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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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What we are going to cover today

- **'Beej Utsav' held across 3 States (GS-3)**
- **Governors should not play up divisive images in official functions (GS-2)**
- **The ECI is taking some proactive steps towards transparency (GS-2)**
- **Inflation falls but not unemployment (GS-3)**
- **Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (GS-2)**

'Beej Utsav' held across 3 States stresses role of indigenous seeds in agricultural sustainability

Recently, a 4-day Seed Festival was celebrated in the tribal areas situated on the borders of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat

Purpose of "Beej Utsav"

1. To understand the value of indigenous seeds.
2. Sustainability in the fields
3. Seed freedom and heritage preservation

'Beej Utsav' held across 3 States stresses role of indigenous seeds in agricultural sustainability

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

A four-day 'Beej Utsav' (seed festival) held in the tribal belt at the tri-junction of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat this month highlighted the role of indigenous seeds in agricultural sustainability. Farmers from tribal groups pledged to rebuild community-led seed systems.

Over 9,400 members of tribal communities, including women and children, participated in events during the festival and learned the techniques of preserving indigenous seeds for use in different crop seasons. They were apprised of the significance of seed heritage, biodiversity, and climate consciousness.

The festival was organised simultaneously in over 60 panchayats spread across the three States,



Joint effort: Tribal women participating in an event during the 'Beej Utsav' held in Banswara district, Rajasthan. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

with activities including 'Beej Samvad' (seed dialogue), biodiversity fairs, 'seed ball' making, and plantation drives.

Community honours, including 'Beej Mitra' (seed friend), and 'Beej Mata' (seed mother), were awarded to exemplary seed-preserving farmers.

Community-led institutions, including Krishi Evam Adivasi Swaraj Sangathan, Gram Swaraj Samooh, Saksham Samooh, and Bal Swaraj Samooh, were instrumental in organising the festival.

They were supported by the Banswara-based voluntary group, Vaagdhara,

which works on tribal livelihood issues.

Seeds should not just be considered the foundation of farming, but treated as symbols of identity, life, nutrition, culture, and climate resilience in tribal traditions, Vaagdhara secretary Jayesh Joshi said in Jaipur on Monday. "When nearly 70% of small farmers depend on market-driven hybrid seeds, *Beej Utsav* is a powerful reminder to reclaim our seed sovereignty," he said.

'Return to the roots'

Seeds in the market often come with chemical inputs, health risks, and high costs, Mr. Joshi said. Tribal farmers need to return to their roots and join community-led and culturally grounded action, which will offer solutions to climate change and food insecurity, he said.





Included activities:

- **Beej Samvad** → Discussion and information about seeds
- **Biodiversity Fair** → Exhibition of biodiversity
- Making Seed Balls → Making balls by mixing seeds with soil, used for sowing
- Tree Plantation Drive → Activities related to planting trees

Awards were also given:

- **'Beej Mitra' (Seed Friend)** → To farmers who preserve seeds well
- **'Beej Mata' (Seed Mother)** → To women farmers for their contribution to seed conservation

Who organized it?

Some community organizations were behind this event:

- **Krishi Evam Adivasi Swaraj Sangathan**
- **Gram Swaraj Samooh**
- **Saksham Samooh**
- **Bal Swaraj Samooh**

Q. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct regarding Beej Utsav (Seed Festival)?

1. Its objective is to conserve and promote indigenous seeds.
2. This festival was organized only in the state of Rajasthan.
3. Children and women farmers also participated in this festival.

Code:

- (a) Only 1 and 2
- (b) Only 2 and 3
- (c) Only 1 and 3
- (d) 1, 2, and 3 — All of the above

Governors should not play up divisive images in official functions

What was the news ?

- **Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar use image of Bharat Mata**
- **Two Kerala ministers boycotted**
- **This mother India Goddess portrait firstly presented by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in His work Anand math**
- **It featured ' Vande Mataram ' which became popular that time**

Governors should not play up divisive images in official functions

Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar's obstinate use of contentious political iconography has shattered the veneer of harmony with the State government that marked his early months in office. Over the last fortnight, two Kerala Ministers have protested and boycotted official events held at the Raj Bhavan, taking strong exception to a garlanded portrait of Bharat Mata – Mother India – in front of a lion and holding a saffron flag against what appears to be a map of Akhand Bharat (undivided India). Leaders of the ruling Left Democratic Front decried the imagery, condemning it as a ploy to inject a Hindu nationalist agenda into the constitutional office of the Governor. Mr. Arlekar nonchalantly ascribed the idea to the spirit of nationalism and patriotism. The rift has since spilled over into the streets, leading to confrontations between workers of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Bharatiya Janata Party across the State. The Mother India motif traces its origins to the late 19th century work, *Anandamath*, by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, which personified the country as an oppressed Hindu goddess with a glorious past aspiring to regain her enormous might. It featured 'Vande Mataram', which became hugely popular and accepted as India's national song. With the nationalist movement taking shape, the image found countless iterations across forms of cultural and political expression. In the early 20th century, artist Abanindranath Tagore depicted Bharat Mata as a four-armed goddess holding a piece of white cloth, sheaves of paddy, a book and a string of beads. While *Anandamath* came under criticism for its perceived communal undertones, with the image being appropriated by Hindu religious nationalists, Abanindranath's image was seen as a 'humanisation' of the divine mother. If painter Ananta Shergill poignantly pictured Mother India as a pining mother staring into an uncertain future, political and cultural portrayals of Mother India relied on the metaphor of a woman who was a divine, benevolent custodian of customs and traditions, with the imagery drawing heavily from Hindu iconography. Her flag changed between the tricolour and saffron, depending on who portrayed the image. Calendar art pinned up many iterations in drawing rooms. While films such as *Mother India* cemented the stereotype, Satyajit Ray's *Dev* called out the deification of women as a patriarchal tool of subjugation. But religious nationalists continued to weaponise the symbolism, imaginatively blending the visual of a decked-up Hindu goddess with a united Hindu Rashtra. Secularists such as M.F. Husain, too, were drawn to the idea of the nation as a woman and it got deeply etched in the collective psyche of the people. Given the lack of a standard depiction of the metaphor of Mother India, the present controversy was avoidable. Governors would do well to desist from employing a Hindu majoritarian version of a multilayered iconic image for political expediency.





Q. Which of the following are discretionary powers of the Governor of a State?

1. Sending a report to the President of India for imposing President's Rule.
2. Reserving certain bills passed by the State Legislature for the consideration of the President.
3. Appointing the Chief Minister when no party has a clear majority.
4. Dismissing a Minister in consultation with the Chief Minister.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 3
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

The ECI is taking some proactive steps towards transparency

- This article discusses the results of by-elections held in five assembly constituencies of India and their political implications.
- It also reviews the recent steps taken by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to make the electoral process more transparent and impartial.
- These by-elections highlight challenges related to regional politics, the role of emerging parties, and issues of violence and transparency at the polling booth level.

Polls and processes

The ECI is taking some proactive steps towards transparency

The results of the by-elections in five Assembly constituencies – Kadi (SC) and Visavadar in Gujarat, Nilambur in Kerala, Ludhiana West in Punjab and Kaliganj in West Bengal – indicate the factors at play at the local and regional levels. The Congress-led United Democratic Front candidate Aryadan Shoukath won the Nilambur seat. P.V. Anvar, who had won in 2021 as a Left-backed independent, vacated the seat after a spat with the ruling coalition, contested as a Trinamool Congress (TMC) candidate (which was rejected) and then stood as an independent. The seat falls in the Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency represented by Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate performed poorly. The outcome could impact the tone of the campaigning for the Kerala Assembly elections due next year. The alignment of communities and relative power of parties in both Fronts will be affected by the Nilambur result. In the Kaliganj constituency in Nadia district, the ruling TMC's candidate Alifa Ahmed won by a margin of over 50,000 votes. Her father's death had led to the by-poll. Counting day was marred by the death of a child in a crude bomb explosion, a sign of the continuing and disturbing role of violence in the State. Assembly elections in West Bengal will take place next year.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s wins in Visavadar and Ludhiana West are significant for a party that lost power in Delhi, its original stronghold, in February. Its MLA in Visavadar had defected to the BJP, and the renewed mandate helps AAP retain its stake in State politics. Its former State president Gopal Italia is the winner. AAP's former Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament and industrialist Sanjeev Arora won the Ludhiana West seat in a State it rules. The BJP retained Kadi. The by-polls were also notable for the new initiatives by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to reinforce the integrity of the electoral process and make it more accessible. These include mobile deposit facility for the electors at all polling stations, upgraded voter turnout sharing process resulting in faster updating of the approximate polling trends, and most significantly, webcasting at 100% of polling stations. The issues of disputes over heavy polling in sensitive booths in the concluding hours of voting and transparency related to video records of booth activities remain, and the ECI must continue to take proactive measures to not only be fair but also to be seen so.





Background:

By-elections were conducted for seats that had become vacant due to the resignation or death of legislators.

Constituencies where by-elections were held:

- Kadi (SC), Visavadar – Gujarat
- Nilambur – Kerala
- Ludhiana West – Punjab
- Kaliganj – West Bengal

Assembly elections are scheduled in these states — especially Kerala and West Bengal — in 2026, making these by-elections politically significant.

ECI's New Reforms:

- **Positive Initiatives:**
 - ♦ Mobile deposit facility at all polling stations
 - ♦ Faster and real-time sharing of voter turnout data
 - ♦ 100% webcasting at all booths — increasing transparency

Remaining Issues:

- ♦ Complaints of heavy voting during the last hour at sensitive booths
- ♦ Questions raised over not making video recordings public
- ♦ Merely appearing fair is not enough; the Commission must also appear credible

Positive Aspects:

- ♦ ECI's reform measures are steps toward digital democracy.
- ♦ Webcasting and real-time reporting have increased public trust.
- ♦ The presence of emerging parties like AAP in various states is a positive sign for democracy.

Negative Aspects:

- ♦ Electoral violence in West Bengal — a blot on the democratic process.
- ♦ Questions raised over booth capturing and sudden spikes in voting.
- ♦ No clear legal provision for making videos public — impacts transparency
- ♦

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
 2. Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and by-elections.
 3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognized political parties.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3





Inflation falls but not unemployment

- **(Context):**

In May 2025, inflation in India fell to 2.8%, which is being seen as a success of the RBI. However, at the same time, unemployment rose to 5.8% (it was 5.1% in April), raising questions about whether our economy is truly strong.

The article criticizes the over-dependence on inflation targeting monetary policy and emphasizes the need for analysis based on the real economy.

Inflation falls but not unemployment

At less than 3%, the inflation figure for May is well within the target set by the government of India. This has led to a celebration in the media of the Reserve Bank of India's prowess in macroeconomic management. What has received next to no acknowledgement, though, is that in the same month, unemployment had risen. Thus, while year-on-year inflation fell from 3.2% in April to 2.8% in May, the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey shows that the unemployment rate rose from 5.1% in April to 5.8% in May.

For those employed, as most commentators on the economy are likely to be, a reduction in inflation is good news, to the extent that their purchasing power is being eroded at a lower rate. But for those seeking employment, it makes no difference. They remain unemployed. A branch of economic theory dominant in the U.S. asserts that the unemployed have chosen not to work, as the market mechanism enables everyone who wishes to work to find employment. One needs only to visit the town centre in semi-urban areas to find migrant labourers milling around at midday to conclude that this would be a preposterous claim to make for India.

So, the first thing to note is that to monitor inflation while neglecting unemployment, as the pundits do, is not a credible way of assessing the state of an economy. While missing the higher unemployment rate in May may be overlooked, as it is not part of the discourse on India's economy today, it is surprising that the considerable reduction in growth has not received as much attention, when growth has been the centrepiece of the government's pronouncements on the economy this past decade. The figures are as follows. GDP growth slid from 9.2% during 2023-24 to 6.5% in 2024-25. The observed rise in unemployment is consistent with this decline in growth.



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Monitoring inflation while ignoring unemployment is not a credible way of assessing economic performance

The provisional estimates of GDP show the decline in growth to be spread across three quarters of the economy. Apart from Public Administration, for which the growth rate held, every other sector slowed in 2024-25.

Agriculture alone grew faster, and much faster too. This development provides the clue to the decline in inflation. In 2024-25, the relative rates of growth of the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors would have led to a reduction of the supply-demand gap for agricultural goods, particularly food, in turn contributing to a lowering of the inflation rate. This is evident in the sharp deceleration in food-price inflation from the peak of close to 11% in October 2024 to less than 1% in May 2025.

Monetary policy, which is the RBI's means for inflation control, could not have achieved the observed configuration of events. It would be difficult to maintain that an increase in the repo rate of just over 10% in June 2022, which has not been exceeded since, could have triggered so great a reduction in food inflation from late 2024. It is equally difficult to imagine that it could have brought about so widespread a slowing of the economy in 2024-25, especially of services, a large segment of which is unlikely to be dependent upon formal credit. On the other hand, the impact of a narrowing difference in the rates of growth of the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors of the economy, as witnessed, can have a direct impact on the inflation rate. The reduction in food-price inflation impacts inflation directly, as food prices are part of the consumer price index, and indirectly via rising wages, which feed into the price of non-agricultural goods.

Econometric evidence

We have so far evaluated the role of monetary policy in relation to events. The economics profession usually settles empirical issues via econometrics—the application of

statistical methods to economic models. This leaves little in doubt as to the inefficacy of monetary policy for inflation management. In our article "Inflation in India: Dynamics, distributional impact and policy implication" ('Structural change and Economic Dynamics', June 2025), we demonstrate that there is no conclusive evidence of the role of the interest rate in controlling inflation in India.

On the other hand, there is conclusive econometric evidence of the overwhelming role of the price of agricultural goods, driven by the relative rates of growth of the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. Inflationary pressure generated by such a mechanism requires augmenting supply to be controlled. Inflation targeting, which works via contraction of demand, is not a solution. If, in the face of a persistent excess demand for agricultural goods, inflation is lowered by hiking the interest rate in order to restrain demand, other things remaining the same, inflation will rise when next the interest rate is lowered and growth revives.

Two final observations should seal the debate on RBI's role in lowering inflation rate. First, an allegedly sophisticated view of RBI's 'inflation targeting' holds that a central bank can control inflation by influencing expectations of economic agents. When we study the RBI's own data on the expectation of inflation by households, we find that it has remained almost unchanged from March 2024 to May 2025, and has been far higher than the RBI's target of 4%. Hence, the recent decline could not have been engineered by inflation targeting.

Secondly, after the last Monetary Policy Committee meeting, RBI Governor expressed willingness to lower repo rate again if inflation continues to decline. Such a stance would imply that India's monetary policy merely follows inflation rather than directing its course.





(Background):

India adopted the inflation targeting framework in 2016, with the aim of keeping CPI inflation within the range of $4\% \pm 2\%$.

- The repo rate has been used as the primary tool to reduce demand and control inflation.
- However, questions have arisen regarding the effectiveness of monetary policy in a supply-constrained country like India.
- In 2024–25, inflation declined without any major monetary changes, but GDP and employment also fell — presenting a contradiction.

Why Did Inflation Fall?

Not due to monetary policy, but because of:

- **Rapid growth in the agricultural sector** → Increased supply of food grains
- **Slowdown in non-agricultural sectors** → Reduced demand pressure
- **Decline in wages and demand in the services sector** → Reduction in cost-push inflation

(Impacts & Implications):

- **Impact on the Economy:**
 - ♦ Low inflation + high unemployment = Risk of stagflation-like situation
 - ♦ Rising unemployment is unstable and politically risky
- **Impact on Policy:**
 - ♦ Sole reliance on the repo rate is not suitable for India
 - ♦ Fiscal measures and supply-side reforms are essential
- **Impact on Social Equality:**
 - ♦ The poor and unemployed do not benefit from low inflation because they lack income
 - ♦ Controlling inflation alongside rising unemployment → increases inequality and crisis

India slams OIC for its 'unwarranted' and 'incorrect' references

What is the Issue?

India has given a strong response to the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) because OIC made certain allegations against India, allegedly influenced by Pakistan.

What Allegations Did OIC Make Against India?

A meeting of the OIC was held in Türkiye, where the following points were raised against India:

- **"Social marginalisation"** of Muslims is happening in India.
- Agreements between India and Pakistan (like the **Indus Waters Treaty**) should be adhered to.
- A **broad-based dialogue** should be initiated to resolve disputes between India and Pakistan.

India slams OIC for its 'unwarranted' and 'incorrect' references

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India on Monday slammed the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for making "unwarranted" and "factually incorrect" references to it while coming under influence of Pakistan, which has turned terrorism into "statecraft".

India's strong reactions came after a two-day foreign ministerial conclave of the OIC in Türkiye criticised New Delhi on a gamut of issues including what it said is "social marginalisation" of Indian Muslims.

The OIC called for strict adherence to bilateral pacts between India and Pakistan, including the Indus Waters Treaty and stressed the need for a broad-based dialogue for peaceful settlement of all outstanding disputes.

"India categorically rejects the unwarranted and factually incorrect references to India at the OIC council of foreign ministers' meeting," the Ministry of External Affairs said.

It said the OIC's repeated "failure" to acknowledge the real and documented threat of terrorism by Pakistan, most recently evidenced in the Pahalgam attack, reflects a "wilful disregard" for facts.





India's Response:

India **completely rejected** all these remarks.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated:

- The OIC's remarks are **"unwarranted"** and **"factually incorrect."**
- Making such comments against India shows that **OIC is working under Pakistan's influence.**
- The OIC repeatedly ignores **Pakistan-sponsored terrorism** — for example, the recent **Pahalgam terrorist incident**, in which innocent people were killed.
- This is, in a way, a **deliberate denial of reality.**

What is OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation)?

- **Established:** 1969
- **Headquarters:** Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
- **Member Countries:** 57 countries (from Africa, Asia, Middle East, etc.)
- **OIC is the second-largest international organization in the world (after the UN).**

Objectives of OIC:

- To protect the rights and interests of Muslim communities
- To promote social, economic, cultural, and scientific cooperation among member countries
- To strengthen Islamic unity and solidarity
- To adopt a united stance on sensitive issues like **Palestine** and **Kashmir**

