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Current Affairs - 05 September 2025

NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL RANKING FRAMEWORK



- It was started by the Union Ministry of Education in **2015**.
- This framework outlines a **methodology to rank institutions across the country**

- **Parameters of National Institutional Ranking Framework:**
 - Teaching, learning and resources;
 - Research and professional practice;
 - Graduation outcomes;
 - Outreach and inclusivity; and peer perception.

Key Highlights of National Institutional Ranking Framework 2025

- This year's rankings have been **released across 17 categories** – overall, **SDGs institutes (introduced for the first time this year)**, universities, colleges, research institutions, engineering, management, pharmacy, medical, dental, law, architecture and planning, agriculture and allied sectors, open universities, skill universities, and state public universities.
- **Indian Institute of Technology Madras** retains its **1st position in Overall Category** for the seventh consecutive year.
- **Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru** tops the Universities Category for tenth consecutive.
- **IIM Ahmedabad** tops in **Management subject** retaining its first position for sixth consecutive year.
- **All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi** occupies the top slot in **Medical** for the eighth consecutive year
- **IIT Roorkee** retained its 1st position in **Architecture and Planning** for the fifth consecutive year.
- **National Law School of India University, Bengaluru** retains its first position in **Law**.



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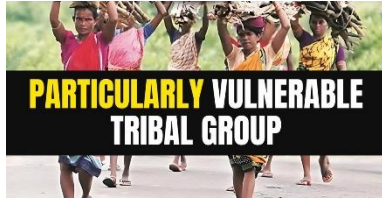
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PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS



- PVTGs are a **sub-category of Scheduled Tribes (STs)** and are more vulnerable among the tribal groups in India.
- **The criteria for identifying Particularly Vulnerable**

Tribal Groups are:

- A declining or stagnant population,
- Geographical isolation,
- Use of pre-agrarian practices (such as hunting and gathering),
- Economic backwardness and relatively low literacy

This category was created based on the **recommendations of the Dhebar Commission (1960-61)** — led by former Member of Parliament U N Dhebar.

- At present there are **75 tribal groups considered** as PVTGs and they are currently spread across **18 states and the Union Territory** of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- As per the recent survey, there were **an estimated 47.5 lakh PVTGs** across India.
 - **Madhya Pradesh** had the highest estimated population of PVTGs, followed by **Maharashtra** with an estimated population of 6.7 lakh, and **Andhra Pradesh**.
- **Livelihoods:** PVTGs depend on various livelihoods such as **food gathering, Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP)**, hunting, livestock rearing, shifting cultivation and artisan works.

Welfare scheme for PVTGs

- **PM JANMAN scheme:** Under this the government rolled out the Rs 24,104 crore with an aim to **improve the socio-economic status**, health, education, livelihoods and amenities for PVTGs in more than 200 districts.



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NEW FOREIGNERS ACT

- The Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, passed by Parliament and received Presidential assent, replaces four older laws:
 - the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920;
 - Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939;
 - Foreigners Act, 1946; and
 - Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000.
- By consolidating these into a single unified statute, the Act streamlines India's framework for the entry, stay, movement, and exit of foreigners, ensuring greater clarity and efficiency.

Key Provisions of the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025

- The Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, along with its accompanying Rules and Orders, introduces clear, centralised rules for regulating foreign nationals in India.
- **Valid Documents and Entry Points** - All entrants must carry a valid passport or travel document and, in the case of foreigners, a valid visa, unless exempted by the Act or special government orders.
- **Role and Powers of Immigration Officers** - Immigration Officers posted at these entry points hold final authority to validate or deny entry or exit. They can refuse admission on national security grounds.
- **Educational and Medical Institutions' Duties** - Universities must report admissions of foreign students, while hospitals must notify authorities of foreign patients, births, and deaths within seven days via electronic submission.
- **Authority Over Premises Frequented by Foreigners** - Civil authorities may restrict or shut down resorts, clubs, or similar venues if linked to criminal or unlawful activities, or if foreigners frequenting them are deemed undesirable.
 - Relocation of such operations requires prior approval.



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- **Permits for Protected Areas** - Access to protected, restricted, or prohibited areas now requires a special online permit. Applications must be filed on designated portals or apps, with standardised procedures in place.

New Provisions in the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025

- The Act not only consolidates older laws but also introduces **modernised systems and clear rules** for enforcement and regulation.
- **Digital and Electronic Records**
 - Mandatory **online notification** through portals and apps by accommodation providers, hospitals, and universities.
 - Creates a **comprehensive digital database** for enforcement, health monitoring, and citizenship-related decisions.
- **Graduated Fines and Compounding System**
 - Clear penalties for infractions like overstaying, visa violations, non-registration, and unauthorised visits to restricted areas.
 - Fines range from **₹10,000 to ₹5 lakh**, with lower fines (as low as ₹50) for certain groups like **Tibetans, Mongolian monks, and refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan**.
- **Protections and Appeals**
 - Limited safeguards for **humanitarian cases** and for errors made in good faith.
 - **Appeal mechanisms** for those penalised under the Act.
- **Centralisation and Delegation of Powers**
 - Central government retains **primary authority**, but can delegate functions to states and Union Territories.
 - Empowered to **modify, cancel, or issue directions** at any time.
- **Uniformity in Exemptions**
 - No discretionary powers at the local level.
 - All exemptions for entry, visa, or protected area permits must come **only from central government orders**, ensuring consistency and clarity.



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PULSES PRODUCTION - NITI AAYOG'S PLAN FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY

- Pulses are central to India's food and nutritional security, providing protein-rich diets while also contributing to sustainable agriculture through nitrogen fixation and low water requirements.
- India is the world's largest producer, consumer, and importer of pulses, making self-reliance in production a national priority.
- Recognising this, NITI Aayog has released a report titled "**Strategies and Pathways for Accelerating Growth in Pulses towards the Goal of Atmanirbharta**", laying out a comprehensive roadmap to reduce import dependency and enhance domestic production.

Pulses Production in India

- India's diverse agro-climatic conditions allow the cultivation of 12 pulse crops across kharif, rabi, and summer seasons.
- Major producing states, **Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan**, account for over 55% of production, while the top ten states contribute over 91% of the national output.
- Historically, the country's dependence on imports was high. Production dipped to 16.35 million tonnes (MT) in 2015-16, necessitating 6 MT of imports.
- However, government interventions, including the **National Food Security Mission (NFSM)** and **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** policies, improved output significantly.
- By 2022-23, production rose by nearly 59.4% to 26.06 MT, with productivity increasing by 38%. Import dependence simultaneously fell from 29% to just 10.4%.
- Despite this progress, challenges persist. **Nearly 80% of pulses cultivation is rain-fed**, making production vulnerable to climatic fluctuations.
- The **sector supports the livelihood of over five crore farmers** and their families, underscoring the importance of a stable policy framework.

NITI Aayog's Recommendations



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- NITI Aayog's roadmap emphasises tailored interventions for different states and districts to boost productivity and sustainability.
- Key recommendations include:
 - **Area Retention and Diversification:** Encouraging region-specific crop clusters to optimise cultivation.
 - **Technology Adoption:** Promoting customised farming technologies suited for varied agro-ecological sub-regions.
 - **Seed Quality and Distribution:** Focusing on high-quality seed treatment kits and ensuring widespread distribution, particularly in 111 high-potential districts that contribute 75% of national output.
 - **Cluster-Based Hubs:** Introducing the “One Block–One Seed Village” model through farmer-producer organisations (FPOs) to enhance local productivity.
 - **Mission for Atmanirbharta in Pulses:** A six-year initiative targeting key crops such as pigeonpea, black gram, and lentil to further strengthen self-sufficiency.
- The report projects that India's pulse production will reach 30.59 MT by 2030 and 45.79 MT by 2047, aligning with the nation's long-term goal of food security and reduced import reliance.

GST 2.0 IS A LANDMARK IN INDIA'S TAX JOURNEY

- **The 56th meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council on September 3, 2025, will be remembered as a landmark moment in India's economic history.**
- Far more than a routine tax reform exercise, **the decisions made reflect a paradigm shift toward a simpler, fairer, and growth-oriented taxation**
- In alignment with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, **the Council's reforms are not only technical adjustments but transformative steps** that touch the lives of citizens, businesses, and industries alike.

Direct Implications of GST Reforms

- **Boost to Labour-Intensive and Traditional Sectors**



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- The reforms also address India's employment challenge by supporting labour-intensive sectors such as handicrafts, leather goods, marble, and granite.
 - Reduced GST rates will enhance demand, preserve traditional industries, and create new growth opportunities.
 - **Correcting Structural Anomalies**
 - Perhaps the most strategically significant reforms lie in the correction of inverted duty structures that had long created inefficiencies in sectors such as textiles and cement.
 - The reduction of GST on man-made fibre and yarn to 5% eliminates distortions in the textile value chain, boosting competitiveness and supporting both exports and domestic manufacturing.
 - **Strengthening Institutions and Processes**
 - Equally transformative is the announcement that the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) will be operational by the end of 2025.
 - Coupled with process reforms such as provisional refunds, risk-based compliance checks, and harmonisation of valuation rules, these steps build trust in the tax system and reduce uncertainty for businesses.
 - **Balancing Growth with Fiscal Prudence**
 - The careful phasing of these reforms, beginning September 22, 2025, reflects the Council's pragmatic approach.
 - By sequencing implementation, the government ensures that revenue stability is maintained even as consumers and industries reap the benefits of lower rates.
 - **A People's Reform for a Growth-Oriented Future**
 - At its core, GST 2.0 is more than a tax overhaul; it is a people's reform.
 - By simplifying structures, lowering rates on essentials, correcting distortions, and institutionalizing dispute resolution, the reforms reach across all sections of society, citizens, farmers, workers, entrepreneurs, and industrialists.
 - They signal a strong commitment to fairness, inclusivity, and growth.
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TRUMP'S TARIFF WAR AS OPPORTUNITY FOR THE GLOBAL SOUTH

- The contemporary world order is undergoing severe disruptions at the intersection of economics, geopolitics, and technology.
- Much attention has focused on the role of the United States and the policies of President Donald Trump, but the more urgent task for India and the wider world is to interrogate the underlying motivations of these disruptions and craft a measured strategic response.
- The global polycrisis, a condition where crises in economics, politics, and technology reinforce one another, requires India to recalibrate its national strategy to defend its interests and to contribute to building a more equitable multipolar world order.

Implications for India

- **U.S. Strategy and India's Security Dilemma**
 - The assumption that Washington views India as a democratic counterweight to China must be reassessed.
 - The U.S. has continued to engage Pakistan, hesitated over commitments to the Quad, and placed barriers on technological collaboration and manufacturing investment in India.
 - These moves complicate India's security calculus, forcing it into concessions with China to avoid simultaneous confrontation with both Beijing and Islamabad.
- **India's Compliance Under U.S. Pressure**
 - India's response to American pressure has often been marked by compliance rather than resistance.
 - While China has leveraged its control over critical rare metals to shield itself from U.S. tariffs, India has yielded to demands on oil imports from Iran and Venezuela and even on agricultural duties.
 - This behaviour risks emboldening Washington while undermining India's own strategic autonomy.



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- **Limits of Personalised Diplomacy**
 - The **Modi government's foreign policy approach**, marked by personalised diplomacy, diaspora mobilisation, and symbolic gestures, **has not translated into tangible strategic gains**.
 - Instead, **India finds itself facing an entrenched China-Pakistan alliance**, strained neighbourhood relations, punitive tariffs, and heightened **racism against its diaspora in the U.S.**

The Way Forward: Leveraging the Polycrisis for Strategic Gains

- Despite the challenges, **the current global disruptions also present India with opportunities to reshape the world order.**
 - The **weakening of neoliberal globalisation and the discrediting of unipolarity create space for India to champion multipolarity** as a more equitable alternative.
 - **A New Economic Deal that prioritises fair distribution of resources**, stronger multilateral institutions, and debt relief for developing nations would **resonate across the Global South.**
 - However, **to assume such leadership, India must address its own structural deficiencies.**
 - Manufacturing remains weak, unemployment high, private investment stagnant, and research underfunded.
 - **Without equitable economic growth and greater investor confidence, India cannot position itself as a reliable global partner.**
 - This demands **bold reforms in industrial policy, scientific development, and public sector restructuring.**
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