent of the world's population**.
- It uses 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure the state of peace across **three domains**: the level of **Societal Safety and Security**; the extent of **Ongoing Domestic and International Conflict**; and the degree of **Militarisation**.
- **Highlights of GPI 2025:**
  - It is the **19th edition** of the GPI.
  - It finds that **global peacefulness continues to decline** and that many of the leading factors that precede major conflicts are higher than they have been since the end of WWII.
  - **More countries are increasing their levels of militarisation**.
  - There are currently **59 active state-based conflicts**, the **most since the end of WWII** and three more than the prior year.
  - **Iceland** remains the **most peaceful country** in the world, a position it has held **since 2008**. It is **joined** at the top of the index by **Ireland, Austria, New Zealand, and Switzerland**.
  - **Russia**, for the first time, is the **least peaceful country** in the world on the 2025 GPI, followed by **Ukraine, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Yemen**.
  - **Western and Central Europe** is the **most peaceful region** in the world, home to eight of the ten most peaceful countries, although its peacefulness has been falling over the last four years.



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- South America was the **only region** in the world to record an improvement in peacefulness last year.
- The **Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region** remains the world's least peaceful region.
- **South Asia**, the second least peaceful region globally, experienced the largest regional decline in peacefulness.
- **India** was ranked **115** on the GPI 2025, **up one position** from its 2024 spot.
- The **most peaceful Asian countries** were **Singapore (6th)**, **Japan (12th)**, **Malaysia (13th)**, **Bhutan (21st)**, and **Mongolia (37th)**.

### WHAT IS THE SECURITIES APPELLATE TRIBUNAL (SAT)?



- The SAT is a **statutory body** established under the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.
- As a **quasi-judicial body**, SAT's primary objective is to **hear and dispose of appeals against orders passed by SEBI or by an adjudicating officer under the Act.**
- It has **jurisdiction over the whole of India and operates from Mumbai.**
- **Composition:**
  - The SAT consists of **one Presiding Officer** and **such a number of judicial and technical members as the Central Government may determine.**
  - **Judicial Member: Judge of the High Court** for at least **five years of service.**
  - The **Presiding Officer and Judicial Members** shall be **appointed by the Central Government in consultation with the Chief Justice of India** or its nominee.
- **Tenure:**
  - The tenure for the Presiding Officer and other members will be **five years** from the date of appointment, and they shall be **eligible for re-appointment for another term of maximum five years.**



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- However, no **presiding officer or member** shall **hold office** after he/she has attained the **age of 70**.
  - **Powers:**
    - SAT exercises the powers of a **civil court** and has the **authority to summon and enforce the attendance** of witnesses, **receive evidence**, and examine witnesses under oath.
    - It also has the **power to require the discovery** and production of **documents**.
  - **Who can make an appeal?** These appeals may be filed by **any person aggrieved by SEBI's decisions**, including **market participants, listed companies, intermediaries**, or investors.
  - **Appeal against the orders of the SAT:**
    - Every person aggrieved by any order or decision of SAT can file an appeal to the **supreme court**.
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### WHAT IS THE UNIQUE DISABILITY ID (UDID) CARD?



- A UDID card is a **single document of identification** for **Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)**.
- It is the **universal ID** that is **accepted all across the country**.
- As per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, **UDID cards** can be **issued by home district hospitals** as well as the **hospital where the PwD is taking medical treatment**.
- The UDID card has a total of **18 digits/characters**.
  - The **first 2 characters** represent **State Code**, the **next 2 digits** for the **district code**, the **next 1 digit** for the **CMO code**, the **next 2 digits** for **disability type**, the **next 4 digits** for **year of birth** of PwD, the following **6 digits** for



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running number, and the last digit for check sum which is involved for security reasons.

- **Three types of colour-based UDID Cards** are issued based on the severity of the disability:
  - **White Card:** When the **disability percentage** of a PwD is **below 40%**.
  - **Yellow Card:** When the disability percentage of a PwD is **above 40% but on or below 80%**
  - **Blue Card:** When the disability percentage of a PwD is **above 80%**.

### **Unique ID for Persons with Disabilities Project (UDID Project):**

- The UDID Project is initiated by the **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.**
- It is being implemented to create a **national database of PwDs and issue** a Unique Disability Identity Card (**UDID**) to each individual.
- It also aids in tracking the physical and financial progress of beneficiaries across various administrative levels — village, block, district, state, and national.
- It aims to build a comprehensive **end-to-end system for issuing Universal IDs and Disability Certificates.** This system includes:
  - Nationwide availability of PwD data through a centralized web application.
  - **Online application submission for Disability Certificate/UDID card** (offline submissions are also allowed and digitized later).
  - **Efficient assessment process by hospitals or Medical Boards** to calculate disability percentage.
  - **Elimination of duplicate PwD records.**
  - **Online renewal and update** of information by or on behalf of PwDs.
  - **Management Information System (MIS) reporting**
  - **Integrated management of various government benefits/schemes** for PwDs.
  - **Support for additional disabilities in the future** (currently 21 disabilities, subject to updates).



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### INCENTIVE SCHEME TO PROMOTE CRITICAL MINERAL RECYCLING



INCENTIVE SCHEME TO PROMOTE  
CRITICAL MINERAL RECYCLING

- It is part of the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM), which is aimed at building the domestic capacity of and supply chain resilience in critical minerals.
- The Scheme will have a **tenure of six years** from Financial Year **2025-26** to Financial Year **2030-31**.
- **Total Outlay: Rs.1,500 crore**
- **Features:**
  - **Eligible feedstock** is **e-waste, Lithium Ion Battery (LIB) scrap, and scrap other than e-waste and LIB scraps.**
  - Expected **beneficiaries** will be both **large, established recyclers, as well as small, new recyclers (including start-ups), for whom one-third of the scheme outlay** has been earmarked.
  - The Scheme will be **applicable to investments in new units as well as expansion** of capacity and modernization and diversification of **existing units.**
  - The Scheme will provide **incentive for the recycling value chain, which is involved in the actual extraction** of critical minerals, and **not the value chain involved in only black mass production.**
  - The incentives include a **20% capital subsidy on plant and machinery for projects that commence production within the stipulated timeframe** and an **operational subsidy tied to incremental sales.**
  - The **operational support** will be provided in tranches—**40% in the second year and 60% in the fifth year**—on meeting specific sales thresholds.
  - To ensure wider participation, the **total incentive** has been **capped at ₹50 crore per large entity and ₹25 crore per small entity, with limits on operating subsidies of ₹10 crore and ₹5 crore, respectively.**



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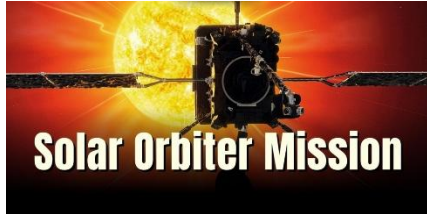


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### SOLAR ORBITER MISSION



- It is a joint project of the **European Space Agency** and **NASA** which was **launched in 2020**.
- **Objective:** It explores the **Sun and heliosphere** from close up and out of the ecliptic plane.
- **Payload:** It carries **six remote-sensing instruments** to observe the **Sun and the solar corona**, and **four in-situ instruments** to measure the **solar wind, energetic particles, and electromagnetic fields**.

### What are Solar Energetic Electrons (SEE)?

- These are high-energy particles **produced by the Sun**.
  - These particles play a key role in shaping the **cosmic environment**.
  - **Sources:** They can be emitted during **solar flares or coronal mass ejections**
  - **Recent findings:** It is observed that one type of **SEE is tied to intense solar flares**, explosive bursts from smaller patches of the Sun's surface, while another stems from **coronal mass ejections (CMEs)**.
  - Between November 2020 and December 2022, the Solar Orbiter observed more than 300 bursts of SEEs.
  - **Significance:** it will deepen **understanding of space weather**.
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### KARMA PUJA

- It is also called **Karam** and **Karam Parab** — is one of the most **important tribal festivals** in India.
- It is related to the **harvest** and a **tribute to the Karam tree**. (Karam tree symbolises fertility, prosperity and everything that is auspicious).



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- It is celebrated primarily in **Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Assam.**
- It is popular especially among the **Munda, Ho, Oraon, Baiga, Kharia, and Santhal peoples.**
- It is traditionally celebrated on the **Ekadashi tithi** (eleventh day) which corresponds to **August-September** in the **Gregorian calendar.**

### How is it celebrated?

- About a week prior to the festival, young women bring clear sand from the river and **sow seven types of grains.**
  - A **Karam tree branch** is planted in the courtyard or 'akhra' on the festival day.
  - Devotees come with jawa (hibiscus) flowers, and the pahan (priest) worships the Karam Raja. Dancing and singing of traditional Karam songs follow.
  - The festival concludes with **the immersion of the Karam branch in a river or pond,** and the jawa is distributed among the devotees.
  - At the end of the Karam festival, branches from sal or bhelua trees are often planted in the fields with the hope that the **Karam Raja/ Devta will protect their crops.**
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