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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

THE HINDU ANALYSIS

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Curated from The Hindu — UPSC Prelims & Mains Focus

TOPICS COVERED TODAY

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1 Retail Inflation Rises to 3.9% as Food Prices Climb

GS 3 · Economy

The Hindu, Pg 1

Why in News

Retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose to **3.9% in May 2026** from 3.5% in April, as food prices climbed — the highest reading in 16 months, per MoSPI data.

Inching higher — CPI retail inflation (%)

A low base plus cost pass-through from the West Asia war pushed the print up; May 2026 figure is provisional.



- ◆ Retail prices moved at their **fastest pace since January 2025**, when the index rose 4.06%.
- ◆ Headline numbers had fallen sharply from over **6% in October 2024**, nearly stagnating by October 2025.
- ◆ From **November 2025**, inflation began rising again on the low base — now just **0.07% short of RBI's 4% target**.

CPI — THE NEW SERIES (BASE 2024)

- ▶ **What it measures:** retail inflation via price changes in a basket of goods & services; tracks household cost of living.
- ▶ **Who measures:** NSO (under MoSPI) → CPI-Combined/Urban/Rural; **Labour Bureau** → CPI-IW, CPI-AL, CPI-RL.
- ▶ **Base year:** 2012 → 2024; **Item basket:** 299 → 358 items.
- ▶ **Food weight:** 45.86% → 36.75% (reduced).
- ▶ **Coverage expanded:** rural markets 1,181 → 1,465; urban markets 1,114 → 1,395.

2

SC Dismisses Plea on Rajya Sabha Nomination Rejection

GS 2 · Polity

The Hindu, Pg 1

Why in News

The Supreme Court dismissed Congress leader **Meenakshi Natarajan's** plea challenging the rejection of her Rajya Sabha nomination from Madhya Pradesh, holding that courts should refrain from intervening in electoral processes.

- ◆ A Bench of Justices **Prashant Kumar Mishra** and **A.S. Chandurkar** held that under **Article 329(b)** it had no jurisdiction to interfere with the Returning Officer's order.
- ◆ An **election petition is the only remedy** in such cases — no election to either House of Parliament or a State legislature can be questioned otherwise.
- ◆ Her nomination was rejected for failing to disclose a pending criminal case in Hyderabad in her affidavit; BJP candidates were declared elected unopposed.

ELECTION PETITION — KEY FACTS

- ▶ The **exclusive judicial remedy** to challenge the validity of an election result, safeguarding the purity of the democratic process.
- ▶ **Constitutional basis:** Article 329(b) — elections to Parliament/State legislatures questioned only via election petition.
- ▶ **Statutory basis:** **Representation of the People Act, 1951** for Parliament & Assemblies; State laws (73rd/74th Amendments) for local bodies.
- ▶ **Forum:** filed in the **High Court** of the State; Presidential/Vice-Presidential disputes go directly to the **SC under Article 71**.
- ▶ **Who & when:** any candidate or elector of the constituency, within **45 days** of result declaration.

3

Equality of Treatment for Persons with Disabilities

GS 2 · Social Justice

The Hindu, Pg 8

Why in News

Despite India's "best practice" digital welfare state, **Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)** remain largely excluded — disability pensions are determined not by the nature of disability but by domicile, State discretion and bureaucratic processes.

An Inadequate Safety Net

- ◆ 2011 Census recorded **2.68 crore PwDs**; today conservatively **4.5–6 crore**.
- ◆ RPwD Act, 2016 gives legal protection, but pensions remain **fragmented & discretionary**.
- ◆ State pensions mostly **₹300–₹500/month**; a few offer ₹1,000–₹3,000.
- ◆ India spends just **0.02% of GDP** on disability welfare.

Comparative Spending (% of GDP)

- ◆ **South Africa** 0.12–0.15% (6×)
- ◆ **Brazil** 0.45–0.50% (20×)
- ◆ **Australia** 0.35–0.40% (20×)
- ◆ **OECD** 2.2% (110×)
- ◆ World Bank/UNDP: LMICs lose **3–7% of GDP** excluding PwDs.

THE WAY FORWARD — MUDPFR

- ▶ Establish a **Minimum Universal Disability Pension Floor Rate (MUDPFR)** — giving effect to **Article 41** and Section 24 of the RPwD Act, 2016.
- ▶ Disability income improves household stability, rural consumption & labour participation; **fiscal multipliers of 1.4–1.6**.
- ▶ 2025 Pro Bono Economics report: socio-economic returns exceed costs by nearly **48%** — an investment, not a welfare expense.
- ▶ Calls for a **National Disability Pension Authority** — one standard, one system, one nation.

4

Strategic Stalemate — U.S., Iran & the Strait of Hormuz

GS 2 · International Relations

The Hindu Editorial, Pg 8

Why in News

President Trump backed off from striking Iran — hours after threatening to seize Kharg Island — underscoring the dilemma the U.S. faces with Tehran, which now controls the Strait of Hormuz.

- ◆ Trump, who launched the conflict with Israel's Netanyahu on **February 28**, now wants to end it through talks; Iran, having survived **40 days of bombing**, is unwilling to hand a diplomatic victory.
- ◆ Iran retaliated against U.S. strikes by hitting bases in **Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan**; after two nights of tit-for-tat, Trump backed off claiming progress.
- ◆ The war failed to achieve its declared aims (dismantling Iran's nuclear programme, regime change); Iran now insists talks follow a ceasefire and lifting of the blockade.
- ◆ The editorial argues Washington should adopt a **phased, realistic approach** — lift the blockade in exchange for Iran reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

STRAIT OF HORMUZ — WHY IT MATTERS

- ▶ A narrow chokepoint linking the **Persian Gulf** to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- ▶ Bordered by **Iran** (north) and **Oman/UAE** (south); carries roughly a fifth of global oil supply.
- ▶ Closure risks spiking global energy prices — a key concern for import-dependent India.

5 The 8th CPC — A Chance to Reform Pay Commissions

GS 3 · Economy / Governance

The Hindu, Pg 8

Why in News

As India moves toward the **8th Central Pay Commission (CPC)**, debate centres on fitment factors and salary revisions — but the larger question is whether the **framework** for public compensation remains coherent, equitable and fiscally sustainable.

- ◆ **Framework deficit:** CPCs lack a common evaluative framework to compare risk, responsibility and career progression across diverse civil, military and technical services — parity is sought without clearly defining its basis.
- ◆ **Pension challenge:** multiple systems coexist (legacy defined-benefit, contributory NPS, elected-representative schemes); per RBI's State Finances Report (2023), salaries/pensions/interest consume a large share of State spending.
- ◆ **New architecture:** many countries use **continuous, institutionalised review** bodies — India's decadal model may warrant a National Compensation Authority while respecting federalism.

PAY COMMISSION — ESSENTIALS

- ▶ A new PC is set up roughly **every 10 years** under the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.
- ▶ Fixes salaries, allowances & pensions of Central govt employees — factoring inflation, cost of living, parity and fairness.
- ▶ Usually headed by a **retired Supreme Court judge**; recommendations often adopted by States/PSUs.
- ▶ The **8th CPC** will be chaired by **Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai**, reporting within **18 months**.

6

Project Kusha — India's Indigenous Air Defence Shield

GS 3 · Defence / Sci-Tech

The Hindu, Pg 10

Why in News

Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** described **Project Kusha** as a "game changer" for India's security architecture, asserting its importance was demonstrated during **Operation Sindoor**.

- ◆ He spoke after inaugurating the **Advanced Weapon System Complex** at DRDO's DRDL, in the Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Missile Complex, Hyderabad.
- ◆ Indigenous systems such as **Akash** and **BrahMos** have proved India's capability to compete in global defence technology.
- ◆ On changing warfare, he flagged precision-strike systems, hypersonic weapons, autonomous platforms, AI and electronic warfare — stressing **resilience and deterrence**.
- ◆ Referenced "**Mission Sudarshan Chakra**" (PM, I-Day 2025) — a multi-layered missile defence shield for military assets, critical infrastructure and civilians.

PROJECT KUSHA — AT A GLANCE

- ▶ An indigenous, **long-range Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM)** defence system developed by **DRDO**.
- ▶ Features **three interceptor variants** — ranges of **150 km, 250 km and 400 km**.
- ▶ Designed to counter **stealth aircraft, drones and hypersonic weapons**.
- ▶ Slated for operational deployment around **2028–2030** — India's robust protective shield.

Test Yourself

Statement-based MCQs from today's edition — UPSC pattern

1 Consider the following statements:

1. The weightage of food in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is higher than that in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI).
2. The WPI does not capture changes in the prices of services, which the CPI does.
3. The RBI has now adopted WPI as its key measure of inflation and to decide on policy rates.

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 only

(c) 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c) — Which are *incorrect*? Only St.3 is wrong: RBI uses **CPI** (not WPI) as its key inflation measure under the inflation-targeting framework. St.1 & St.2 are correct.

2 Consider the following statements in the context of the Delimitation Commission:

1. It is constituted to set the territorial boundaries of constituencies in a State with a legislature.
2. Its orders have the force of law and can only be challenged in the Supreme Court.
3. The qualification for its chairmanship is a retired 'Chief Justice of India'.

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 3 only

(c) 1 only

(d) 2 and 3 only

Ans: (c) — Only St.1 is correct. St.2 wrong: orders have force of law but **cannot be questioned in any court**. St.3 wrong: chaired by a retired/sitting **Supreme Court judge**, not the CJI.

