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WHAT IS BRICS GROUPING?



The US President recently issued a blunt warning to BRICS nations, threatening a 100% tariff on all imports into the United States if they proceed with launching a common currency.

- BRICS is an acronym for **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**, a bloc of countries that formed a partnership following the creation of the term in 2001 by Goldman Sachs economist Jim O'Neill (but it didn't include South Africa at the time).
- South Africa joined in 2010, making it "BRICS".
- The group was designed to bring together the world's most **important developing countries to challenge the political and economic power of** the wealthier nations of North America and Western Europe.
- It is an attempt to form a geopolitical bloc capable of **counterbalancing the influence of Western-dominated global institutions** such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

New Members:

- **Saudi Arabia, Iran, Ethiopia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt** joined BRICS in 2024.
- **Indonesia** joined the bloc as a full member on January 6, 2025.
- The expanded group has a combined **population of about 3.5 billion**, or 45% of the world's inhabitants.
- Combined, members' economies are worth more than \$28.5tn - about **28% of the global economy**.
- With Iran, Saudi Arabia, and UAE as members, BRICS countries produce about **44% of the world's crude oil**.

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ARTICLE 356



Four days after the Manipur Chief Minister resigned, President's Rule was imposed in the northeastern State that has been affected by ethnic violence for the past two years.

- Article 356 of the Constitution pertains to the **imposition of President's rule** over a certain **state or Union territory**.
- It is **derived from the Government of India Act of 1935**.
- This is of **two types**:
 - If the **President receives a report from the state's Governor** or is otherwise convinced or satisfied that the state's situation is such that the **state government cannot carry on the governance according to the provisions of the Constitution**.
 - **Article 365**: As per this Article, President's Rule can be imposed **if any state fails to comply with all directions given by the Union** on matters it is empowered to.
- In simple words, the President's Rule is when the **state government is suspended** and the **central government directly administers the state** through the office of the **governor** (centrally appointed).
- It is also called a **State Emergency or Constitutional Emergency**.
- **Parliamentary approval is necessary** for the imposition of President's Rule in any state.
- The proclamation of President's Rule **should be approved in both Houses of Parliament within two months of its issue**. The approval is **by a simple majority**.
- The President's Rule is **initially valid for six months**. It can be **extended up to three years** with **parliamentary approval every six months**.
- The **44th Amendment** to the Constitution (1978) brought in some constraints on the imposition of the President's Rule beyond a period of one year. It says that **President's Rule cannot be extended beyond one year unless**:

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- There is a **national emergency in India.**
- The **Election Commission** of India certifies that **it is necessary to continue the President's Rule in the state because of difficulties in conducting assembly elections** in the state.

What happens after the President's Rule is imposed?

- The **President takes up the functions of the state government**, the Governor and any other executive authority in the state.
- The **state will be administered by the Governor** on behalf of the President.
- The **Governor** will also **take the help of the chief secretary** of the state or advisors appointed by the President.
- The powers of the **state legislature** are also assumed by the President by **either suspending or dissolving it.**
- The President or a delegated authority makes laws and also imposes a duty upon the Centre, its officers and its authorities.
- The **President can sanction funds** for expenditure from the State Consolidated Fund and also **pass ordinances, subject to Parliament's approval.**
- These powers can also be exercised when the Lok Sabha is not in session, subject to sanction by Parliament.
- A **law or rule made** for the state **during this time continues to remain in force even after the end of the President's rule.** It can be repealed, amended, or re-enacted by the new state legislature.
- The imposition of the President's rule **does not affect the fundamental rights** of citizens, unlike the National Emergency.
- **Revocation of the President's Rule:**
 - President's Rule can be **revoked anytime** after such a proclamation has been made **by a subsequent proclamation by the President.**
 - A proclamation of revocation **does not require approval by Parliament.**

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WHAT IS THE 'TAX YEAR' CONCEPT?



The Income Tax Bill 2025, tabled in Parliament recently, defined a new concept of 'tax year'.

- Currently, income tax laws use the assessment year to refer to the year following the financial year in which income is earned.
- This often leads to confusion when filing taxes or depositing self-assessment and advance tax.
- The new bill proposes a unified 'Tax Year', which will simply refer to the same financial year (April 1–March 31), in which income is earned and tax is filed.

Benefits of Tax Year:

- It will remove the confusion between Previous Year and Assessment Year.
- This will also help India fall in line with international standards since many countries follow the concept of a singular tax year.
- Advance tax computation will also be made easier since taxpayers will be able to refer to the Tax Year alone instead of navigating through Previous Year and Assessment Year.

Example:

- According to the Income Tax Act 1961, if a person earns in the year April 1, 2024–March 31, 2025, this time period will be known as the Previous Year and 2025-26 when tax will be assessed for said income; that time period is known as the Assessment Year.
- In the new draft bill, if a person earns in the year April 1, 2025–March 31, 2026, it will simply be known as Tax Year 2025-26.

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PARAS-2 SPECTROGRAPH



Recently, scientists at Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) discovered a new dense sub Saturn exoplanet TOI-6038A b by using PARAS-2 Spectrograph at Mt Abu Telescope.

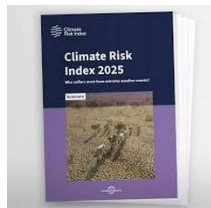
- The PRL Advanced Radial-velocity All-sky Search-2 (PARAS-2) is a cutting-edge **fiber-fed spectrograph** integrated with the PRL 2.5m telescope, constituting a significant advancement over its predecessor.
- It is a state-of-the-art high-resolution spectrograph that operates in **380-690 nm wave-band**.
- It is aimed to unveil the **super-Earth-like worlds**.
- It was conceived with the primary objective of achieving **sub-m/s precision in radial velocity (RV)**, a crucial capability for the detection and characterization of super-Earths or massive planets orbiting **G and K dwarf stars**.
- It is the **highest-resolution spectrograph in Asia** which is under ultra-stable temperature and pressure environment.

What is Exoplanet?

- These are **planets that orbit other stars** and are beyond our solar system.
- They come in a host of **different sizes**. They can be gas giants bigger than Jupiter or as small and rocky as Earth.
- They are also known to have different kinds of temperatures; boiling to cold.
 - The recently discovered sub **Saturn exoplanet TOI-6038A b** lies in the transition region between Neptune-like and gas giant exoplanets, called as “Sub-Saturn,” a category absent in our solar system, providing a unique opportunity to study planetary formation and evolution.

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CLIMATE RISK INDEX



Climate Risk Index is being published since 2006.

- It is one of the longest running annual climate **impact-related indices**.
- It analyses **climate-related extreme weather events**' degree of effect on countries.
- This backward-looking index ranks countries by their **economic and human impacts** (fatalities as well as affected, injured, and homeless) with the most affected country ranked highest.
- The findings of the report are based on extreme weather event data from the International Disaster Database (Em-dat) and socio-economic data from the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.
- It is published by **Germanwatch**, an independent development, environmental, and human rights organisation based in Bonn and Berlin.

Highlights of the Index:

- India is among the 10 countries most **affected by extreme weather** events between 1993 and 2022, accounting for 10% of global fatalities caused by such events, and 4.3% of the damage (in dollar terms).
- It is ranked **sixth in the Climate Risk Index, 2025**, highlighting its vulnerability to the climate crisis.
- Dominica, China, Honduras, Myanmar, and Italy are ranked ahead of India.
- India faced more than 400 extreme events, causing \$ 180 billion in losses, and at least 80,000 fatalities.
- India was affected by floods, heatwaves, and cyclones during the period. It experienced devastating floods in 1993, 1998, and 2013, along with severe heatwaves in 2002, 2003, and 2015.



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J. C. BOSE GRANT



Recently, the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) has announced the launch of the new scheme J. C. Bose Grant (JBG).

- It is a restructured form of the J. C. Bose Fellowship running under erstwhile Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB).
- It recognizes the outstanding performance and contributions of **senior Indian scientists and engineers** to enhance their research in cutting-edge scientific and technological areas.
- It is designed to **support senior-level researchers** who have demonstrated exceptional achievements, with evidence of excellence such as publications records and research outcomes, patents, technology transfers, awards, and grants etc. across various domains of science and technology (S&T) including agriculture, medicine, as well as humanities and social sciences at the interfaces of S&T.
- **Eligibility:** Participants must be active, senior Indian scientists or researchers with a proven track record of excellence, holding at least a Professor-level position or equivalent at an Indian institution/university.
- **Selection:** The process of selection for J. C. Bose grants will be **conducted once a year** by a Search-cum-Selection Committee specially constituted for the purpose and as per the broad guidelines of the grant.
- **Grants:**
 - This grant provides an annual research funding of **25 lakhs for a duration of five years**.
 - Additionally, an annual overhead of Rs. 1.0 lakh will be provided to the implementing institution.

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- If the Principal Investigator (PI) superannuates, during the term of the grants, it can be continued subject to the host institutions willingness to host the PI. The grant can be **availed until the age of 68**.

Anusandhan National Research Foundation:

- It is an apex body to provide high-level strategic direction of scientific research in the country as per recommendations of the **National Education Policy (NEP)** aims to seed, grow and promote research and development (R&D) and foster a culture of research and innovation.
- It will support capacity building at all levels to strengthen the research ecosystem of the country.

BRAHMOS NG

- It is an **advanced supersonic cruise missile** developed jointly by India-Russia.
 - It is a sleeker missile with the same capabilities as its predecessor.



○ It is **lighter, smaller and compact**, due to its reduced size, the next-generation missile system will be able to fit on a wider array of platforms. These include the Russian-origin **Sukhoi-30MKI fighter aircraft** and India's indigenously developed **Light Combat**

Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, both of which will now be capable of deploying the BrahMos NG.

- It weighs **6 tonnes and is 6 metres** long while the older version weighed 3 tonnes and was 9 metres long.
- **Range and Speed:** The missile has a **range of 290 km** and a speed of up to **5 Mach**.
- It will have a **lesser radar cross-section** in comparison to the previous version.
- It will have a homemade seeker with an **AESA radar which will** enhance its precision and stealth capabilities.

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TRAI TIGHTENS RULES AGAINST SPAM CALLS AND TEXT MESSAGES

Cracking Down on Spam Communication

- **Faster Action Against Spam**
 - Users can now report spam more easily, with telecom operators required to act within **5 days**, down from the previous **30-day limit**.
 - **Clear Identification of Spam Calls**
 - Telemarketers can no longer use **normal 10-digit numbers** for promotional calls. Instead:
 - **140 series** remains for promotional calls.
 - **1600 series** is now designated for **transactional and service calls** (already being implemented).
 - **Opting Out of Promotional Messages**
 - Telecom operators must provide a mechanism for users to **opt out** of promotional communication, though users can **opt in**
 - **Stricter Monitoring of Spam Activity**
 - Operators must **analyze call and SMS patterns** based on factors like:
 - High call volumes
 - Short call durations
 - Low incoming-to-outgoing call ratios
 - This real-time monitoring helps detect potential spammers.
 - **Stronger Verification & Penalties**
 - Telemarketers must undergo physical verification, biometric authentication, and unique mobile number linking.
 - Repeated violators will have all telecom resources suspended.
 - Operators must maintain detailed records of complaints and sender information to ensure quick action.
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