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## India Walks Energy Tightrope Amid U.S.-Russia Pressure

India's oil import pattern in November 2025 underlined the growing complexity of its energy and trade diplomacy, with Russia and the United States together accounting for nearly half of the country's crude oil imports. Data show that India imported about 7.7 million tonnes of crude oil from Russia in November, accounting for around 35% of total imports, valued at approximately \$3.7 billion.



This marked the highest level since May 2025 and was about 7% higher than in November 2024, even though imports from Russia had been reduced during the June–October period.

At the same time, imports from the United States also rose sharply to nearly 2.8 million tonnes, valued at about \$1.4 billion. This was a seven-month high and accounted for about 12.6% of India's total oil imports, up from around 4–5% in the preceding months.

The data come against the backdrop of the United States raising tariffs on Indian imports from 25% to 50% in August 2025, citing India's continued purchase of Russian oil. A new sanctions bill introduced in the U.S. Senate, which proposes steep tariffs on countries continuing to buy Russian crude, has further added to uncertainties around future trade and energy flows. India is attempting to balance its strategic and economic relations with the U.S. while ensuring stable and affordable energy supplies for its domestic economy. With global energy markets remaining volatile and geopolitical pressures intensifying, energy security is likely to remain a key factor shaping India's external economic engagement in the coming months.

## SC denied bail to Umar and Sharjeel



The Supreme Court on Monday denied bail to activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in a case related to the February 2020 Delhi riots under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), while granting conditional bail to five other accused.

The court drew a clear distinction among the seven accused, observing that Mr. Khalid and Mr. Imam were alleged to have played a “central and formative role” in the events leading to the violence. It held that a “hierarchy of participation” must be recognised while assessing criminal liability, and that treating all accused alike merely because the charges arise from a common factual background would be contrary to basic principles of criminal adjudication.

Addressing the argument that the delivery of provocative or unpalatable speeches by itself cannot amount to a terrorist act, the court noted that the definition of “terrorist act” under the UAPA is not limited to conventional forms of violence. It observed that Parliament has recognised that threats to the sovereignty and security of the nation may also arise from conduct that destabilises civic life and public order.

The court clarified that its observations at this stage were limited to the question of bail and would not prejudice the trial.

## Delhi govt. to raise funds from market for infra projects

The Delhi government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to enable it to directly access open market borrowings, a move expected to allow the Union Territory to raise funds at lower interest rates for capital expenditure.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the funds raised through market loans would be used exclusively for capital projects, including Yamuna rejuvenation, drainage infrastructure, drinking water supply, health facilities, and public transport.

The development follows a Government of India notification issued on January 2, 2026, which separated the Public Accounts of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi from the Public Accounts of the Government of India. This accounting separation has paved the way for Delhi to independently raise funds through the issuance of State Development Loans.

The move would strengthen Delhi’s fiscal autonomy in infrastructure financing and support an infrastructure-led growth strategy, while maintaining oversight through established borrowing norms.

The step is being seen as an important milestone in improving the capital expenditure capacity of the Delhi government and streamlining its access to long-term funding from financial markets.



## India Commissions First Indigenous Pollution Control Vessel



The Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday commissioned ICGS Samudra Pratap, India's first indigenously designed and built pollution control vessel, marking a significant step in strengthening the Indian Coast Guard's capacity for maritime safety and environmental protection.

With over 60% indigenous content, the vessel reflects India's growing focus on self-reliance in defence manufacturing while addressing critical challenges in marine pollution response and coastal security. The vessel was built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL).

The ship is equipped with advanced systems for pollution response, modern fire-fighting, maritime safety operations, environmental protection, and extended maritime surveillance.

Officials said Samudra Pratap will play a crucial role in the rapid detection, containment, and mitigation of oil spills and other pollution incidents in India's maritime zones. Its induction is expected to significantly enhance India's preparedness to deal with marine environmental emergencies, especially in ecologically sensitive areas.

The vessel is also expected to contribute to the protection of vital marine ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, fisheries, and coastal biodiversity, which are increasingly under threat from shipping-related pollution and industrial activity.

Apart from its environmental role, the ship will strengthen the Coast Guard's overall operational capability in coastal surveillance and maritime safety, reinforcing India's efforts to ensure cleaner, safer, and more secure seas.

The commissioning of Samudra Pratap is being seen as a milestone in integrating environmental protection with maritime security, while also advancing the objectives of indigenisation in the defence sector.

## Elon Musk's AI tool faces international backlash

X's AI chatbot Grok has come under scrutiny after reports emerged that it is being used to generate non-consensual sexually explicit images, triggering demands for stronger safeguards from countries such as India and France and renewing concerns over content moderation and accountability in artificial intelligence systems. The controversy has highlighted the growing risk of misuse of generative AI tools, particularly in creating abusive and harmful content. Experts warn that such applications can fuel online harassment, disproportionately target women and gender minorities, and create serious challenges for law enforcement and digital governance.

Regulators and policymakers have pointed to the lack of effective guardrails and clear responsibility frameworks for AI platforms, especially when tools are deployed at scale and can be misused for criminal or harmful purposes. The episode has also revived debate on whether technology companies should be held legally accountable for the downstream misuse of their AI systems as Grok avoids the safeguards instituted by OpenAI and Google in their large language models.

Elon Musk's public response to the issue, which was seen by many as dismissive, has further drawn attention to concerns about the seriousness with which platform owners are treating the social consequences of AI deployment.

The incident comes at a time when governments across the world are struggling to balance innovation with safety, and are considering stricter rules for high-risk AI systems.

## Colombia, Cuba, Mexico - what's behind Trump's Threats?



Fresh tensions have emerged in the Americas after U.S. President Donald Trump warned of possible military action against Colombia, Cuba, and Mexico if they fail to cooperate with Washington on drug trafficking and border control.

The remarks come amid growing unease in the region following recent U.S. actions in Venezuela. In a joint statement, the governments of Spain, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Uruguay said that the U.S. action in Venezuela "constitutes an extremely dangerous precedent for peace and regional security" and warned that it could endanger civilian populations.

Relations between the U.S. and Colombia have come under strain in recent months, following the Trump administration's decision to cut U.S. foreign assistance and a visible increase in U.S. military activity in the Caribbean region.

Ties with Mexico have also seen renewed friction. In April, President Trump's proposal to allow American troops into Mexico to fight drug cartels was firmly rejected by Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum. The latest developments in Venezuela have further heightened concerns in Mexico over the future direction of bilateral relations.

U.S.-Cuba relations remain tense as well, with President Trump recently stating that Cuba's economy was "going down for the count", a remark seen as reinforcing the hardened posture towards Havana.

## India Introduces e-B-4 Visa for Chinese nationals

India has introduced a new e-Production Investment Business Visa (e-B-4) for Chinese nationals to facilitate business-related travel, according to the latest advisory issued by the Embassy of India in Beijing.

The new visa category will allow Chinese professionals to visit India for specific and essential business activities such as installation and commissioning of equipment, quality checks and maintenance, production and IT ramp-up, training, and supply-chain development including vendor empanelment.

Under the new system, Indian companies seeking to invite Chinese nationals must register on the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)'s National Single Window System (NSWS) to generate a digital sponsorship letter with a unique identification number, which is mandatory for visa processing. Applications for the e-B-4 visa will be submitted online, and after verification, the visa is expected to be issued within 45–50 days, allowing a stay of up to six months.

## Southern States Gain FDI



Southern states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have increased their share in India's total foreign direct investment (FDI) as inflows into the information technology sector rose sharply in the first half of FY26. Karnataka emerged as the second-largest recipient with \$9.4 billion in inflows, followed by Tamil Nadu with \$3.6 billion.

Although Maharashtra retained its top position, its share in total FDI fell to about 30% from nearly 45% earlier. Gujarat's share also declined to around 6.4%.

Analysts attribute this shift to India receiving a two-fold increase in share of IT sector (Computer Software and Hardware) investment. The growing presence of global capability centres, technology firms, and digital service companies in southern states has helped them attract a greater portion of foreign capital.

Among the major recipients of FDI were companies such as Flipkart, Meesho, Access Healthcare, Haldiram Snacks, and Adani Green Energy. In terms of source countries, Singapore led with about \$12 billion, accounting for roughly one-third(34%) of total inflows, followed by the United States and Mauritius.

Changing pattern of FDI possibly reflects a gradual shift in India's growth drivers towards services and knowledge-based sectors.

## PRELIMS CORNER :

1) Which one of the following activities of the Reserve Bank of India is considered to be part of 'sterilization'? (2023)

(a) Conducting 'Open Market Operations'  
(b) Oversight of settlement and payment systems  
(c) Debt and cash management for the Central and State Governments  
(d) Regulating the functions of Non-banking Financial Institutions

2) The Lahore Session of the Indian National Congress (1929) is very important in history, because

(2012)

1. The Congress passed a resolution demanding complete independence.
2. The rift between the extremists and moderates was resolved in that Session.
3. A resolution was passed rejecting the two-nation theory in that Session. Which of the statement(s) given above is/ are correct?

(a) 1 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) None of the above

## Case Study

In 2025, the National Green Tribunal took cognisance of a citizen's complaint against construction activity at a Union government telecom campus in Delhi that allegedly violated air pollution control restrictions imposed by the CAQM.

A man named Shubham Verma complained that construction activities of the campus left his daughter with serious health issues.

The NGT issued notice to authorities, showing how statutory environmental institutions can intervene even against government bodies to protect public health and enforce environmental regulations.



# Prelims Corner: Explanations

1) option a is the correct answer.

**Sterilization:** Sterilization refers to the actions taken by a central bank (such as the Reserve Bank of India) to neutralize the impact of foreign capital inflows or outflows on the domestic money supply. When there is significant foreign exchange inflow, it can lead to an increase in the domestic money supply, which might result in inflationary pressures. Similarly, outflows could lead to deflationary pressures.

To counteract this, the central bank uses monetary policy tools like Open Market Operations (OMO) to absorb or inject liquidity into the domestic economy.

OMO involves the purchase or sale of government securities in the open market by the RBI.

If there is excess liquidity due to foreign inflows, the RBI sells government securities to absorb the surplus money supply.

Conversely, in case of a liquidity deficit due to outflows, the RBI purchases government securities to inject liquidity.

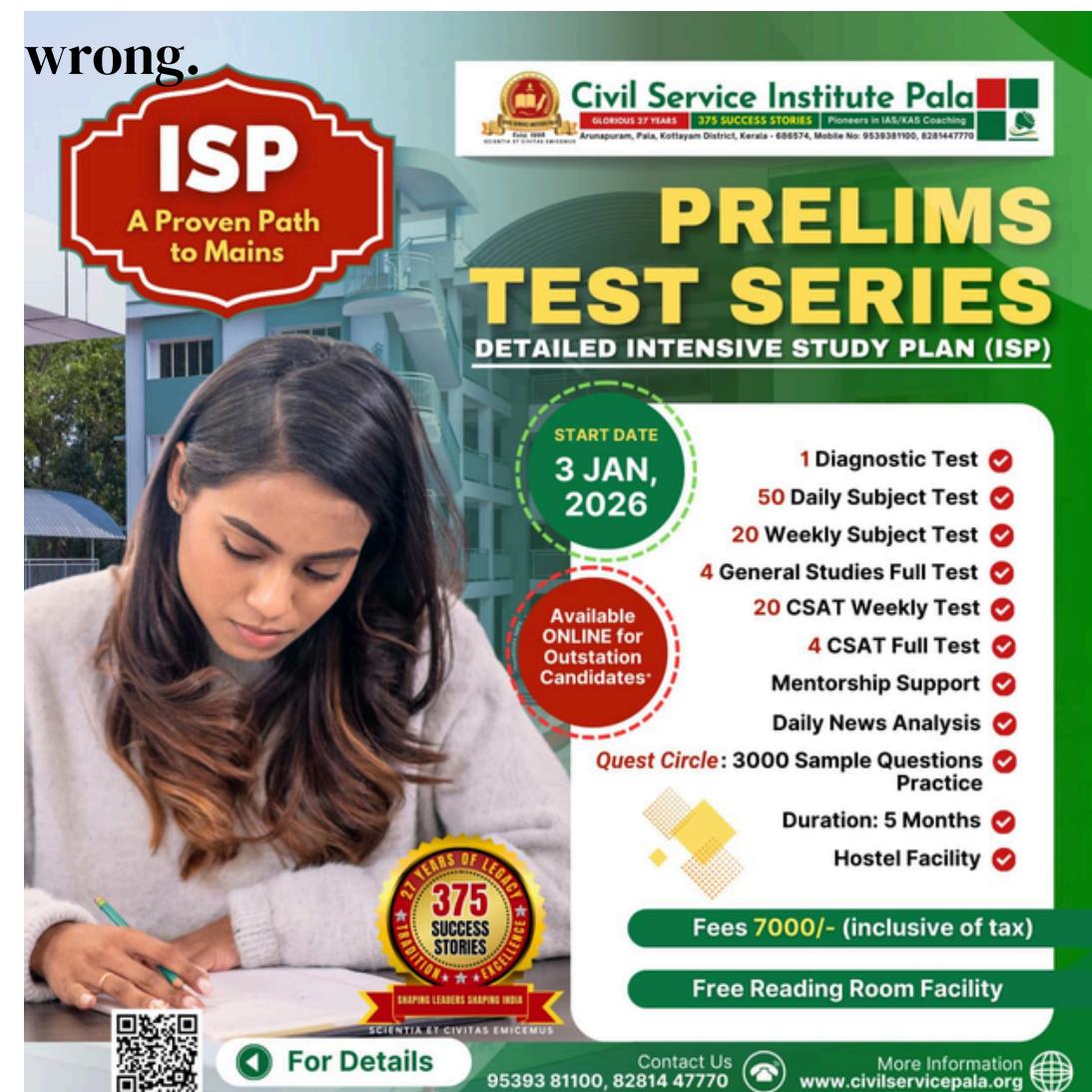
In conclusion, Sterilization, aimed at managing money supply changes due to foreign exchange flows, primarily involves Open Market Operations (OMO) as a key tool.

2) option a is the correct answer.

The Lahore Session of the Indian National Congress, held in December 1929 under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru, is notable for adopting the resolution for Purna Swaraj or complete independence from British rule. January 26, 1930, was declared as Independence Day, to be celebrated by hoisting the tricolor and affirming the commitment to independence. So statement 1 is correct.

The rift between the extremists and moderates was not resolved during the Lahore Session of 1929. It had occurred earlier at the Surat Session in 1907. So statement 2 is wrong.

The two-nation theory, which argued for separate nations for Hindus and Muslims, was formally proposed by Muhammad Ali Jinnah much later. So statement 3 is also wrong.





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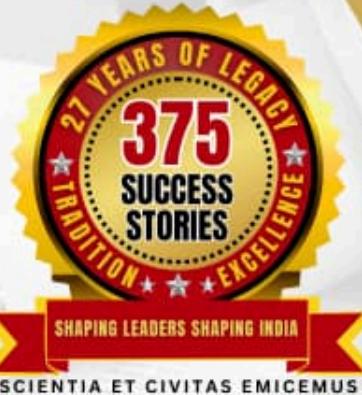
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