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INDIA-CYPRUS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP — IMEC, EU PRESIDENCY AND THE NEW DELHI BILATERAL

Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides held bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House, New Delhi, on May 22, 2026. The two leaders elevated India-Cyprus relations to a Strategic Partnership and announced the formation of a “Friends of IMEC” group of pro-corridor nations. Cyprus currently holds the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union (January – June 2026).

Background

- Cyprus became an **EU member on May 1, 2004** and adopted the **Euro on January 1, 2008**. Its capital **Nicosia (Lefkosia)** remains the world’s only divided capital, partitioned along the UN Buffer Zone (Green Line) since the 1974 Turkish invasion that led to the establishment of the so-called **Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)** — recognised only by Turkey.
- India and Cyprus have shared close ties since Cyprus’s independence in **1960**; Cyprus has consistently supported India’s positions at the **UN, NAM and Commonwealth** (including India’s permanent UNSC seat bid).
- The **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** was launched at the **G20 New Delhi Summit (September 9, 2023)** as an MoU between India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, the EU, France, Germany, Italy and the US (Jordan and Israel are transit states but not MoU signatories). Cyprus is the EU’s eastern-most island and a natural transit point on the corridor’s Europe arm.

Key Facts

- **Cyprus EU Presidency:** First half of 2026 (Jan-Jun); priorities include EU enlargement, Mediterranean security and EU-India FTA momentum.
- **Strategic Partnership pillars:** Trade & investment, defence & maritime, digital & space, mobility & education.
- **“Friends of IMEC”:** New plurilateral coalition of pro-corridor nations to coordinate financing, regulation and security across the corridor’s two arms — Eastern (India-UAE maritime) and Northern (UAE-Greece via Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel, with rail-ship-rail multimodal segments).
- **India-EU FTA:** Negotiations resumed in June 2022; both sides target conclusion by **end-2026** under successive EU presidencies.

UPSC Angle

- **GS Paper 2 (IR):** India-EU relations, IMEC, Indian diaspora in Mediterranean, NAM legacy.
- **GS Paper 1 (Geography):** Cyprus location (eastern Mediterranean), Nicosia (last divided capital), Green Line, TRNC.
- **Prelims hooks:** Cyprus EU year (2004); Euro year (2008); EU Presidency (rotating six-monthly); IMEC year (2023, G20 New Delhi).
- **Mains angle:** “IMEC offers India a strategic alternative to BRI. Discuss with reference to corridor diplomacy and the role of Mediterranean partners.”

EU member May 1, 2004; Euro Jan 1, 2008; capital Nicosia (last divided capital); 1974 partition; TRNC recognised only by Turkey. EU Presidency: Rotates six-monthly; Cyprus holds Jan-Jun 2026. IMEC: Launched G20 New Delhi, Sept 9, 2023; signatories include India, UAE, Saudi Arabia, EU, France, Germany, Italy, US. Strategic Partnership year: 2026.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY 2026 — CBD, KMGBF AND INDIA AS A MEGADIVERSE NATION

International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) was observed worldwide on **May 22, 2026** under the theme “**Acting Locally for Global Impact.**” India’s national celebrations were held in **Odisha** — anchored at **Bhitarkanika, Chilika and Similipal** — three of India’s flagship biodiversity sites. The day commemorates the adoption of the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** at **Nairobi on May 22, 1992.**

Background

- IDB was designated by **UNGA Resolution 55/201 (December 2000)**, shifting the observance from 29 December (CBD’s date of entry into force) to **May 22** (date of CBD text adoption).
- The **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** has three objectives: (i) conservation of biodiversity; (ii) sustainable use of its components; (iii) **fair and equitable sharing of benefits** (Access and Benefit Sharing — ABS).
- CBD entered into force on **December 29, 1993**; India **ratified on February 18, 1994**. The **CBD Secretariat** is located in **Montreal, Canada**. The **four UN member states that are not parties** are the **United States** (signed but never ratified), **Andorra, South Sudan** and the **Holy See**.

Key Facts

- **2026 theme:** “Acting Locally for Global Impact.”

- **CBD Protocols: Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2000, in force 2003)** governing LMO transboundary movement; **Nagoya Protocol on ABS (2010, in force October 12, 2014)** – India ratified Nagoya on **October 9, 2012** (5th country to ratify).
- **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF):** Adopted at **CBD COP-15 in Montreal, December 2022** under China’s presidency; **4 long-term goals, 23 action targets**; flagship target is **30x30** (protect 30% of land and sea by 2030).
- **India:** One of **17 megadiverse countries** (per Conservation International); hosts **4 of the world’s 36 biodiversity hotspots** – **Himalaya, Indo-Burma, Western Ghats-Sri Lanka, Sundaland (Nicobar Islands)**. Domestic law: **Biological Diversity Act, 2002 (amended 2023)**; nodal body **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), Chennai**.

UPSC Angle

- **GS Paper 3 (Environment):** CBD, KMGBF, India’s biodiversity hotspots, BD Act 2002 amendments, NBSAP.
- **GS Paper 2 (IR):** Multilateral environmental agreements, India’s position at COPs, ABS regime.
- **Prelims hooks:** CBD adoption (May 22, 1992 Nairobi); entry into force (Dec 29, 1993); KMGBF (COP-15 Montreal Dec 2022); India ratification (Feb 18, 1994); Nagoya Protocol India ratification (Oct 9, 2012); 17 megadiverse + 4 hotspots.
- **Mains angle:** “The Kunming-Montreal framework’s 30x30 target imposes both a conservation imperative and a development trade-off for India. Discuss.”

*Adopted Rio Earth Summit, signed at Nairobi May 22, 1992; in force Dec 29, 1993; India ratified Feb 18, 1994; Secretariat Montreal. **KMGBF:** Adopted CBD COP-15, Montreal, Dec 2022; 4 goals; 23 targets; 30x30 flagship. **Cartagena Protocol:** 2000 (biosafety/LMOs). **Nagoya Protocol:** 2010 (in force Oct 12, 2014); India ratified Oct 9, 2012. **India:** 17 megadiverse; 4 of 36 hotspots – Himalaya, Indo-Burma, Western Ghats-Sri Lanka, Sundaland; BD Act 2002 (amended 2023); NBA Chennai.*

QUAD FOREIGN MINISTERS’ MEETING IN NEW DELHI — INDO-PACIFIC ARCHITECTURE UNDER TRUMP 2.0

*The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** confirmed on **May 22, 2026** that **External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar** will host the **Quad Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in New Delhi on May 26, 2026**. Attendees: **Penny Wong (Australia), Toshimitsu Motegi (Japan) and Marco Rubio (United States)**. This is the **first Quad FM meeting under a full year of the Trump 2.0 administration**.*

Background

- The Quad traces its origins to the **2004 Tsunami Core Group** (India, US, Japan, Australia) for humanitarian relief.
- **Quad 1.0 (2007)**: Initiated in Manila by Japanese PM Shinzo Abe; lapsed after Australia's withdrawal in 2008.
- **Quad 2.0 (2017)**: Revived on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit in Manila in November 2017.
- The **first virtual leaders' summit** was held on **March 12, 2021**; the **first in-person summit** at the **White House, Washington DC, on September 24, 2021**.

Key Facts

- **Quad initiatives: Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)** — launched at the **Tokyo Quad Summit, May 24, 2022**; vaccine partnership; critical and emerging technology working group; STEM fellowships; Quad Investors Network.
- **Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI)**: India-led; launched by PM Modi at the **East Asia Summit, Bangkok, November 4, 2019**; 7 pillars; complementary to ASEAN's **AOIP (2019)**.
- **Australia-India MoUs**: Critical minerals, undersea cables, cyber resilience expected on the sidelines.
- **Quad 2026 Summit**: Scheduled later in 2026 in India.

UPSC Angle

- **GS Paper 2 (IR)**: Quad, Indo-Pacific, IPMDA, IPOI, AOIP, minilateralism, India's Act East policy.
- **GS Paper 3 (Security)**: Maritime domain awareness, critical minerals security, semiconductor supply chains.
- **Prelims hooks**: Quad 2004 origin; Quad 1.0 Manila 2007; Quad 2.0 2017; first virtual summit (March 12, 2021); first in-person (Sept 24, 2021 Washington); IPMDA (Tokyo May 2022); IPOI (EAS Bangkok Nov 2019).
- **Mains angle**: "The Quad has matured from a security dialogue to a public-goods provider in the Indo-Pacific. Discuss."

*India, US, Japan, Australia; origins 2004 Tsunami Core Group; 2007 Manila Quad 1.0; revived 2017; first virtual summit March 12, 2021; first in-person Washington Sept 24, 2021. **IPMDA**: Launched Tokyo Quad Summit, May 24, 2022. **IPOI**: India-led; launched EAS Bangkok Nov 4, 2019; 7 pillars. **AOIP**: ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, 2019.*

IN-SPACE OPENS PSLV TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER TO PRIVATE INDUSTRY — INDIA'S SPACE PRIVATISATION LEAP

The **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe)** on **May 22, 2026** announced the **complete transfer of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) technology to Indian private industry — the first end-to-end transfer of an operational ISRO launch vehicle to a private consortium.** The move marks a structural shift in India's space economy as it pursues a **USD 44 billion target by 2033.**

Background

- **IN-SPACE** was established in **June 2020** as the **single-window autonomous body under the Department of Space** to authorise and promote private participation. Headquarters: **Bopal, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.** Chairman: **Dr Pawan Goenka.**
- The **Indian Space Policy 2023** was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security on **April 6, 2023.** It defines the roles of ISRO (R&D), NSIL (commercial), and IN-SPACe (regulator-promoter).
- **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)** — ISRO's commercial arm — was **incorporated on March 6, 2019;** HQ **Bengaluru.**
- **PSLV** had its first successful flight on **October 15, 1994 (PSLV-D2)** and is considered ISRO's "workhorse" — credited with **Chandrayaan-1 (2008), Mars Orbiter Mission (2013)** and several record multi-satellite missions.

Key Facts

- **FDI rules (amended February 2024):** Up to **74% automatic** in satellite manufacturing/operation; **49% automatic** in launch vehicles and ground systems; **100% automatic** in satellite components.
- **PSLV ToT consortium:** HAL-L&T consortium has held the contract since 2022; the May 2026 transfer extends to end-to-end manufacturing.
- **India's space economy:** Current ~USD 8 billion (~2% global share); target **USD 44 billion by 2033.**
- **Private launches:** Skyroot (Vikram-S, Nov 2022); Agnikul (Agnibaan SOrTeD, May 2024).

UPSC Angle

- **GS Paper 3 (S&T):** Space sector reforms, FDI policy, private launch vehicles, IN-SPACe.
- **GS Paper 2 (Governance):** Single-window regulation, Atmanirbhar Bharat in critical technologies.
- **Prelims hooks:** IN-SPACe HQ (Bopal, Ahmedabad); established June 2020; Indian Space Policy (April 6, 2023); NSIL (March 6, 2019, Bengaluru); FDI launch vehicles 49% automatic; PSLV first success (Oct 15, 1994).

- **Mains angle:** “Privatisation of launch vehicles is necessary but not sufficient for India to claim a substantial share of the global space economy. Discuss.”

*Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre; HQ Bopal, Ahmedabad; est. June 2020; under DoS; Chairman Pawan Goenka. **Indian Space Policy:** April 6, 2023. **NSIL:** Incorporated March 6, 2019; HQ Bengaluru. **PSLV:** First success Oct 15, 1994; workhorse vehicle. **FDI:** 74% auto for satellite manufacturing; 49% auto for launch vehicles (Feb 2024 amendment). **Target:** USD 44 billion space economy by 2033.*

INDIA'S ROOFTOP SOLAR CROSSES 20.8 GW — PM SURYA GHAR AND THE RENEWABLES TRAJECTORY

*Latest **Mercom India Research** data released around **May 22, 2026** show India's **cumulative rooftop solar capacity at 20.8 GW by end-December 2025**, with **7.1 GW added during calendar 2025** — a record year that represents roughly a **122-123% year-on-year jump**. Residential rooftop accounted for **~76%** of additions, reflecting the impact of the **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana**.*

Background

- **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana** was launched by PM Modi on **February 15, 2024** with an outlay of **₹75,021 crore**. It targets **1 crore households** with up to **300 free units of electricity per month** through rooftop solar with a CFA up to **₹78,000** per household.
- Implementing agency: **REC Limited** (formerly Rural Electrification Corporation); discom interface via **National Portal**.
- India's **renewable energy capacity** stood at approximately **274.68 GW by end-March 2026**, with solar at **~150.26 GW**. India ranks **3rd globally** in installed renewable capacity (after China and the US) per **IRENA 2026**.
- India's **Panchamrit pledges at COP-26 Glasgow (November 2021)** included **500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030**, 50% RE in the energy mix, 45% reduction in carbon intensity (2005 base), and net-zero by **2070**.

Key Facts

- **Rooftop solar (Dec 2025 cumulative):** 20.8 GW.
- **2025 additions:** 7.1 GW (~122% YoY jump).
- **Residential share:** ~76% of new capacity.
- **Subsidy structure:** ₹30,000/kW for 1 kW, ₹60,000 for 2 kW, ₹78,000 cap for 3 kW and above.
- **Net-metering:** Mandated under MoP guidelines; rooftop ≥10 kW typically uses gross metering.

UPSC Angle

- **GS Paper 3 (Economy/Environment):** Energy transition, RE financing, distributed generation, discom solvency.
- **GS Paper 2 (Schemes):** PM Surya Ghar design, CFA model, state interface.
- **Prelims hooks:** PM Surya Ghar launch (Feb 15, 2024); outlay ₹75,021 crore; subsidy cap ₹78,000; 300 free units; India's 2030 non-fossil target 500 GW; RE rank 3rd globally per IRENA.
- **Mains angle:** "Rooftop solar is as much a financial-inclusion product as an energy product. Discuss the role of consumer financing in scaling India's distributed renewables."

20.8 GW by end-Dec 2025; 7.1 GW added in 2025; ~76% residential. **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana:** Launched Feb 15, 2024; outlay ₹75,021 crore; CFA cap ₹78,000; 300 free units/month; 1 crore household target. **India RE capacity:** ~274.68 GW (Mar 2026); solar ~150.26 GW; global rank 3 (IRENA 2026). **Panchamrit (COP-26 Glasgow Nov 2021):** 500 GW non-fossil by 2030; net-zero 2070.

ODISHA MANDATES 100% EVS FOR GOVERNMENT VEHICLES — FIRST INDIAN STATE EV PROCUREMENT MANDATE

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi issued an 8-point fuel-austerity directive on May 21, 2026 instructing all departments that from June 1, 2026, every new government vehicle (two-wheeler and four-wheeler, including rented four-wheelers) must be an Electric Vehicle. Odisha becomes the first Indian state to adopt a 100% EV procurement mandate for state-government vehicles.

Background

- India's EV transition is anchored in the **EV30@30** target (announced at the **Clean Energy Ministerial 2017**) — 30% EV sales by 2030.
- **FAME-I** (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and EVs) — launched **April 1, 2015**; outlay ₹895 crore.
- **FAME-II** — launched **April 1, 2019**; outlay **₹10,000 crore**; ended **March 31, 2024**.
- **PM E-DRIVE Scheme** — launched **September 2024**; outlay **₹10,900 crore** for 2 years; covers e-2W, e-3W, e-buses, ambulances, charging infrastructure.
- **PLI for Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) batteries** — outlay **₹18,100 crore** (approved May 2021).

Key Facts

- **First state EV policy: Karnataka (2017).**

- **States with EV policies:** Delhi, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Karnataka, Telangana, Kerala, UP, Goa, MP, Haryana, Punjab, Odisha (revised 2025), Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh.
- **Battery Waste Management Rules:** Notified **August 2022** — Extended Producer Responsibility regime.
- **India crude import dependence:** ~87% (FY25, PPAC) — strategic rationale for EV transition.

UPSC Angle

- **GS Paper 3 (Economy/Environment):** Energy transition, oil import bill, EV ecosystem, battery supply chains.
- **GS Paper 2 (Governance):** Cooperative federalism in green procurement, state EV policies.
- **Prelims hooks:** FAME-II outlay (₹10,000 cr); FAME-II end (March 31, 2024); PM E-DRIVE outlay (₹10,900 cr, Sept 2024); PLI ACC (₹18,100 cr); first state EV policy Karnataka 2017; Battery Waste Mgmt Rules 2022.
- **Mains angle:** “Government procurement is a powerful demand-creation tool for the EV ecosystem. Examine with reference to Odisha’s mandate.”

*Issued by CM Mohan Charan Majhi May 21, 2026; effective June 1, 2026; first Indian state with 100% EV procurement. **FAME-I:** Launched 2015; ₹895 cr. **FAME-II:** Launched 2019; ₹10,000 cr; ended March 31, 2024. **PM E-DRIVE:** Sept 2024; ₹10,900 cr. **PLI ACC:** ₹18,100 cr. **EV30@30:** Announced 2017 Clean Energy Ministerial. **India crude import dependence:** ~87%.*

FSSAI'S CENTRALISED FOOD SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM — INTEGRATING SAMPLING, LABS AND ALERTS

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on May 22, 2026 announced plans for a centralised food surveillance system that will integrate market sampling, lab testing, and real-time digital alerts across States and Union Territories — closing critical regulatory gaps exposed by recurring food-adulteration episodes.

Background

- FSSAI was **established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006** (formally constituted September 5, 2008) and became **operational on August 5, 2011** (date FSS Rules and core Regulations came into force). HQ: **FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, New Delhi**. Parent ministry: **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)**.
- The FSSA 2006 consolidated eight prior laws including the **Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954**.

- Existing FSSAI tools include: **FoSCoS (Food Safety Compliance System, 2020)**, **FoSCoRIS (FSS Compliance through Regular Inspections and Sampling)**, **Eat Right India movement (2018)**, **Project BHOG (Blissful Hygienic Offering to God)**, **RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil)**.

Key Facts

- State Food Safety Index (SFSI):** Annual ranking released by FSSAI since **2019** to evaluate State performance.
- World Food Safety Day:** Observed annually on **June 7** since 2018; theme aligned with WHO-FAO Codex Alimentarius.
- EU equivalent: RASFF (Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed)** — operational since **1979** — serves as the global benchmark FSSAI seeks to emulate.
- Codex Alimentarius:** Joint FAO/WHO body; sets international food standards; India is a member.

UPSC Angle

- GS Paper 2 (Governance/Health):** Food safety regulation, FSSAI's mandate, federal-state coordination.
- GS Paper 3 (Science/Public Health):** Food testing infrastructure, lab accreditation (NABL), traceability.
- Prelims hooks:** FSSA year (2006); FSSAI operational (Aug 5, 2011); parent ministry (MoHFW); HQ FDA Bhawan; SFSI from 2019; World Food Safety Day June 7; RASFF (EU, 1979).
- Mains angle:** "Centralised surveillance addresses fragmentation in food safety. But last-mile enforcement remains a State subject. Discuss."

Established under FSSA 2006; operational Aug 5, 2011; HQ FDA Bhawan New Delhi; under MoHFW.

FoSCoS: 2020. Eat Right India: Launched 2018. SFSI: Annual ranking since 2019. World Food Safety Day: June 7. EU equivalent: RASFF (1979). Codex Alimentarius: Joint FAO/WHO standards body.

PAKISTAN'S RS 75 COIN FOR 75 YEARS OF PAK-CHINA TIES — CPEC AND INDIA'S POK POSITION

The State Bank of Pakistan announced on May 20, 2026 the issuance of a commemorative Rs 75 coin marking 75 years of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations (established May 21, 1951). Public release is scheduled for May 25, 2026. The announcement comes against the backdrop of intensifying India-Pakistan tensions and India's continuing protest against CPEC's transit through Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Background

- Pakistan was among the first non-communist countries to recognise the **People’s Republic of China**, establishing relations on **May 21, 1951**.
- The **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** was launched during **President Xi Jinping’s Islamabad visit in April 2015** as the flagship of **China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
- The corridor runs from **Kashgar in Xinjiang to Gwadar Port in Balochistan**, passing through **Gilgit-Baltistan and PoK**.
- **India’s official position:** PoK, Gilgit-Baltistan and Aksai Chin are **integral parts of India**. India has formally protested CPEC since 2015 as a violation of India’s territorial sovereignty.

Key Facts

- **Coin specifications:** 19 g; 36 mm; 75% Cu + 25% Ni alloy; obverse Pakistan emblem; reverse Pakistan and China flags above “75” with dates **1951-2026** and motto “**Eitamad-Dosti-Mu’awanat**” (**Trust-Friendship-Cooperation**).
- **CPEC value:** Originally announced at USD 46 billion; reportedly expanded to USD 62 billion; major projects include Karakoram Highway upgrade, Gwadar Port, multiple energy projects.
- **China-Pakistan defence ties:** China is **Pakistan’s largest defence supplier** — approximately **70% of Pakistan’s major arms imports** between 2019-2023 per **SIPRI**.
- **India’s protest channels:** UN; bilateral demarches to China; G20 (rejected G20 events in PoK-adjacent territory).

UPSC Angle

- **GS Paper 2 (IR):** India-China relations, India-Pakistan relations, BRI/CPEC, India’s PoK position.
- **GS Paper 3 (Security):** Defence dependence, China-Pakistan strategic **nexus**, two-front concerns.
- **Prelims hooks:** Pak-China ties (May 21, 1951); CPEC launch (April 2015, Xi Jinping Islamabad visit); CPEC route (Kashgar to Gwadar via Gilgit-Baltistan); SIPRI on Pakistan arms imports (~70% from China).
- **Mains angle:** “The China-Pakistan strategic partnership presents India with a structural security challenge. Examine.”

*Established May 21, 1951. **CPEC:** Launched April 2015, Xi Jinping’s Islamabad visit; runs Kashgar-Gwadar through Gilgit-Baltistan and PoK; flagship of China’s BRI. **India’s position:** PoK is an integral part of India; CPEC violates Indian sovereignty. **China-Pakistan defence:** China supplies ~70% of Pakistan’s major arms imports (SIPRI 2019-23).*

INDIA'S HSBC MANUFACTURING PMI FLASH 54.3 (MAY 2026) — STEADY EXPANSION AMID ENERGY PRICE PRESSURES

The **HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) Flash for May 2026** released on **May 22, 2026** came in at **54.3** (down marginally from **54.7** in April), while the **Composite PMI Flash** stood at **58.1** (vs 58.2). The data confirm sustained expansion but flag **highest input-price inflation in three years** driven by the West Asia energy spike.

Background

- The PMI is a survey-based indicator compiled globally by **S&P Global** (formerly IHS Markit) since 2005 for India; **HSBC** is the sponsor.
- A reading **above 50 indicates expansion**, exactly **50 is no change**, and **below 50 contraction**.
- The Manufacturing PMI tracks five sub-indices: new orders, output, employment, suppliers' delivery times and stocks of purchases.
- India's Manufacturing PMI has remained **above 50 for approximately 50 consecutive months**, reflecting a sustained recovery.

Key Facts

- **May 2026 Manufacturing PMI Flash:** 54.3 (vs 54.7 in April).
- **Composite PMI Flash:** 58.1 (vs 58.2).
- **Services PMI Flash:** Approximately 59.0 — driving overall composite.
- **Input price inflation:** Highest in three years due to elevated energy prices linked to West Asia crisis.
- **RBI repo rate:** 5.25% (post the **May 2026 MPC**); **Governor:** Sanjay Malhotra (since December 2024).
- **CPI target band:** 4% ± 2% under the **Monetary Policy Framework Agreement, 2015** (statutory under RBI Act amendment 2016).
- **MPC composition:** 6 members — 3 RBI (Governor as chair with casting vote, Deputy Governor in charge of monetary policy, one officer nominated by Central Board) + 3 external members nominated by the Central Government.

UPSC Angle

- **GS Paper 3 (Economy):** Manufacturing growth, PMI as a leading indicator, monetary policy framework.
- **GS Paper 2 (Governance):** Statutory MPC, inflation targeting, RBI Act 1934 amendments.

- **Prelims hooks:** PMI threshold (50); compiler (S&P Global); RBI Governor (Sanjay Malhotra); CPI target ($4\% \pm 2\%$); MPC composition (6 members; 3+3).
- **Mains angle:** “Inflation targeting has anchored expectations but limits counter-cyclical flexibility. Discuss in the Indian context.”

*Survey-based diffusion index; 50 = no change; compiled by S&P Global; sponsored by HSBC India. **May 2026:** Manufacturing 54.3; Composite 58.1. **RBI repo rate:** 5.25% (May 2026). **RBI Governor:** Sanjay Malhotra (since Dec 2024). **CPI target:** $4\% \pm 2\%$ under Monetary Policy Framework Agreement 2015 (statutory under RBI Act amendment, 2016). **MPC:** 6 members (3 RBI + 3 external); Governor chairs with casting vote.*

INDIA-GERMANY PATHWAY PROGRAMME — HIGHER EDUCATION, MOBILITY AND STRATEGIC SKILLS

*Following German **Chancellor Friedrich Merz’s January 12-13, 2026 India visit** (Ahmedabad bilateral with PM Modi), the **Comprehensive Roadmap on Higher Education** was formalised and the **German Pathway Programme** became operational. On **May 22, 2026**, India and Germany announced expanded scholarship streams, vocational training tracks and **fast-track Chancenkarte (Opportunity Card)** processing for Indian aspirants.*

Background

- India-Germany relations were elevated to a **Strategic Partnership in 2000**.
- **Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC)** — a biennial cabinet-to-cabinet mechanism — has been held since **2011**; the **7th IGC** was held in **New Delhi in 2024**.
- **Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement:** Signed in **December 2022** during the 6th IGC.
- Germany’s **Opportunity Card (Chancenkarte)** — a points-based long-stay visa for skilled workers — was launched on **June 1, 2024**.
- **DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst — German Academic Exchange Service)** — headquartered in **Bonn** — is the primary German agency for academic exchange and scholarships.

Key Facts

- **Indian students in Germany:** Approximately **50,000+** — the **largest non-EU student group** in Germany.

- **Bilateral trade:** Approximately **€30 billion (2024)**; Germany is India's largest trading partner in the EU.
- **Strategic Partnership year:** 2000.
- **IGC frequency:** Biennial since 2011.

UPSC Angle

- **GS Paper 2 (IR):** India-Germany Strategic Partnership, India-EU diplomacy, IGC mechanism.
- **GS Paper 3 (Economy):** Skilling, manufacturing tie-ups, automotive and engineering linkages.
- **Prelims hooks:** India-Germany Strategic Partnership year (2000); IGC since 2011 (biennial); Mobility Agreement (Dec 2022); Chancenkarte launch (June 2024); DAAD HQ (Bonn).
- **Mains angle:** "Skilled migration is a public good in an aging Europe and a youth-bulged India. Discuss the policy architecture needed to scale it."

2000. **IGC:** Biennial since 2011; 7th IGC New Delhi 2024. **Migration & Mobility Partnership:** Signed Dec 2022. **Chancenkarte (Opportunity Card):** Launched June 1, 2024; points-based long-stay visa. **DAAD:** German Academic Exchange Service; HQ Bonn. **Indian students in Germany:** ~50,000+ (largest non-EU group). **Bilateral trade:** ~€30 billion (2024).

DGTR RECOMMENDS LOWER ANTI-DUMPING DUTY ON MET COKE — STEEL MINISTRY PUSH FOR DILUTION

The **Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR)** under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** has recommended definitive anti-dumping duties of **USD 42.95 to USD 128.8 per tonne** on **low-ash metallurgical coke imported from China, Indonesia, Colombia, Japan and Russia** — down from the **provisional range of USD 60.87-130.66/tonne** notified earlier. The recommendation, reported on **May 22, 2026**, follows the **Ministry of Steel's request for dilution**, citing input-cost concerns for blast-furnace steelmakers.

Background

- DGTR was constituted in **May 2018** through the merger of three earlier directorates (DGAD, DGS, and DG Safeguards). It is the nodal body for **anti-dumping, countervailing-duty and safeguard investigations**.
- Legal basis: **Customs Tariff Act, 1975 — Sections 9, 9A, 9B**; rules of 1995. Multilateral basis: **Agreement on Anti-Dumping under Article VI of GATT 1994 (WTO)**.
- Final imposition of duty is by the **Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue)** on DGTR recommendation.

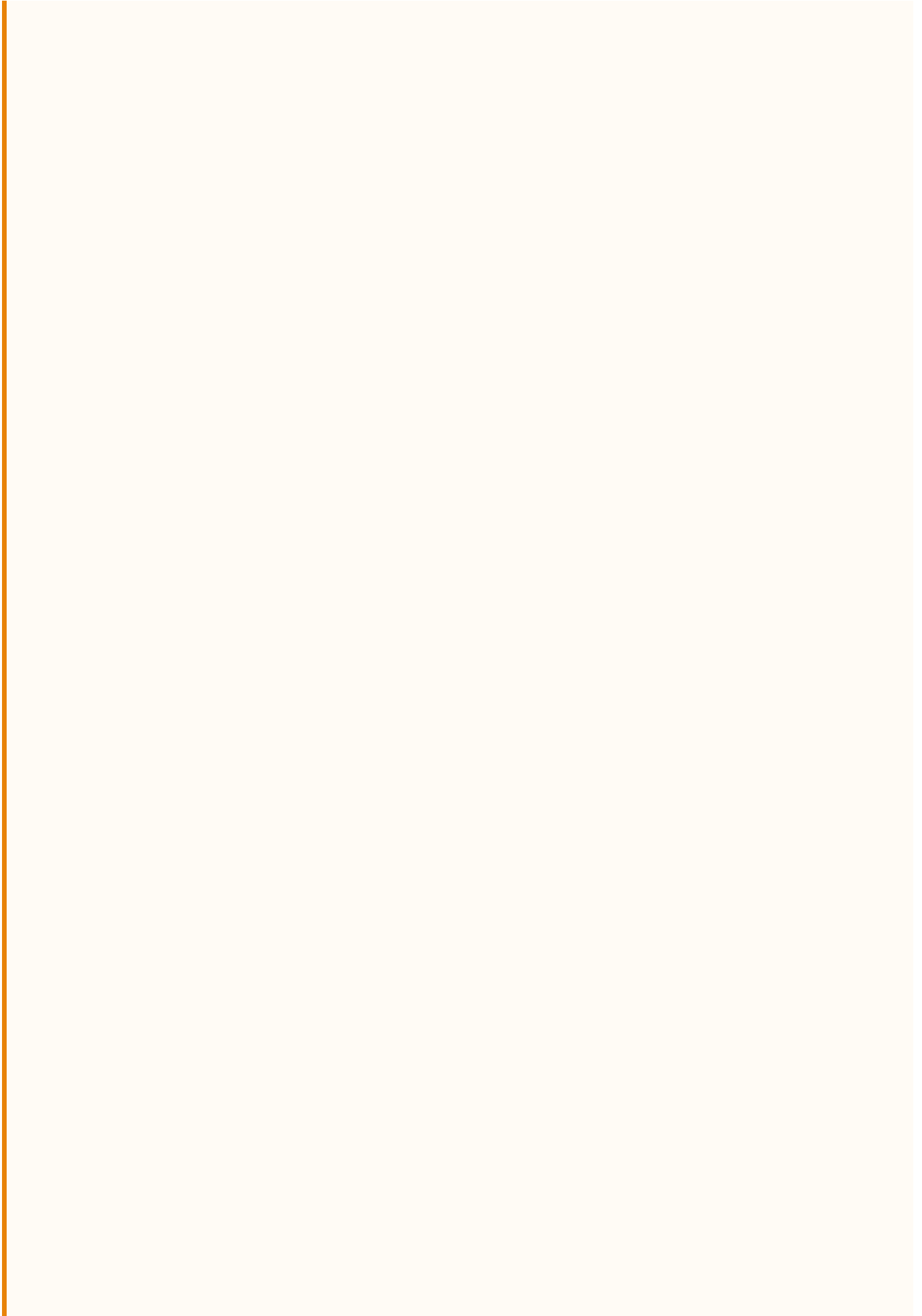
Key Facts

- **Investigation period:** April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 (15 months); injury period since April 2020.
- **India's met coke imports:** Approximately **2.7-3 million tonnes per annum (mtpa)**.
- **India's steel position: 2nd largest crude steel producer globally** (after China); current production ~180 mtpa.
- **National Steel Policy, 2017:** Target of **300 mtpa crude steel capacity by 2030-31**; per-capita steel consumption target 158 kg.
- **Coking coal dependence:** India imports ~85% of its coking coal — primary risk factor.

UPSC Angle

- **GS Paper 3 (Economy):** Trade remedies, WTO obligations, steel sector, raw material security.
- **GS Paper 2 (IR/Trade):** WTO Article VI GATT 1994, AD rules, India's use of trade remedies.
- **Prelims hooks:** DGTR established 2018; parent ministry Commerce; WTO legal basis (Article VI GATT 1994); India crude steel rank (2nd); National Steel Policy year (2017); 300 mtpa by 2030.
- **Mains angle:** "Anti-dumping duties protect domestic producers but raise costs for downstream users. Discuss the calibration challenge with reference to met coke."

*Directorate General of Trade Remedies; established May 2018 (merger of DGAD, DGS, DG Safeguards); under Ministry of Commerce. **Legal basis:** Customs Tariff Act 1975 §§9, 9A, 9B + Anti-Dumping Rules 1995; multilateral basis Article VI GATT 1994. **Duty imposition:** By Ministry of Finance on DGTR recommendation. **India steel:** 2nd largest producer; National Steel Policy 2017 — 300 mtpa target by 2030-31. **Met coke imports:** ~2.7-3 mtpa.*



TOPIC	KEY FACT
India-Cyprus Strategic Partnership	PM Modi-President Christodoulides bilateral at Hyderabad House, May 22, 2026; Strategic Partnership elevated; “Friends of IMEC” group; Cyprus holds EU Presidency Jan-Jun 2026; Cyprus EU since May 1, 2004, Euro since 2008; capital Nicosia (last divided capital); 1974 partition + TRNC (recognised only by Turkey); IMEC launched G20 New Delhi Sept 9, 2023
Biological Diversity Day	May 22; UNGA Resolution 55/201 (Dec 2000); 2026 theme “Acting Locally for Global Impact”; CBD adopted Nairobi May 22, 1992; in force Dec 29, 1993; India ratified Feb 18, 1994; CBD Secretariat Montreal; KMGBF (COP-15 Montreal Dec 2022) – 4 goals, 23 targets, 30x30; Cartagena Protocol 2000; Nagoya Protocol 2010 (India ratified Oct 9, 2012); India = 17 megadiverse, 4 of 36 hotspots; BD Act 2002 (amended 2023); NBA Chennai
Quad FM Meeting	Hosted by EAM Jaishankar in New Delhi May 26, 2026; Penny Wong, Toshimitsu Motegi, Marco Rubio; first under Trump 2.0 full year; Quad origins 2004 Tsunami Core Group; 2007 Manila Quad 1.0; 2017 Quad 2.0; first virtual summit March 12, 2021; first in-person Washington Sept 24, 2021; IPMDA launched Tokyo May 24, 2022; IPOI launched EAS Bangkok Nov 4, 2019 (7 pillars); AOIP 2019
IN-SPACE PSLV Tech Transfer	IN-SPACE announced May 22, 2026; HQ Bopal Ahmedabad; est. June 2020; Chairman Pawan Goenka; Indian Space Policy April 6, 2023; NSIL incorp. March 6, 2019, Bengaluru; PSLV first success Oct 15, 1994; FDI 74% auto satellites, 49% auto launch vehicles (Feb 2024); India space economy target USD 44 B by 2033
Rooftop Solar 20.8 GW	Mercom India data: 20.8 GW cumulative by end-Dec 2025; 7.1 GW added in 2025 (~122% YoY); ~76% residential; PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana launched Feb 15, 2024; outlay ₹75,021 cr; CFA up to ₹78,000/household; 300 free units/month; India RE ~274.68 GW (Mar 2026); solar ~150.26 GW; 3rd globally (IRENA 2026); Panchamrit COP-26 – 500 GW non-fossil by 2030, net-zero 2070
Odisha EV Mandate	CM Mohan Charan Majhi 8-point directive May 21, 2026; from June 1, 2026 all new govt 2W/4W must be EVs; first Indian state 100% EV procurement; EV30@30 announced 2017; FAME-I 2015 (₹895 cr); FAME-II 2019 (₹10,000 cr, ended March 31, 2024); PM E-DRIVE Sept 2024 (₹10,900 cr); PLI ACC ₹18,100 cr; first state EV policy Karnataka 2017; Battery Waste Mgmt Rules 2022; India crude import dependence ~87%
FSSAI Centralised Surveillance	FSSAI plans announced May 22, 2026; FSSA 2006; FSSAI operational Aug 5, 2011; HQ FDA Bhawan New Delhi; under MoHFW; tools – FoSCoS (2020), Eat Right India (2018), Project BHOG, RUCO; SFSI annual ranking since 2019; World Food Safety Day June 7; EU RASFF (1979); Codex Alimentarius joint FAO/WHO
Pak-China Rs 75 Coin / CPEC	State Bank of Pakistan announced May 20, 2026; release May 25, 2026; 75 years Pak-China ties (established May 21, 1951); coin 19g, 36mm, 75% Cu + 25% Ni; motto Eitamad-Dosti-Mu’awanat; CPEC launched April 2015 (Xi Islamabad visit); flagship of BRI; runs Kashgar (Xinjiang) to Gwadar (Balochistan) via Gilgit-Baltistan + PoK; India officially protests as PoK is integral part of India; China supplies ~70% Pakistan’s major arms (SIPRI 2019-23)

TOPIC	KEY FACT
India PMI May 2026	HSBC India Mfg PMI Flash 54.3 (vs 54.7 April); Composite 58.1 (vs 58.2); input-price inflation highest in 3 years (West Asia crisis); PMI compiler S&P Global; threshold 50; >50 expansion; India Mfg PMI >50 for ~50 months; RBI repo 5.25% (May 2026); Governor Sanjay Malhotra (Dec 2024); CPI target 4% ± 2% under Monetary Policy Framework Agreement 2015 (statutory under RBI Act amendment 2016); MPC 6 members (3 RBI + 3 external)
India-Germany Pathway	Chancellor Friedrich Merz visited India Jan 12-13, 2026 (Ahmedabad bilateral); German Pathway Programme operational with May 22, 2026 announcements; India-Germany Strategic Partnership since 2000; IGC biennial since 2011 (7th IGC New Delhi 2024); Migration & Mobility Partnership Dec 2022; Chancenkarte launched June 1, 2024; DAAD HQ Bonn; Indian students in Germany ~50,000+ (largest non-EU); bilateral trade ~€30 bn (2024)
DGTR Met Coke AD	DGTR recommended definitive AD duty \$42.95-128.8/tonne (down from \$60.87-130.66 provisional) on China, Indonesia, Colombia, Japan, Russia; Ministry of Steel sought dilution; DGTR est. May 2018 (merger of DGAD, DGS, DG Safeguards); under Commerce; legal basis Customs Tariff Act 1975 §§9-9B + Anti-Dumping Rules 1995; multilateral basis Article VI GATT 1994; final duty by MoF; India met coke imports ~2.7-3 mtpa; India 2nd largest crude steel; National Steel Policy 2017 — 300 mtpa by 2030-31

Sources: [The Hindu](#), [Indian Express](#), [PIB](#)

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