



**TATHASTU**  
Institute Of Civil Services

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

## 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2025



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## Topics Covered

- PM welcomes Putin at airport in warm gesture, hails India-Russia partnership
- New Delhi's relative isolation, India's tryst with terror
- A day to pause and come down to earth
- Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address, or DHRUVA.

### PM welcomes Putin

Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in New Delhi for the **India–Russia annual summit**, marking his **first visit to India since the Ukraine war began**. Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally welcomed him at Palam Air Force Station — a gesture showing the importance India places on this relationship. **23rd India–Russia annual summit** at Hyderabad House

# PM welcomes Putin at airport in warm gesture, hails India-Russia partnership

Putin arrives in Delhi for his first state visit to India since beginning of war in Ukraine, attends private dinner with Modi at the latter's official residence; Rajnath Singh meets Russian Defence Minister on sidelines, says ties rooted in 'mutual trust'

**Kallol Bhattacharjee**  
**Saurabh Trivedi**  
NEW DELHI

**I**n a special gesture, Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed Russian President Vladimir Putin upon his arrival at the Air Force Station, Palam on Thursday evening, ahead of the India-Russia annual summit scheduled for Friday. This is Mr. Putin's first state visit to India since the beginning of the war in Ukraine.

"Delighted to welcome my friend, President Putin to India. Looking forward to our interactions later this evening and tomorrow. India-Russia friendship is a time-tested one that has greatly benefited our people," said Prime Minister Modi after greeting Mr. Putin on the tarmac of AFS Palam.

Mr. Putin's first engagement started with a private dinner with Mr. Modi at the latter's official residence at 7 Lok Kalyan Marg. The



**Kremlin connect:** Narendra Modi and Vladimir Putin as they depart Palam Air Force Base, marking the start of the latter's two-day visit to India on Thursday. (Right) Rajnath Singh welcomes his Russian counterpart Andrei Belousov. AFP, SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



Russian leader will receive a ceremonial reception at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan at 11 a.m. on Friday, which will be followed by a visit to Rajghat, where he will lay a wreath at the memorial to Mahatma Gandhi.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> India-Russia annual summit will commence at 11.50 a.m. at Hyderabad House, to be followed by press state-

ments by Mr. Modi and Mr. Putin.

Several members of Mr. Putin's official delegation reached New Delhi hours before his arrival. Russian Defence Minister Andrei Belousov met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday evening.

Both Ministers reiterated that the bilateral partnership is rooted in deep mutual trust, shared prin-

ciples, and long-standing respect, the Ministry of Defence said.

Mr. Singh further underscored India's commitment to strengthening its indigenous defence manufacturing ecosystem under the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision, highlighting new avenues for bilateral collaboration in advanced and niche technologies, the Ministry said.

Mr. Singh emphasised that India aims at boosting both domestic capability and defence exports.

The Hindu had earlier reported that the two sides are expected to sign a number of agreements on Friday, including one on mobility that will indicate Russia's greater willingness to open its labour market for Indian blue-collar workers.

## India highlighted:

- Its focus on Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence manufacturing
- Opportunities for joint development of advanced defence technologies
- Its aim to boost defence exports

India and Russia are expected to sign several agreements, including one that may make it easier for Indian workers to get jobs in Russia's labour market.

## New Delhi's relative isolation, India's tryst with terror

India is going through a **difficult and sensitive period** in its foreign and internal security situation.

### 1. India looks isolated internationally

Even though India is known for good diplomacy, it is **not playing a major role** in global issues today — whether it is conflicts in West Asia, Europe, or developments in the Indo-Pacific.

India is mostly watching from the sidelines, which is unusual for a country of its size.

## New Delhi's relative isolation, India's tryst with terror

**T**he current period might well be viewed, or termed, as India's moment of reckoning. For one, India today — and despite its highly regarded diplomatic skills — increasingly appears more like an 'outlier' than a major player in world affairs. It has been virtually sitting on the sidelines when it comes to issues involving peace and order in different regions of the globe, especially in West Asia and Europe. It is also a virtual onlooker as far as the emerging situation in the Indo-Pacific is concerned. Seldom indeed has India faced a situation of this kind.

If this was not bad enough, the entire South Asian region in which India is situated, appears to be in turmoil at present. Afghanistan and Nepal are among the countries on India's periphery that appear to be most affected, but from the Maldives to Myanmar and further afield, India can hardly count on many friends and allies. This is a frightening scenario given that each day produces a range of new threats, including cyber.

#### Hostility from west to east

Currently, India has to contend with two openly hostile powers on its western and eastern flanks — Pakistan and Bangladesh, respectively. In the case of Pakistan, the threat level has been going up steadily, with a growing cacophony of voices being heard in that country to teach India a proper lesson. What is aggravating the situation further is the approval of the 27th Constitutional Amendment Bill by Pakistan's Joint Parliamentary Committee of the Senate and National Assembly, which has altered the precarious balance between civil and military authority in that country.

Also, a recent amendment has introduced the concept of a new 'Chief of Defence Forces', elevating Field Marshal Asim Munir as the nation's military supreme, and the commander-in-chief of all three services, having sole control over Pakistan's nuclear assets. The amendment has invested Field Marshal Munir with absolute authority to deal with enemies (such as India), removing the fig leaf of parliamentary restraint and posing a real threat to India on its western flank. Military dictatorships in Pakistan, as elsewhere, have traditionally proved to be extremely hostile to a democratic India, and the rise and rise of Field Marshal Asim Munir, with unfettered authority, represents a significant and direct threat to a democratic India.

That such concerns are well merited, and that military dictators tend to be short sighted, is well known. Concentration of power encourages strategic adventurism. This, in turn, increases the chances of miscalculation in crises. Also, and in keeping with the general trend among military regimes, there is likely to be a tendency to turn local conflicts into spheres of proxy competition and inter-state confrontation. Hence, prospects of a lasting peace with Pakistan are unlikely. On the other hand, the risk of conflict has enhanced



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significantly. Thus, it would be wise for India not to ignore the possibility of yet another conflict with Pakistan in the near future and be prepared for all eventualities. This may as yet be in the realm of speculation, but the danger must not be ignored.

India's Pakistan problem is compounded by the fact that the interim government in Bangladesh to India's east, is proving unfriendly, if not openly hostile, to it. To add to India's discomfiture, Bangladesh is currently displaying a willingness to establish warmer relations with Pakistan. In a first, a Pakistan navy ship visited Bangladesh after almost a half-a-century and this is expected to help Pakistan re-establish its presence in the Bay of Bengal. This has serious security implications for India.

Hence, a mixture of ideological posturing and military governance on India's western and eastern flanks has raised diplomatic temperatures across the region. It could have serious and adverse consequences, if not properly handled. Extreme vigilance and careful manoeuvring is called for.

#### The surfacing of 'urban terror'

Compounding India's problems at this time is the return of 'urban terror' after a gap of several years, though in a different mould, and by a whole new set of indigenous actors. It is only fair to think that in the highly disparate world that we live in, and in the circumstances prevailing today, terror is merely a hand's length away from everyday existence. Yet, till recently, urban terrorism on a significant scale had taken a back seat after the 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai sponsored by Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed in collusion with elements of the Pakistan military establishment.

During the past two decades, sporadic terror attacks had been reported in certain urban pockets, but the latest module of urban terror — extending from Jammu and Kashmir to Faridabad and Delhi, and involving medical practitioners and doctors (most of whom had connections to the Al-Falah university, Faridabad, Haryana) reveals a new chapter in India's tryst with terrorism.

The latest terror module, comprising almost only medical practitioners, draws inspiration from, and harps back to the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya (in 1992). It fundamentally differs from the terror attacks witnessed in Mumbai (and certain other pockets) during 1992-1993 in the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition, which were mainly carried out by 'lumpen' elements.

That more than three decades after the destruction of the Babri Masjid, terror still finds supporters and that too among the educated elite. That is it more so among groups, such as doctors, is highly disturbing. It reveals that religious terrorism is not only alive but still active.

Also, its newest disciples represent some of the best and brightest elements of a community. This

is a quantitative and qualitative leap as far as the annals of terror are concerned.

Details of the terror module, which extends from Srinagar to Faridabad to Delhi, have been widely aired. But what should cause more serious and deep concern is that they could accumulate nearly 3,000 kilograms of explosive material and also safely hide it in two houses. Further, it is alarming that a car laden with explosives could escape the police dragnet around India's capital city, Delhi, and trigger an explosion in the vicinity of Red Fort in the heart of Delhi. This reveals either extremely careful planning at one level, or total ineptness on the part of the authorities, on another. Worse still, while the 1993 terror explosions were carried out by 'lumpen elements' and the 2008 Mumbai attacks were directly sponsored by Pakistan, the latest incidents were of an entirely different character.

These were organised by a group of medical professionals, some of whom were perhaps not even born when the destruction of the Babri Masjid took place, revealing a major fault line in India's multi-cultural, multi-religious society. Far more than the details of the terror module that are being revealed through painstaking investigation, it is this aspect, and the aspect of revenge, which has been the catalyst for some of the best and brightest in a community, which should be seen as a blot on India's civilisational journey and progress.

The moot point is whether the latest incident represents mere disenchantment and anger against the nation state, or something more fundamental. It has been India's belief, and as claimed by the Union Home Minister in Parliament, that no local had joined a terrorist group in Jammu and Kashmir in recent times.

This myth has been exploded. Investigations have revealed that this is an entirely local terrorist module, which had been using encrypted channels for indoctrination, coordination, fund movements and logistics. Another aspect is that funds were being raised by professional and academic networks under the guise of social/charitable causes. There are other reports that the groups were in touch with elements in Pakistan. The links of the group also seem to extend beyond Pakistan to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye.

#### The need for vigil

Given the new perilous external dimension to India's security, a hostile Pakistan and Bangladesh on its western and eastern borders, and the fact that much of West and South Asia are in turmoil, India needs to be careful that the situation does not lead to the fostering of religious fascism on a more extended scale. Given India's tolerance and acceptance of disparate religious beliefs, this may seem unlikely. But eternal vigilance (or diligence) is the price that needs to be paid to ensure that the situation does not deteriorate further, necessitating cause for alarm.

The country is having to deal with being an onlooker in world affairs, and also the fault lines in its multi-cultural, multi-religious society



## 2. South Asia around India is unstable

Almost every neighbouring country is facing turmoil — from Afghanistan and Nepal to Maldives and Myanmar. India currently has **very few reliable friends** in the region.

## 3. Hostile neighbours on both sides

- **Pakistan (West):** Power has shifted further towards the military. A new law has made General Asim Munir the all-powerful military chief, including full control over nuclear weapons. This increases the risk of miscalculation and conflict with India.
- **Bangladesh (East):** The interim government seems unfriendly to India and is improving ties with Pakistan. A Pakistan naval ship visiting Bangladesh for the first time in 50 years is a worrying sign for India's security in the Bay of Bengal.



## 4. Rise of new 'urban terror' inside India

A new terror module made up of **educated professionals (mostly doctors)** has emerged. This is deeply troubling because:

- They stored nearly **3,000 kg of explosives** and they planned an attack near **Red Fort, Delhi**.
- Their motivation goes back to the **1992 Babri Masjid demolition**, showing that old wounds still influence new generations.

This proves that **local radicalisation** is real, not just cross-border terrorism.

## What India must do

With:

- hostile neighbours,
- instability in South Asia,
- and the rise of educated local extremists,

India must be **extremely vigilant**. Preventing the growth of religious extremism and maintaining internal harmony is critical. Without careful handling, these pressures could threaten India's stability.

## A day to pause and come down to earth

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Every year on December 5, the world pauses to acknowledge one of the most overlooked foundations of human civilisation: soil. World Soil Day, established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, is more than an environmental observance. It is a reminder of the silent and living resource that sustains life. For 2025, the theme, "Healthy Soils for Healthy Cities", shifts the focus from the rural farmland to the concrete jungle, highlighting a critical truth — the ground beneath our cities is not mere dirt, but a dynamic ally in building a resilient urban future.

With over 56% of the global population now living in cities, urban environments are confronting unprecedented challenges, from food insecurity and pollution to devastating flooding and extreme heat. At the heart of the solution to these issues lies an often forgotten ally: urban soil.



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World Soil Day is a reminder of the need to look after a life-sustaining and silent resource — soil

Second, preventing floods and managing water — as climate change intensifies rainfall, cities paved with concrete surfacing face frequent flooding. Healthy soil is a city's first line of defence, acting like a sponge to absorb rainfall, filter it, and replenish groundwater supplies, unlike impermeable surfaces.

Third, supporting urban food systems and biodiversity — the rise of urban agriculture, from rooftop farms to backyard plots, relies entirely on fertile soil, shortening food chains and enhancing local resilience. These soil-based habitats also support a web of life, from earthworms and microbes to pollinators, which are essential for decomposition and plant growth.

Fourth, enhancing mental and physical well-being — contact with nature, or "Vitamin N," in urban green spaces has been proven to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. Gardening and time spent in green, soil-rich environments encourage physical activity and improve mental health. Despite its immense value, urban soil is among the most degraded natural resources. The FAO notes that nearly a third of the world's soils are degraded, a problem magnified in cities. Urban soils face contamination from industrial waste, severe compaction from construction, loss of organic matter, and "sealing" by concrete and asphalt, which suffocates soil life. These pressures weaken plant growth, threaten food safety, and cripple the very ecosystems that make cities livable, making the theme of 2025 an urgent call to action.

**A blueprint for action**  
The "Healthy Soils for Healthy Cities" campaign is a blueprint for transforming our urban landscapes. It calls on municipal governments, planners, community groups, and every resident to become stewards of the ground beneath them.

Key actions include first, urban soil restoration and protection. Cities must prioritise rehabilitating degraded land through compost addition, soil testing and organic amendments. Limiting further soil sealing from new construction is equally critical to protect this non-renewable resource.

Second, promoting green infrastructure. We must replace concrete with soil-based solutions wherever possible. Soils under parks, rain gardens, and tree belts are not just aesthetic; they are vital infrastructure that reduces flooding and heat stress.

Third, championing urban agriculture. Community and backyard gardens are powerful tools for improving soil health while providing fresh food, recreation and social bonding. The theme encourages everyone to plant, even in containers on a balcony.

Fourth, embracing responsible soil management. This involves adopting eco-friendly practices such as reducing chemical fertilisers, minimising pesticide use, planting native species, and protecting topsoil with mulching.

Fifth, boosting soil literacy and composting. Schools are encouraged to host hands-on soil tests and workshops. Meanwhile, every household can contribute to this by composting kitchen waste, and turning organic residues into nutrient-rich food for urban soil.

**The basis of healthy cities**  
On December 5 this year, the message is clear. The foundation of a resilient city is not just steel and concrete. It is living, breathing soil. By caring for the ground beneath our feet, we directly safeguard our cities, our health, and our shared future. Healthy cities depend on healthy soils, and healthy soils depend on informed, engaged communities.

- Every year on **December 5**, the world pauses to acknowledge one of the most overlooked foundations of human civilisation: **soil**.
- **World Soil Day**, established by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the **United Nations**, is more than an environmental observance.
- It is a reminder of the silent and living resource that sustains life. For **2025**, the theme, “**Healthy Soils for Healthy Cities**”, shifts the focus from the rural farmland to the concrete jungle, highlighting a critical truth — the ground beneath our cities is not mere dirt, but a dynamic ally in building a resilient urban future.
- With over 56% of the global population now living in cities, urban environments are confronting unprecedented challenges, from food insecurity and pollution to devastating flooding and extreme heat. **At the heart of the solution to these issues lies an often-forgotten ally: urban soil.**

### **An unsung hero**

**When we think of soil, we picture farms. But our urban soils are silent, unsung heroes. They are living filters, natural sponges and carbon sinks. A teaspoon of healthy soil contains more organisms than there are people on earth, and this vibrant ecosystem performs extraordinary services.**

These include: **first, combating climate change and extreme heat** — urban areas often become “heat islands”, several degrees warmer than their surroundings. Healthy soils, especially when covered with vegetation, absorb heat, sequester atmospheric carbon, and act as natural air conditioners in parks, community gardens, and green medians.

**Second, preventing floods and managing water** — as climate change intensifies rainfall, cities paved with concrete surfacing face frequent flooding.

**Third, supporting urban food systems and biodiversity** — the rise of urban agriculture, from rooftop farms to backyard plots, relies entirely on fertile soil. These soil-based habitats also support a web of life, from earthworms and microbes to pollinators, which are essential for decomposition and plant growth.

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### **Challenges:**

**Despite its immense value, urban soil is among the most degraded natural resources.**

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Urban soils **face contamination from industrial waste, severe compaction from construction, loss of organic matter, and “sealing” by concrete and asphalt**, which suffocates soil life.

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**Fourth, embracing responsible soil management.** This involves **adopting eco-friendly practices** such as **reducing chemical fertilizers, minimising pesticide use**, planting native species, and protecting topsoil with mulching.

**Fifth, boosting soil literacy and composting** - every household can contribute to this by composting kitchen waste, and turning organic residues into nutrient-rich food for urban soil.

**The basis of healthy cities**

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## Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address, or DHRUVA

### What is DHRUVA?

The Department of Posts has proposed a new digital addressing system called **DHRUVA** (Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address).

It aims to give every address in India a **simple digital label**, similar to an email ID or UPI ID — like **“name@entity”**.

This label will act as a **proxy for your real physical address**.

### Who will manage it?

- A new not-for-profit body (like NPCI for UPI) will manage DHRUVA.
- Private companies can join voluntarily — there is **no compulsion**.

## Postal department considers UPI-like ‘labels’ for addresses

The system, called DHRUVA, will provide users a convenient way to share their addresses across platforms; users can grant firms limited address access, after which the label needs re-authorisation

Aroon Deep  
NEW DELHI

**T**he Department of Posts this week released a draft amendment to the Post Office Act, 2023, aimed at introducing an interoperable, standardised, and user-centric addressing system called the Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address, or DHRUVA. The framework has been under consultation for a few months, with one key element, DIGIPIN, rolled out in March.

A senior official involved in DHRUVA's implementation said it would be able to replace textual addresses with email or UPI address-like labels such as “name@entity”, which would act as a proxy for a physical address.

The government hopes to build this system as part of its digital public infrastructure initiatives and will allow private companies to participate.

The department is hoping to draw interest from e-commerce and gig platforms, where users need to provide addresses across

### Smart addresses

A draft amendment seeks to enable an interoperable system replacing physical addresses with smart labels like “name@entity” powered by DIGIPIN for precise geolocation

• Labels will be provided by address service providers, while consent architecture will be managed by address information agents

• It will be based on the DIGIPIN system, which is a 10-character alphanumeric expression of latitude and longitude coordinates



• The technology was developed to provide more precise locations in rural areas or in cases where the textual expression of a physical address does not

offer adequate information

• The draft amendment is under consultation; Section 8 entity proposed (like NPCI for UPI)

• The system will be built as part of government's digital public infrastructure initiatives, and will allow private firms to participate

in the draft amendment for private players to join, the official said, and the department hopes the system will be compelling enough for firms and users to sign up.

Labels will be provided by address service providers, and the consent architecture will be managed by address information agents, or AIAs.

### DIGIPIN system

The DIGIPIN system is the foundational layer for this service, the official said. DIGIPIN is a 10-character alphanumeric expression of latitude and longitude. The technology was developed to provide more precise locations in rural areas or in cases where the textual expression of a physical address does not offer adequate information.

DIGIPIN was open-sourced by the department, and each DIGIPIN corresponds to a roughly 14 square metre patch of land, with a mathematical function deterministically generating a unique code. This translates to around 228 billion DIGIPINs for Indian territory

multiple services. On these platforms, individuals would be able to provide a label instead of an address and authorise firms to receive the geographic coordinates and full text of their address instantly, instead of filling out address forms repeatedly.

The draft amendment would allow the postal department to set up a Section 8 not-for-profit entity under government supervision. The body would

play a role similar to the National Payments Corporation of India, which is an association of banks administering the UPI payments system.

### Consent-based

Users would be able to authorise companies to view their address for a specified period if they wish, after which a given label will require re-authorisation.

There is no compulsion

### How it works

- Instead of typing your full address again and again on e-commerce, gig apps, or courier services, you can simply give your **digital address label**.
- When you authorise, companies can instantly access your full address and geo-coordinates.
- You can control:
  - ♦ **Who sees your address**
  - ♦ **For how long**
  - ♦ After the time expires, companies must re-seek permission.

This makes it **consent-based** and user-controlled

### What is DIGIPIN?

DIGIPIN is the **base technology** behind DHRUVA.

- It is a **10-character alphanumeric code**.
- It represents the **latitude–longitude** of a 14 sq. metre patch of land.
- Every physical spot in India has a unique DIGIPIN.
- It helps identify precise locations, especially in rural areas with unclear addresses.



DIGIPIN has been **open-sourced**, and there are around **228 billion possible codes** for India.