



**TATHASTU**  
Institute Of Civil Services

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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**TATHASTU**  
Institute Of Civil Services



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# Intel grid linked to NPR with details of 119 crore residents

**Vijaita Singh**  
NEW DELHI

The National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID), a secure platform for the police and other investigating agencies to access government and private databases in real-time, has been linked to the National Population Register (NPR), which has the family-wise details of 119 crore residents in India, government officials have said.

The Union Home Ministry has been pushing for the enhanced use of NATGRID by the State police forces and Central law and security agencies for intelligence gathering and speedy investigation of criminal cases through indigenous and secure platforms.

On December 9, the Ministry informed the Lok Sabha that an Organised Crime Network Database was being developed on

## Tying it up

Upgraded NATGRID tools support multi-source data collection and analysis

■ One such tool is 'Gandiva' used for facial recognition and entity resolution

■ Details of all family members of a suspect or a person of interest, if available in NPR, could be accessed through the platform

■ **3 categories of access requests:** non-sensitive, sensitive, and highly sensitive

NATGRID's IT platform to facilitate secure data-sharing between the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the State Anti-Terror Squads (ATS). The reply said that upgraded NATGRID tools, particularly "Gandiva", are supporting multi-source data collection and analysis.

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## Prelims PYQs

Q. In India, it is legally mandatory for which of the following to report on cyber security incidents? (2017)

1. Service providers
2. Data centres
3. Body corporate

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

## A year of dissipating promises for Indian foreign policy

The year 2025 began as one of considerable promise for Indian foreign policy. After 2024, a year that was dominated by national elections and political recalibration, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was expected to resume active diplomacy, with a full calendar of bilateral visits and multilateral engagements. Relations with the United States were expected to be reset under the second term of the Trump administration, continuing from Donald Trump's first term. Long running Bilateral Trade Agreement (BITA) negotiations with partners such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the European Union (EU) seemed imminent, with commitments to complete them by the end of the year.

Across the geopolitical divide, a new engagement appeared to be taking shape with China after years of a stand-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), especially after Mr. Modi's visit to China. Economic ties with Russia were also at a high point: India's oil imports from Russia had surged to \$52 billion, with U.S. and EU sanctions pressure having eased. Regionally, the government attempted to repair frayed relationships by reaching out to the Tuna administration in Bangladesh with a visit, in December 2024, by the Foreign Secretary, Vikram Murti, sending External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to Pakistan (October 2024), engaging the Taliban leadership in Dubai (January 2025), and preparing for regional visits from Nepal, Sri Lanka, and others. Five years after the Balakot strikes and the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir, New Delhi was also projecting confidence in its security posture and its deterrent capacity for terrorism from Pakistan.

However, many of those expectations for 2025 dissipated by the end of the year. India's foreign policy planners found themselves wrestling with profound challenges across four interconnected domains: economic security, energy security, global strategic stability and regional security.

### Economic and energy security

Instead of resetting India-U.S. ties, 2025 proved to be the most difficult year of this century. Actions by the Trump administration on tariffs, immigration and sanctions pushed trust levels back by decades. Washington's decision to levy a steep 25% reciprocal tariff on Indian goods hit key labour-intensive sectors such as apparel, gems and jewellery, and seafood. This followed from the Trump first term, where India's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) trade privileges were withdrawn.

To compound matters, the U.S. introduced a 25% surcharge on Indian imports of Russian oil, effectively making India the most heavily tariffed trading partner. Even if a forthcoming BITA softens the blow, the losses in contracts mean that factory-line closures and the retrenchment of workers remain. Immigration restrictions, particularly on H-1B visas, further undermined remittances, a key pillar of India's foreign exchange inflows. Of all the trade deals on the anvil, India signed FTAs with the U.S., Oman and New Zealand. But the big prizes that leaders had committed to signing in 2025, with the U.S. and the EU, are still pending.

Ties with China and Russia remained tenuous despite the iconic photo-moment of Mr.



Subashini Halder

Modi-President Xi-President Putin holding hands at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit (September 2025) and the Modi-Putin bear hug on the tarmac of New Delhi airport earlier this month. While India-China flight-visa-pilgrimage links were restored, more fundamental security guarantees for the LAC were not. Neither have economic investment regulations been removed. The hours-long detention of an Indian air passenger from Arunachal Pradesh at Shanghai (November 2025) has raised new concerns.

After three years of reining western pressure over Russian-Ural energy imports, New Delhi appeared to bend, after a new wave of U.S. sanctions. Whether India will be compelled to zero out its Ural imports – similar to how it halted Iranian and Venezuelan oil imports under U.S. pressure in the past – remains uncertain, but the choice carries economic and reputational costs. The India-Russia summit, that ended without any major agreements in strategic spheres such as defence, energy, nuclear and space cooperation, disappointed all the hype preceding it.

### Global and regional security

A central challenge for Indian strategists in 2025 has been the rise in global unpredictability. In its 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS), Washington identified China and Russia as "revisionist powers" seeking to undermine U.S. influence and global stability. In contrast, the 2025 NSS presents a softened, more ambiguous stance – avoiding direct mentions of China's aggression in the South China Sea and toward Taiwan, and treating Russia with more caution than criticism. The 2025 NSS hailed India's rise as a "leading global power" and "major defense partner", but the 2025 version offers only a limited articulation of India's role, primarily in the context of Indo-Pacific security and critical minerals. Given the short shift to traditional U.S. allies in Europe and Asia, any deeper alignment with Washington, as had earlier been envisaged, seems risky now. Mr. Trump's references to his meeting with Xi Jinping as a potential "G-2" only intensify concerns about India's position in the Asian power balance.

At the same time, global acceptance of the Gaza and Ukraine peace proposals – both of which critics argue favour the aggressor – signals a weakening of the international rules-based order. China's rollout of a framework for "Global Governance" reflects its ambition to shape an alternative international architecture. For India, this requires serious thought about its own vision for a future global order, especially as the UN's failures at controlling conflict grow.

India's immediate neighbourhood, which initially appeared stable in early 2025, became more volatile as the year progressed. The terror attack in Pahalgam (April) was a grim reminder that even with the security crackdown in Jammu and Kashmir and past cross-border operations in 2016 and 2019, threats remain embedded. That terrorists came hundreds of kilometres inside the Valley to carry out the killings and escaped should merit serious introspection. India's regulatory Operation Sindoor was militarily effective, but New Delhi's diplomatic campaign following the strike encountered setbacks. While countries condemned the terror attack, few openly supported India's cross-border response.

Persistent questions – particularly regarding speculation about the loss of Indian jets – damaged India's credibility, as the government neither confirmed nor denied the reports.

Complicating matters were claims that other countries supported Pakistan's military actions. While India set aside concerns over China's role in Pakistan Air Force strikes, ties with Türkiye and Azerbaijan have nose-dived. The announcement of a Saudi-Pakistan mutual defence pact was an additional blow to India's regional calculus.

Mr. Modi's declaration of a "new normal" after the Pahalgam attack led to international worries over rapid escalation of the next conflict in South Asia. India's restrained handling of the Delhi blasts conspiracy (November 2025) eased some of those worries, but the broader issue remains: how will New Delhi respond to the next major attack, especially with Pakistan's political landscape increasingly shaped by the ultra-hardline Field Marshal Asim Munir?

The 2024 regime-change protests in Bangladesh and the 2025 Gen-2 demonstrations in Nepal have created fragile transitional governments, reducing predictability in India's periphery. With elections in both countries scheduled for early 2026, New Delhi must prepare to engage with new leadership that is not necessarily positively disposed to it. With Bangladesh, in particular, the end of the year has seen relations at their lowest ebb yet. The elections in Myanmar, on December 28, will be held on the Junta's terms, despite New Delhi's best attempts at fostering talks with the deposed NUG members and to ask for the more humane treatment of Aung San Suu Kyi.

### Lessons for 2026

Several lessons from 2025 stand out clearly. India must recognise the limits of performative diplomacy – warm embraces, highly publicised summits and symbolic gestures such as awards and leaders driving together in the same car do not necessarily translate into tangible gains. Performative aggression – threats to isolate or boycott countries only mean something if other countries join in. The government was sensible in shifting its projection of India as "Vishwaguru" (global teacher) during the G-20 year in 2023 to "Vishvanetra" (global friend). But it must now avoid slipping into the narrative of a "Vishwa-victor", blaming all others – American sanctions, Chinese manoeuvring, Pakistan's machinations, or the "ingratitude" of neighbouring states – for its disappointments.

New Delhi must stop being blind to its own double standards too – concerns over the lynching of a minority member in Bangladesh can only ring true only if the Modi government is prepared to condemn and stop similar attacks on minorities in India. The same is true for concerns about democracy and inclusive elections in the neighbourhood. If rising Islamism in the region is an issue, then how does the government sanguinely sup with the Taliban? In 2026, with a world turning increasingly transactional, India can only bring up principles if it follows them consistently, regardless of whether they pertain to ties with geopolitical powers, or its own neighbours.

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## Constitution of India released in Santhali language

President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday released the Constitution of India in the Santhali language at a function held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The Santhali language is spoken by a significant number of tribal people in Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, and Bihar. The President said it is a matter of pride for all the Santhali people that the Constitution of India is now available in their language, written in the *Ol Chiki* script. It will enable them to understand the Constitution in their own language, she added. Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan and Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal were present on the occasion. PTI

## Prelims PYQs

**Q. After the Santhal Uprising subsided, what was/were the measure/measures taken by the colonial government? [2018]**

1. The territories called 'Santhal Paraganas' were created
2. It became illegal for a Santhal to transfer land to a non-Santhal.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q. Consider the following events: [1999]**

1. Indigo Revolt
2. Santhal Rebellion
3. Deccan Riot
4. Mutiny of the Sepoys

The correct chronological sequence of these events is:

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



## Tightening the opium belt

The Madhya Pradesh High Court's remark that a case against an 89-year-old man, arrested for illegal opium possession, was "rather suspicious, led to the suspension of six police personnel. It also brought the focus back on Madhya Pradesh's historic opium cultivation. Madhya Pradesh reports on how farmers find themselves caught between drug smugglers and crackdowns by government agencies

In the morning of August 26, a bus heading to Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh was stopped near the village of Khatwa. A group of police officers in uniform surrounded the vehicle and searched it. In the bus, they found a large quantity of opium. The case was referred to the Madhya Pradesh High Court in Jabalpur. The court, in its judgment, stated that the case was "rather suspicious" and that the police officers involved in the case were "not acting in the interest of the law". The court also ordered the suspension of six police personnel. The case is now being investigated by the Madhya Pradesh Police.

While the MP police has faced backlash after the High Court's verdict, the case has brought focus on the opium cultivation in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, and the challenges people engaged in the generation of livelihood are now facing.

The Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN), the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Ministry of Agriculture, are involved in the case.

The Madhya Pradesh High Court's verdict has brought focus on the opium cultivation in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, and the challenges people engaged in the generation of livelihood are now facing.

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Farm labourers work to harvest the early crop in an open field in a village in Madhya Pradesh. The case is now being investigated by the Madhya Pradesh Police.

While it is not clear if the case is still ongoing, the court's verdict has brought focus on the opium cultivation in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, and the challenges people engaged in the generation of livelihood are now facing.

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# 915 Maharashtra villages back dignified life for widows

**Vinaya Deshpande Pandit**  
NASHIK

Last week, an official of the Masal gram panchayat of the tribal taluka of Sargana in Nashik district passed away at a private hospital in Beed during treatment. Within hours, the message of his last rites was circulated among the villagers. As it informed the fellow villagers of his demise, it also gave one key message.

"In consonance with the idea of maintaining the dignity of our women, it was decided that the evil tradition of wiping away of vermilion, removal of bangles, toe rings and *mangalsutra* (akin to *thaali* worn by married women), will not be followed," the message said about the family's decision to not let the widow of the official face the social humiliation.

"We are sad about his unfortunate demise, but this is the first response to our effort in stopping the

evil traditions which humiliate our women," the message read further.

For centuries now, the tradition of publicly removing the ornaments considered to be the symbols of marriage for a woman has been prevalent in Maharashtra.

This includes the villagers coming together and gathering around the widowed woman to strip her off her bindi, her necklace, her toe rings, her bangles. The tradition is humiliating for the widows who are made to socially realise the lack of their status.

While it is not openly followed in many urban areas anymore, it is still a common practice in the rural areas.

## Defying societal norms

But now, 915 villages in Maharashtra's Nashik district have passed a resolution that they will not follow this evil tradition in their villages anymore. Moreover,



Couples and gram panchayat members of Chandshi Gram Panchayat after passing the resolution. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

over, over 1,100 couples have also signed an affidavit saying they will not let their spouse face this humiliation after their death. The women have signed the affidavit saying they will not follow this tradition, and that they will not let the society strip them off their dignity.

The affidavit, signed on a bond paper of ₹100 by each couple, is named '*Saubhagyache Shapathpatra*'. It states, "We follow the progressive ideas of

Mahatma Phule and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar. As a responsible part of the society, we have complete faith in equality, freedom and dignity enshrined in our Constitution. Even today, a woman is subjected to humiliation after the demise of her husband. Evil traditions like the stripping of her ornaments, wiping off her vermilion, stopping her from wearing certain coloured clothes, are among the social and religious restrictions placed

on her. They are painful and unscientific, and are in complete contravention of her fundamental rights. So, we pledge that we will not follow any such evil traditions. We will work to spread social awareness against them. We will not impose anything on women against their own will."

A single village in Sinnar named Gulwanch has given 250 affidavits so far. Schoolchildren have also started spreading awareness of the evil tradition, performing street plays and convincing their parents to sign the affidavits.

A woman from Chandshi had tears in her eyes as her gram panchayat passed the resolution against it.

"Don't let anyone remove these ornaments. There should be a law against it. As women, we are in full support of this move," she said.

The move is a part of the

Navchetana programme being implemented by the Nashik Zilla Parishad for the past three months. The programme aims at spreading social awareness against the ill-treatment to widows and empowering them with workshops, self-employment opportunities, loans, education for their children.

"Maharashtra is a progressive State which has always been at the forefront of social reforms. These practices not only strip the women of their dignity, they also make them feel inferior in the social setup after they lose their spouses. That is why we decided to implement this programme. For the social assimilation of the widows, we also organise '*haldikunku*' programme at each village. The idea is, there should be no social discrimination against widows," said Omkar Pawar, Chief Executive Officer of Nashik Zilla Parishad.