



I don't believe you have to
be better than everybody
else. I believe you have to
be better than you ever
thought you could be.

Ken Venturi

Important Issues of the Day

- **India, Canada – Page No.1 , GS 2**
- **Index of Industrial Production – Page No. 1, Prelims**
- **West Asia – Page No. 6, GS 2**
- **Bureau of Energy Efficiency – Prelims**
- **Fiscal targets – Page No. 6, GS 3**
- **Article 21 – Page No. 12, Prelims**

India, Canada ink uranium deal as Carney meets Modi

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India and Canada on Monday agreed to a \$1.9 billion, 10-year uranium supply deal for Indian nuclear power reactors, and agreed to conclude the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) this year, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney in New Delhi in an effort to establish “strategic trust” and reset ties ruptured over the past few years.

However, issues over the killing of Canadian-Khalistani activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar persisted after new reports that Canadian investigative agencies believe two officials in the Indian Consulate in Vancouver were linked to the case, a charge that India rejected.

After the talks between the Prime Ministers, India



Fruitful talks: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney in New Delhi on Monday. ANI

and Canada announced a number of agreements including a Strategic Energy Partnership in the fields of renewable energy, LPG and uranium supplies, and cooperation in critical and emerging technologies, as well as MoUs on education and culture.

They also issued the “Terms of Reference” for the CEPA or free trade negotiations, aiming to double bilateral trade by 2030. Canada also decided to join the India-led multilateral International Solar Al-

liance (ISA) and Global Bio-fuel Alliance as a member.

The two leaders discussed the escalation of the conflict in West Asia, although they didn’t put out any joint understanding on the issue. Mr. Modi described the situation as one of “deep concern” and called for “diplomacy and dialogue” to resolve it. India had always called for peace and stability to be maintained, he said.

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- **The two leaders discussed the escalation of the conflict in West Asia, although they didn’t put out any joint understanding on the issue.**
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- **With Canada's vast natural resources & India's expanding energy demand, the energy cooperation remains a key pillar of the bilateral relationship.**
- **The partnership encompasses both – conventional & RE resources – with Canada pitching itself as a reliable supplier of oil, gas, LNG, LPG, Crude oil & Critical minerals.**
- **India and Canada signed a Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (NCA) in 2010 for which a Joint Committee on Civil Nuclear Cooperation was constituted by both the countries. Uranium supply deal has been signed during PM Modi's visit in 2015.**
- **Manage the China Factor Together Both India and Canada are increasingly wary of Chinese influence – in their economies, institutions, and political systems.**
- **This shared concern could be a significant convergence point. Collaborating on supply chain resilience, critical minerals (Canada is rich in them, India needs them), and technology standards could turn a geopolitical challenge into a bilateral opportunity.**

- **The ISA was launched in 2015 by India and France during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris. It is the first international intergovernmental organisation headquartered in India.**
- **It currently has 125 Member and Signatory Countries, working together to expand access to clean, affordable, and reliable solar energy worldwide.**
- **Core Mission: ISA aims to enhance global energy access and security by promoting solar power as a key driver of the world's transition to a sustainable energy future.**
- **Catalytic Finance Hub: It aims to mobilise USD 1 trillion in investments by 2030.**
- **Global Capability Centre & Digitisation: Promotes innovation, capacity building, and digital platforms across Member Countries.**

Mains Question

India–Canada relations have witnessed diplomatic turbulence in recent years despite strong economic and diaspora linkages. Examine the key challenges and discuss the way forward for restoring mutual trust and strategic cooperation.

हाल के वर्षों में भारत-कनाडा संबंधों में कटनीतिक तनाव देखा गया है, जबकि दोनों देशों के बीच मजबूत आर्थिक और प्रवासी संबंध मौजूद हैं। प्रमुख चुनौतियों का विश्लेषण कीजिए तथा आपसी विश्वास और रणनीतिक सहयोग की पुनर्स्थापना के उपाय सुझाइए।

IIP growth in January slows down to 4.8%

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India's industrial activity slowed to a three-month low of 4.8% in January 2026, dragged down by a broad-based slowdown across manufacturing, mining, electricity, and consumer-facing sectors, official data showed.

Growth in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) slowed from a 26-month high of 7.8% in December 2025, which was later revised upwards to 8%.

Within the index, the manufacturing sector saw growth slow to 4.8% in January from 8.4% in December 2025 and 5.8% in January 2025. The only broad sector to show accelerating growth was infrastructure, which quickened to 13.7% in January 2026, the highest since August 2023.

The mining sector saw growth slow to 4.3% in January, after accelerating in the previous two months.

The electricity sector, too, saw growth slowing to 5.1% in January, down from 6.9% in December 2025.

This was, however, faster than the 2.4% growth seen in the same month of last year.

Continued deceleration

The capital goods sector continued decelerating, with growth coming in at 4.3% in January, the second consecutive month of slowing growth. Growth had been 10.1% two months earlier.

The consumer durables goods sector saw growth slow to 6.3% in January, down sharply from the 12.4% in December.

The consumer non-durables sector contracted 2.7% in January, down from a growth of 8.5% in the previous month.

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- **IIP is a monthly volume index that measures short-term changes in industrial output.**
- **Formula used: The index is calculated as a simple weighted arithmetic mean using Laspeyres' formula.**
- **Sectors covered: It tracks production in key industrial sectors and shows whether activity is expanding or contracting over a period.**
- **IIP covers three broad sectors: Manufacturing (77.6% weight), Mining (14.4%), and Electricity (8%).**
- **The eight core industries together account for about 40.27% of the weight of items included in the IIP.**
- **These are refinery products, electricity, steel, coal, crude oil, natural gas, cement, and fertilizers, listed in descending order of their share.**

- **Published by:** It is published by the National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- **It is compiled and published every month, six weeks after the reference month ends.**
- **Base year:** The current base year is 2011–12, adopted to reflect the modern industrial structure.
- **The base has been periodically revised from earlier years such as 1937, 1946, 1951, and 1956, and so on, to keep the index relevant.**

- **Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) measures combined and individual performance of production of eight core sectors in India, comprising- coal, crude oil, natural gas, petroleum refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity.**
- **These eight core industries constitute 40.27% of the total index of industrial production (IIP).**
- **This index is prepared by the Office of the Economic Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.**
- **It is published monthly with the base year as 2011-12.**

In the 'Index of Eight Core Industries', which one of the following is given the highest weight?

(a) Coal production

(b) Electricity generation

(c) Fertilizer production

(d) Steel production

In India, in the overall Index of Industrial Production, the Indices of Eight Core Industries have a combined weight of 37.90%. Which of the following are among those Eight Core Industries?

- 1. Cement**
- 2. Fertilizers**
- 3. Natural Gas**
- 4. Refinery products**
- 5. Textiles**

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

- (a) 1 and 5 only**
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only**
- (c) 1, 2, 3 and 4 only**
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5**

Israel, the U.S. and a war to build a unipolar West Asia

Page No. 6, GS 2

On February 27, Oman's Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, who was mediating talks between the United States and Iran, told an American channel that a deal was within reach. He said Iran had committed not to make a nuclear bomb "ever" and not to stockpile nuclear material. The next day, the U.S. and Israel began bombing Iran, killing its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and dozens of senior Iranian officials. Israel described the campaign as a "pre-emptive" war to remove "existential threats", while U.S. President Donald Trump urged Iranians to "take over your government," adding, "This will probably be your only chance for generations." It was clear from the way the initial decapitation strike was carried out and the remarks issued by Mr. Trump and Mr. Netanyahu, that what the invading bloc wanted was regime change.

The Iranian government, despite the initial blow, has reorganised itself and is hitting back. West Asia, as a result of the actions of Mr. Trump and Mr. Netanyahu, is witnessing one of its most perilous moments in the post-Second World War era – a conflict whose outcome will define the region for the decades to come.

After the 12-day war in June 2025, Mr. Trump announced that he had "obliterated" Iran's nuclear programme. Mr. Netanyahu declared a "historic victory". So, why did they start another war eight months later? Israel has always wanted regime change in Iran. For Tel Aviv, Iran is the only revisionist country that challenges its supremacy in West Asia. Arab countries, many of them hosting American bases or dependent on American aid, have either established direct ties with Israel or accepted to live with Israel's militarism and its occupation of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories. But Israel sees Iran, a country of 90 million people with enormous economic potential and an advanced missile programme, as an existential threat.

When then U.S. President Barack Obama signed the nuclear deal with Iran in 2015, his focus was on addressing Iran's nuclear programme. He believed that a non-nuclear Iran would be good news for West Asia, where a "cold peace" between Tehran and its adversaries would be established. But, Israel had a different understanding. Its problem was not merely Iran's nuclear programme but its conventional might. That is why Mr. Netanyahu opposed the 2015 deal with all his might.

Geopolitics of Iran

In recent times, when the U.S. and Iran were engaged in talks, Israel had repeatedly called for a deal to include Iran's missile programme and its support for non-state militias in the region. What Mr. Netanyahu wanted was a total disarmament



Stanly Johny

This is a perilous conflict that is more about geopolitics and shaped by Tel Aviv's own interests

of Iran – a demand no Iranian leader, except someone installed by Mr. Netanyahu in Tehran – can accept. A Tehran-based security analyst told *The Hindu* on February 24 in unmistakable terms that Iran would not sign a deal with the U.S. on its nuclear programme. He said, "If Iran agrees to surrender its ballistic missiles today to avert war with the U.S., Israel will bomb us anyway a few months down the line. So, the question Iranians ask themselves is why should they give up their last deterrent?"

The only way Israel could meet all its objectives was to bring about a regime change. Regime change would also be geopolitically rewarding. Saddam Hussein's Iraq is gone. Qadhafi's Libya is gone. Bashar al-Assad is in Moscow while a former jihadist is running Damascus. Hezbollah has been weakened. Hamas has been pushed to the ruins of Gaza. The Arab countries are unlikely to do anything other than issue condemnation letters. Iran is the last revisionist power standing. If the Islamic Republic is taken down, the regional balance of power would shift, setting the stage for a unipolar West Asia, with Israel, fully backed by Washington, at its centre. This is more about geopolitics and Israel's own interests than about giving freedom to the Iranians.

Decapitation strategy

But there is one problem. Iran, ring-fenced by tall mountains and roughly 70 times bigger than Israel, is a geographical fortress. Israel alone cannot bring about regime change. Typically, regime changes are achieved through a ground invasion – even then it is not guaranteed. Israel pulverised Gaza, a strip of land sandwiched between Israel and the Mediterranean Sea for 24 months and killed at least 70,000 of its people, but has still not unseated Hamas. No country, including the U.S., wants to send ground troops to Iran. If an Iraq-style ground invasion is not possible, the other options are Libya or Syria. But in Libya and Syria, there was armed opposition to the regime that led the battle on the ground.

In Libya, it took months-long bombing by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to topple Qadhafi's regime. In Syria, which fell into a disastrous civil war in 2012, it took 12 years for Mr. Assad to fall. In Iran, there is no organised armed opposition. So, what Israel tried to do in June 2025 and February 2026 was to carry out decapitation strikes – give a blow so heavy that the regime would not stand up and fight back.

In June 2025, the Iranians recovered from the initial shock fast and began hitting back. Mr. Netanyahu had said that regime change would be a desirable outcome of the war, but he had to ask for American help and then agree to a ceasefire after 12 days. In February 2026, backed by a more willing U.S., Israel has launched a much broader

and more ambitious strike, killing Khamenei. Mr. Trump and Mr. Netanyahu want a quick, decisive victory. But if they thought the assassination of the "leader of the revolution" would lead to the crowds jamming the streets and taking over the institutions bringing down the regime, that has not happened – not as yet. Iran seems prepared for this moment, and is hitting back at American bases across the region, and Israel, widening the war.

A regional war

During the 2025 June war, Iran's response was mainly focused on Israel. It launched a token strike on the U.S. base in Qatar following an American attack on its nuclear facilities and subsequently agreed to a ceasefire. But this time, Iran is hitting American bases across the Persian Gulf kingdoms and Israel. Iranian missiles and drones have targeted a military base in Cyprus and a French base in the United Arab Emirates. Iran has also announced the shutting of the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf with the Arabian Sea through which a third of the global energy supply flows. This is a risky gamble.

In two days, Iran has regionalised the war. This is the all-out war almost all critics of Mr. Trump's Iran policy had warned him about. The supporters of the war in Washington had said that Iran was bluffing. But it was not. If Iran continues to attack U.S. bases (some of them were hit hard) in the Gulf monarchies, these countries would be pressed to join the war. And if they do, the cross-Gulf conflict could have disastrous implications for energy trade, severely impacting the global economy. A prolonged conflict would also mean that the missile defence shields that are currently protecting these bases, Israel and other American assets in the region, would be exhausted.

This means that the clock is ticking fast for both sides. It is unclear whether Mr. Trump was prepared for a scenario in which the Iranian state survives the assault. Washington and Tel Aviv aim to destroy Iran's ballistic missile stockpiles and its launchers to blunt its firepower. But if Iran retains its strike capability and continues to widen the war, the pressure on Mr. Trump would intensify.

To be sure, there is a vast gap between the conventional strength of the U.S.-Israel alliance and that of Iran. Yet, conventional superiority alone does not guarantee victory, which depends on clearly defined and attainable objectives. If Mr. Trump seeks a swift and decisive triumph, Iran's doctrine is built precisely to deny it. Mr. Trump wants to kill the guerrilla because, as Henry Kissinger would agree, the guerrilla wins if he does not lose.



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- **West Asia, as a result of the actions of Mr. Trump and Mr. Netanyahu, is witnessing one of its most perilous moments in the post-Second World War era — a conflict whose outcome will define the region for the decades to come.**
- **After the 12-day war in June 2025, Mr. Trump announced that he had “obliterated” Iran’s nuclear programme.**
- **Mr. Netanyahu declared a “historic victory”.**
- **So, why did they start another war eight months later? Israel has always wanted regime change in Iran.**

- **When then U.S. President Barack Obama signed the nuclear deal with Iran in 2015, his focus was on addressing Iran's nuclear programme.**
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IRAQ

KUWAIT

PERSIAN GULF

BAHRAIN

QATAR

SAUDI ARABIA

UAE

OMAN

OMAN

IRAN

AFGHANISTAN

PAKISTAN

Strait of Hormuz

GULF OF OMAN

ARABIAN SEA

Mains Question

West Asia occupies a central place in India's foreign policy due to energy security, diaspora, and strategic connectivity. Examine the significance of the region for India and analyse the challenges in balancing competing regional powers.

ऊर्जा सुरक्षा, प्रवासी भारतीयों और सामरिक संपर्क के कारण पश्चिम एशिया भारत की विदेश नीति में केंद्रीय स्थान रखता है। इस क्षेत्र के महत्व का विश्लेषण कीजिए तथा प्रतिस्पर्धी क्षेत्रीय शक्तियों के बीच संतुलन स्थापित करने की चुनौतियों पर चर्चा कीजिए।

New reality

Fiscal targets will now be realigned based on more accurate data

The release of the new series of national accounts data is a heartening improvement to India's key economic statistics, but the data highlights some aspects that merit policy attention. The new series updates the base year of India's Gross Domestic Product and Gross Value Added data to 2022-23 from the earlier 2011-12. This was a long-overdue update, since the earlier data was becoming more outdated and unrepresentative with each passing year. Apart from the updated base year, the new series has several methodological improvements and new data sources for greater robustness. For example, the adoption of the double-deflator approach, which accounts for the effect of inflation separately for intermediate goods and the final product, is a marked improvement in terms of ascertaining the real value added of India's production. Similarly, the new series allocates multi-sector company output proportionately, improving sectoral data accuracy. The data on households will now be obtained from the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE) and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) on an annual basis instead of relying on extrapolations as

difficult to quantify such as the agricultural sector and the vast informal sector. All of these should yield a more accurate picture of India's economic size and growth.

The new series predicts India's GDP to grow 7.6% in the current financial year 2025-26, which is faster than the 7.4% predicted for the year in the old series. While the rate might bring cheer, the new absolute size of the economy is somewhat sobering. The new series pegs India's economy at ₹345.47 lakh crore in 2025-26, which is about 3.3% smaller than what was predicted based on the old series. The size of the economy in both 2023-24 and 2024-25 was also revised downward by 3.8% each. Along with the depreciation of the rupee, this has meant that India is currently a \$3.8 trillion economy, with the \$5 trillion target moving further away. A smaller economic size also means the Centre's various commitments to lower the fiscal deficit and debt – ratios that are pegged to nominal GDP – also become that much tougher to achieve. That said, it is better to realign targets based on more accurate data than to blithely forge ahead with decade-old metrics.

- **The new series updates the base year of India's Gross Domestic Product and Gross Value Added data to 2022-23 from the earlier 2011-12.**
- **The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the new GDP series with 2022-23 as base year, lowering nominal GDP by about 3 to 4 percent.**
- **This affects fiscal deficit ratios, debt calculations and India's timeline to become a 4 trillion dollar economy.**
- **Lower nominal GDP means the economy is slightly smaller in rupee terms than previously estimated.**
- **Target: 4.3% of GDP**

To achieve this ratio:

- **Nominal GDP must grow 13 to 14% next year.**
- **Budget assumption was only 10% nominal growth.**
- **This implies either: Higher growth, or Lower borrowing, or Expenditure compression.**

- **Debt ratio projected to rise to about 58% in 2025-26.**
- **Target is 55.6%.**
- **Lower GDP denominator pushes ratio upward.**
- **New GDP series makes fiscal consolidation slightly tougher mathematically.**

- **Fiscal deficit equals total expenditure minus total receipts excluding borrowings.**
- **Debt to GDP ratio indicates sustainability of public debt.**

Suppose the revenue expenditure is 80,000 crores and the revenue receipts of the Government are 60,000 crores. The Government budget also shows borrowings of 10,000 crores and interest payments of 6,000 crores. Which of the following statements are correct?

I. Revenue deficit is 20,000 crores.

II. Fiscal deficit is 10,000 crores.

III. Primary deficit is 4,000 crores.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

A country's fiscal deficit stands at 50,000 crores. It is receiving 10,000 crores through non-debt creating capital receipts. The country's interest liabilities are 1,500 crores. What is the gross primary deficit?

(a) 48,500 crores

(b) 51,500 crores

(c) 58,500 crores

(d) None of the above

Bureau of Energy Efficiency



- **The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Power, responsible for promoting energy efficiency and reducing energy intensity across sectors of the Indian economy.**
- **It acts as India's nodal institution for designing and implementing energy conservation policies and programmes.**

- **Established: 1 March 2002**
- **Legal Basis: Energy Conservation Act, 2001**
- **Parent Ministry: Ministry of Power, Government of India**
- **Headquarters: New Delhi, India**

- **Reduce the energy intensity of the Indian economy.**
- **Promote self-regulation and market-based mechanisms for energy conservation.**
- **Enable sustainable development through efficient energy use across all sectors.**

SC to look into feasibility of NAT for blood transfusion

Petitioner says safe blood transfusion is a fundamental part of right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution; Bench asks petitioner to file affidavit on whether State hospitals use NAT

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has decided to look into whether blood banks should compulsorily conduct Nucleic Acid Test (NAT) for identification of diseases.

NAT is a highly sensitive molecular technique that detects the genetic material for viruses such as HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C in the blood.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M. Pancholi asked advocate A. Velan, counsel for petitioner-NGO Sarvesham Mangalam Foundation, about the cost-effectiveness of NAT compared with the more commonly used Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) test.

The Chief Justice questioned if all the States could afford NAT in government blood banks and hospitals. Mr. Velan said the costs were comparatively low for NAT.

“Delhi can afford it. In States who are struggling hard to pay the salaries of their employees or unable



NAT is a highly sensitive molecular technique that detects genetic material for viruses such as HIV, in the blood. REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

to pay their electricity charges... would this be another financial burden on them?” the Bench asked.

The court asked the petitioner to research more on whether State hospitals use NAT, if so, in how many hospitals and in what States. The Bench asked the petitioner to file an affidavit with these details and posted the case for further hearing on March 13.

The petitioner argued that the right to safe blood transfusion was a fundamental part of the right to life under Article 21 of the

Constitution. In addition, the plea drew the court’s attention to NAT as a mechanism to ensure the supply of safe and infection-free blood to recipients.

‘Preventable tragedies’

The petitioner highlighted the case of Thalassemia patients who require frequent blood transfusion and were vulnerable to transfusion of infected blood. The petition described such medical mishaps as “preventable tragedies”.

“Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder which

is caused by the body’s inability to produce enough haemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that transports oxygen from the lungs to the tissues and carbon dioxide to the lungs. As India is the Thalassemia capital of the world, there is a need to strengthen blood safety practices across the country...particularly the need for a standardised test to screen blood donations,” the petition noted.

The case takes significance in the background of the reported case of at least six children found to be HIV positive in Madhya Pradesh’s Satna allegedly due to contaminated blood transfusions at the district hospital during treatment for Thalassemia in December 2025.

In October last year, the family of a seven-year-old Thalassemia patient had alleged that the local blood bank in Chaibasa, in West Singhbhum, Jharkhand, had transfused HIV-infected blood. During an inquiry, by a medical team, a few days later, four more children were found to be HIV-positive from botched blood transfusion.

- **The Supreme Court has decided to look into whether blood banks should compulsorily conduct Nucleic Acid Test (NAT) for identification of diseases.**
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- **The Chief Justice questioned if all the States could afford NAT in government blood banks and hospitals. Mr. Velan said the costs were comparatively low for NAT.**
- **“Delhi can afford it. In States who are struggling hard to pay the salaries of their employees or unable to pay their electricity charges... would this be another financial burden on them?” the Bench asked.**

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Thank You!

