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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Hindu & The Indian express

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External Affairs Minister to join Brazil-led BRICS virtual summit on U.S. tariffs: MEA

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will represent India at a virtual summit of BRICS nations on Monday, the Ministry of External Affairs said here on Friday, announcing India's participation in the meeting convened by Brazil President Lula da Silva to discuss tariffs imposed by the U.S.

The summit, which is bound to irk the U.S. government, comes days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China for the SCO summit and conversation with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, which U.S. officials criticised.

Countries taking part
Brazilian officials have not confirmed how many of the 11-member BRICS grouping of emerging economies will participate in the summit and at what level. Shortly after U.S. tariffs were imposed on August 6, Mr. Lula had called the Mr. Modi and said he would speak to each of the BRICS members to rally support



S. Jaishankar

towards forming a "common" plan to deal with the move.

On Friday, the Kremlin's spokesperson confirmed that Mr. Putin would take part in the summit, and sources said they expected other confirmations over the weekend.

"From [India's] side, it will be the External Affairs Minister [S. Jaishankar] who will be participating in it," said MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal when asked at a weekly briefing. "This BRICS summit is at the leaders' level," he added, but did not clarify why Mr. Modi would not attend the meeting.

India is the next Chair of the BRICS grouping, and will host the summit of

countries including Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and new members Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not yet announced the specific agenda of the meeting to be held on Monday. However, local media reported that the summit would discuss the impact of U.S. tariffs on global trade, and measures to strengthen multilateralism in order to counter the effects of unilateral economic measures.

The U.S. has imposed 50% tariffs on goods from Brazil, like India, the two countries with the highest levies worldwide. China and South Africa also face high 30% tariffs, and Indonesian goods are levied 19% tariffs, with a waiver for its most important agricultural exports such as palm oil, cocoa and rubber.

All other BRICS nations including Russia and Iran, which are among the most heavily sanctioned countries, are on the lowest rung of 10% tariffs.

External Affairs Minister to join Brazil-led BRICS virtual summit on U.S. tariffs: MEA

Source: The Hindu, Page 4

GS-II (International Relations)

Context

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will represent India at a Brazil-led BRICS virtual summit on Monday to discuss U.S. tariffs.
- The U.S. has imposed steep tariffs on BRICS members, including 50% tariffs on Indian and Brazilian goods.
- The summit aims to form a common response to U.S. measures and strengthen multilateralism against unilateral economic actions.
- India will also take over as the next Chair of BRICS.

About BRICS

- BRICS = Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa.
- Originally started as BRIC (2006); South Africa joined in 2010.
- In 2023, BRICS expanded with new members (Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran & UAE) + Indonesia (2025)
- Represents 42% of the world's population, around 25% of global GDP, and a major chunk of world trade.



BRICS

- **Origin:** Coined as BRIC in 2001 (Goldman Sachs); formalized in 2006 (first meeting of foreign ministers).
- **Members:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (joined in 2010). Expanded to BRICS+ in 2023.
- **Representation:** ~42% of global population, ~25% of world GDP, major share of global trade & energy resources.
- **Nature:** Informal, consensus-driven multilateral grouping of emerging economies, with focus on reforming global governance and promoting a multipolar order.

Institutional Mechanisms under BRICS

1. New Development Bank (NDB) - Established under the Fortaleza (2014) Declaration

- HQ: Shanghai.
- Funds infrastructure & sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies.
- Each member has equal voting power (unlike IMF/World Bank).

2. Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) - Launched in 2014

- A financial safety net of \$100 billion to tackle currency volatility & balance of payment crises.
- Aimed at reducing dependence on IMF during crises.

1

Consider the following statements with regard to BRICS :

- 16th BRICS Summit was held under the Chairship of Russia in Kazan.
- Indonesia has become a full member of BRICS.
- The theme of the 16th BRICS Summit was Strengthening Multiculturalism for Just Global Development and Security.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

PYQ 2025



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The 'Fortaleza Declaration', recently in the news, is related to the affairs of

- (a) ASEAN
- (b) BRICS
- (c) OECD
- (d) WTO

PYQ 2015

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With reference to a grouping of countries known as BRICS, consider the following statements :

1. The First Summit of BRICS was held in Rio de Janeiro in 2009.
2. South Africa was the last to join the BRICS grouping.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

PYQ 2011

Chinese companies bear the brunt of jihadist strikes targeting Mali's junta

In June, JNIM warned its fighters would attack foreign companies in Mali, run by the Army since back-to-back coups in 2020 and 2021, and firms doing state projects without 'authorisation'; Chinese private investment in Mali came to \$1.6 billion between 2009 and 2024, according to AEI data

Agence France-Presse
ABIDJAN

Jihadists allied to al-Qaeda have launched a blitz of raids on Malian industrial sites run by foreign firms, especially Chinese, as a tactic to undermine the ruling junta.

While present across wider west Africa, the powerful Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims, known by its Arabic acronym JNIM, represents the greatest threat to the arid Sahel region today, the United Nations says.

In June, the JNIM warned that its well-armed fighters would target all foreign companies at work in Mali, run by the Army since back-to-back coups in 2020 and 2021, as well as any business doing public works for the state without "its authorisation".

A recent UN report found the group's "core ambition remains the creation of an emirate that could challenge the legitimacy of military regimes, force them to cede authority and implement sharia" law, or the Islamic legal code.

To that end, the JNIM's raids in the west could allow it "to establish a racketeering network that extorts foreign companies and undermines the legitimacy of the Malian government", while kidnapping



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foreigners "to ransom them back to their governments", the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) said.

Workers abducted

From the end of July, the JNIM has made good on its threats, attacking seven foreign-run industrial sites in one of Africa's top producers of gold and lithium, according to the AEI.

Six of those were run by Chinese firms, most of them in the gold-rich Kayes region to the west, with the jihadists abducting at least 11 Chinese citizens in the raids, AEI analyst Liam Karr said.

"From what we can tell, China is bearing the

brunt," Mr. Karr said.

In the wake of the attacks, China's Foreign Affairs ministry said it had urged the junta "to spare no effort in searching for and rescuing the kidnapped individuals".

It said it had "further taken practical and effective measures to ensure the safety of local Chinese citizen institutions and projects".

Economic hub

Besides Chinese, the JNIM also kidnapped three Indians at a cement works in the west in early July.

"The group has no grievances against the Chinese, but it stems from the group's desire to deal a blow to the Malian econo-

my instead," said Bakary Sambe, director of the Dakar-based Timbuktu Institute think tank.

"Kayes holds strategic value for JNIM as a key economic hub. The region accounts for roughly 80% of Mali's gold production and serves as a trade corridor to Senegal", the country's top supplier, according to the Soufan Center consultancy.

As a result, the JNIM's western campaign "threatens to undermine business ties" with China, "one of Mali's largest economic partners", the AEI warned.

Chinese private investment in Mali came to approximately \$1.6 billion between the years 2009

and 2024, while the Chinese government has poured in \$1.8 billion across 137 projects since 2000, AEI figures show.

Mali's reliance on Beijing has only grown since the coups that brought the military to power.

After turning its back on former colonial ruler France and the West more broadly, the junta has sought closer ties with China, as well as Russia and Turkey.

Russian mercenaries from the Wagner paramilitary group and its successor, Africa Corps, Chinese armoured cars and Turkish drones have helped the Malian Army in its more than a decade-long

fight against the jihadist insurgency.

For Mr. Karr, Russian willingness "to be a disruptor to strengthen its influence" stands "at odds with China, because China wants stability for its business interests".

Despite the outside help, the Malian junta has struggled to contain the JNIM and its rival, the Islamic State-Sahel Province group.

Deadly attacks

Deadly attacks across the Kayes region piled up in August, while the JNIM hit businesses in the Malian centre "for the first time", Mr. Karr said, with Chinese sugar refineries near the town of Segou among the targets.

Several days later, an assault on a British-run lithium mine in Bougouni in the south left a security guard dead.

The rash of jihadist raids comes as the junta, which trumpets a nationalist policy of greater domestic sovereignty over Mali's riches, is bidding to tighten its grip on the country's mining resources.

The military government has seized control of Mali's largest goldmine, the Loulo-Gounkoto site in the Kayes region, from Canadian giant Barrick Mining, demanding hundreds of millions of dollars in back taxes.



Chinese companies bear the brunt of jihadist strikes targeting Mali's junta

The Hindu - Page 13

Places in News - Africa (Mali)

Context

- Jihadists allied to al-Qaeda have launched raids on Malian industrial sites run by foreign firms, especially Chinese, as a tactic to undermine the ruling junta.
- In June, JNIM (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims) warned that its fighters would target all foreign companies at work in Mali, run by the Army since back-to-back coups in 2020 and 2021, as well as any businesses doing public works for the state without authorisation.

Important Points

1. JNIM Actions

- Attacked sites including one of Africa's top producers of gold and lithium.
- Six of those were run by Chinese firms, most of them in the gold-rich Kayes region.
- Jihadists abducted at least 11 Chinese citizens in the raids.

2. Importance of Kayes Region

- Kayes holds strategic value for JNIM as a key economic hub.
- Region accounts for roughly 80% of Mali's gold production.
- Also serves as a trade corridor to Senegal, Mali's top supplier.

3. Chinese Investment

- Between 2009 and 2024, Chinese private investment in Mali came to approximately \$1.6 billion.
- Chinese government has poured in \$1.8 billion across 137 projects since 2000 (AEI data).

4. Military & Political Situation

- Malian junta has struggled to contain JNIM and its rival, the Islamic State-Sahel Province.
- Russia's Wagner paramilitary group and its successor, Africa Corps, plus Russian armour and drones, have helped the junta since 2021.

5. Recent Development

- The military government has seized control of Mali's largest goldmine, the Loulo-Gounkoto site in Kayes region, from Canadian giant Barrick Mining.



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In the recent years Chad, Guinea, Mali and Sudan caught the international attention for which one of the following reasons common to all of them?

- (a) Discovery of rich deposits of rare earth elements
- (b) Establishment of Chinese military bases
- (c) Southward expansion of Sahara Desert
- (d) Successful coups

PYQ 2023





'REITs, InvITs AUM crossed ₹9 lakh cr'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) instruments are becoming popular in India as their combined assets under management have crossed ₹9 lakh crore in the last nine years, as per industry bodies IRA and BIA.

The combined AUM of REITs and InvITs are expected to touch ₹25 lakh crore by 2030, as per the projections of The Indian REITs Association (IRA) and Bharat InvITs Association (BIA).

At present, there are five listed REITs in India - Brookfield India Real Es-

tate Trust, Embassy Office Parks REIT, Mindspace Business Parks REIT, Nexus Select Trust, and Knowledge Realty Trust.

Currently, there are 27 Sebi-registered InvITs, and out of these, five are publicly listed on the stock exchanges, while 23 are privately listed.

The first InvIT was registered in 2016, while the first REIT got listed in 2019.

On Friday, IRA and BIA, which jointly hosted the first product awareness programme in the national capital, highlighted assets under management (AUM) of InvITs and REITs currently stand at around ₹7 lakh crore and ₹2.25 lakh crore, respectively.

'REITs, InvITs AUM crossed ₹9 lakh cr'

The Hindu - Page No. 11

Economics for Prelims

Context

- Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) are becoming increasingly popular in India.
- Their combined Assets Under Management (AUM) have crossed ₹9 lakh crore in the last nine years, according to industry bodies IRA (Indian REITs Association) and BIA (Bharat InvITs Association).

1. Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs)

- A REIT is a company that owns, operates, or finances income-generating real estate.
- It allows investors to pool money and invest in commercial real estate assets (like office buildings, shopping malls, IT parks, etc.).
- Investors earn returns mainly through rental income and capital appreciation.
- In India, REITs are regulated by SEBI.



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2. Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs)

- An InvIT is a collective investment vehicle that pools money from investors to invest in infrastructure projects (like roads, highways, power transmission, telecom towers, pipelines, etc.).
- They help developers monetize infrastructure assets and provide stable returns to investors.
- InvITs are also regulated by SEBI.
- In InvITs → Interest income is tax-exempt, dividend taxable.
- In REITs → Interest income is taxable, dividend taxation depends on SPV's tax regime

Consider the following statements :

Statement-I :

Interest income from the deposits in Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) distributed to their investors is exempted from tax, but the dividend is taxable.

Statement-II :

InvITs are recognized as borrowers under the 'Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002'.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- (c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- (d) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct



A new leaf

Environmental compliance needs to be monitored at all levels

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has brought into effect a set of rules called the Environment Audit Rules, 2025, that allows the vital activity of environmental monitoring and auditing to go beyond the remit of State Pollution Control Boards. The rules will largely scrutinise whether industrial units are compliant with environmental regulation. The overall framework for monitoring and compliance within the existing environmental framework is presently supported by the Central Pollution Control Board, the Regional Offices of the Environment Ministry, and the State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees. They have, however, been facing significant constraints in terms of manpower, resources, capacity and infrastructure. “These limitations have hampered their ability to comprehensively monitor and enforce environmental compliance across the vast number of projects and industries operating nationwide,” said a press statement by the Environment Ministry. This scheme aims to bridge the manpower and infrastructure deficits faced by regulatory authorities, thereby strengthening the effective implementation of environmental compliance mechanisms.

Under the new rules, private agencies can get themselves accredited as auditors. Much like chartered accountants, environment auditors can get themselves licensed and be authorised to evaluate the compliance of projects with environmental laws and their adherence with best practices in the prevention, control and abatement of pollution. Environmental regulation has, in recent years, transcended policing and bookkeeping. Given that human-caused climate change is seen as a problem that nations must collectively fix, new dimensions to environmental regulations have emerged. Thus, audits undertaken by these agencies can also be used for compliance with ‘Green Credit Rules’, under which individuals and organisations can gain tradeable ‘credits’ for afforestation, sustainable water management and waste management among other activities. Beyond industrial units, nearly every company in India will have to account for its direct and indirect carbon emissions. This will entail fairly complex accounting practices, which are beyond what Pollution Control Board officials can handle. However, preparing for the future should not be at the expense of compromising core responsibilities. It is usually at the district, block and panchayat levels that the most flagrant environmental travesties abound, which escape notice usually because of the lack of trained staff. The new regime must seek to empower them too.

CM

A new leaf: Environmental compliance needs to be monitored at all levels

The Hindu, page 6

Environment

Context

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the Environment Audit Rules, 2025, expanding environmental monitoring and auditing beyond the remit of State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs). The move comes amid longstanding challenges of manpower shortage, limited resources, and weak enforcement capacity in existing regulatory bodies like CPCB, SPCBs, and Pollution Control Committees.

Summary

- **Environment Audit Rules, 2025:** New rules empower private agencies, apart from government authorities, to act as accredited environmental auditors—similar to chartered accountants.
 - **Objective:** To ensure industries and projects comply with environmental regulations and best practices in pollution prevention, control, and abatement.
 - **Addressing Deficits:** The scheme aims to overcome manpower and infrastructure constraints of regulatory authorities, thereby improving compliance monitoring.
 - **New Dimensions:** Environmental audits will go beyond bookkeeping to cover broader aspects like carbon accounting and sustainable practices.



- **Green Credit Rules:** Audits will also be linked to 'green credits' for sustainable water/waste management and other eco-friendly activities, allowing tradable credits for compliance.
- **Wider Scope:** Nearly every company in India will need to account for its direct and indirect carbon emissions, introducing complex accounting requirements.
- **Significance:** Marks a shift towards stricter, professionalized, and holistic monitoring of environmental compliance, crucial in addressing climate change and environmental degradation.

Green Credit Rules

- The Green Credit Programme (GCP) was notified in 2023 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- It is a market-based mechanism to incentivize individuals, industries, and organizations to undertake environmentally beneficial activities.

Under this scheme:

- People or companies can earn "green credits" for activities like tree plantation, sustainable water management, waste management, air pollution control, mangrove restoration, eco-friendly agriculture, etc.
- These credits are tradable - meaning they can be bought and sold in the market, like carbon credits.
- The idea is to create an eco-economy, where compliance and sustainability generate financial value.

Clip of Ajit Pawar 'rebuking' an IPS officer draws criticism

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

A video clip in which Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Nationalist Congress Party leader Ajit Pawar is allegedly heard rebuking a young woman IPS officer, over an issue of illegal sand mining, has gone viral.

While the Deputy Chief Minister said he did not intend to interfere with law enforcement, and had only wanted to ensure that the situation on the ground remained calm, the Opposition has slammed him over the incident.

Anjana Krishna is the

NCP leader says he only wanted to keep situation calm; Oppn. condemns 'political intimidation'

sub-divisional police officer of Karmala in Solapur district. She is reported to have made a field visit in response to complaints of illegal sand mining. She is seen listening to a phone call on speaker mode. "Do you have so much audacity? I am the Deputy Chief Minister. Give me your number. I will directly call you," says the speaker in the call.

After receiving flak over the video, Mr. Ajit Pawar posted on X, "My attention has been drawn to certain videos circulating regarding my interaction with police officials in Solapur. Let me state clearly that my intention was not to interfere with law enforcement but to ensure that the situation on the ground remained calm and did not escalate."

NCP-SP MP Supriya Sule posted on her social media account, "All members of the Executive must be protected from political intimidation to uphold the 'Idea of India' our Constitution enshrines".

Mains Enrichment

Clip of Ajit Pawar 'rebuking' an IPS officer draws criticism

The Hindu, Page no. 4

GS4: Ethics in Governance

1. Core Values in Civil Services

- **Integrity** → Officer upholding the law against illegal sand mining despite political rebuke.
- **Objectivity/Impartiality** → Action taken based on facts and law, not political convenience.
- **Courage of Conviction** → Standing firm in the face of intimidation.
- **Accountability** → Ensuring illegal mining is checked and rule of law prevails.

2. Ethical Concerns in Governance

- **Rule of Law** → Shows need to insulate law enforcement from arbitrary political influence.
- **Conflict of Interest** → Between a leader's desire to "maintain calm" and the officer's duty to enforce the law.

3. Case Study Dimensions

- **Ethical Dilemma** → Balancing respect for an elected representative vs. professional duty.
- **Professional Ethics** → Civil servants must follow code of conduct and constitutional obligations, not succumb to intimidation.
- **Work Culture** → Need for independence, morale, and protection of officers to encourage fearless decision-making.

Value Addition

- **Second ARC Report:** Strongly recommended insulating civil services from political interference to ensure efficiency, accountability, and integrity in governance.
- **Constitutional Protection (Article 311):** Provides safeguards to civil servants against arbitrary removal or disciplinary action, thereby empowering them to discharge their duties without fear or favour.
- **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel:** Famously described civil services as the "steel frame of India", underlining their role in upholding neutrality, impartiality, and administrative stability even under political pressures.

Case Study

A young police officer conducts a field inspection against illegal sand mining after receiving local complaints. During the inspection, a senior political leader calls on speakerphone and rebukes the officer for acting "without taking higher authorities into confidence." This raises concerns of political pressure on law enforcement. The officer faces a dilemma: whether to continue the action firmly or yield to political instructions to avoid confrontation.

DAILY MCQs FOR PRACTICE

Questions

1. What are the ethical issues involved in this case?
2. Which values of public service are at stake?
3. As the police officer, how would you respond to such political pressure while ensuring law enforcement and maintaining respect for democratic institutions?