

04th June DSC

Current Affairs 04th June 2025.

Centre Slashes Import Duty on EVs to Accelerate Domestic Manufacturing

Policy Summary

The Union Government has announced a new policy allowing electric vehicle (EV) makers to import up to 8,000 EVs annually at a significantly reduced customs duty of 15%, compared to the earlier rate of 70–100%.

To qualify, manufacturers must commit a minimum investment of ₹4,150 crore (approximately \$500 million) in domestic EV production units.

The approved companies must establish manufacturing operations within three years and comply with stipulated domestic value addition targets.

This concessional import duty will be valid for a period of five years from the approval date.

Relevance: GS 2 (Governance), GS 3 (Energy, Technology)

Boost to Domestic Production

This initiative aims to reinforce the Make in India movement in the EV sector while drawing international investment.

Notably, companies now have the flexibility to opt for either greenfield (new) or brownfield (existing) investments—an important revision influenced by domestic industry concerns about unfair competition.

Global Interest & Tesla's Reluctance

Union Minister for Heavy Industries, H.D. Kumaraswamy, pointed out that Tesla is not showing interest in manufacturing in India and prefers establishing sales outlets instead.

The policy seems to be directed at enticing other global players like BYD, Hyundai, and Volkswagen.

Key Conditions of the Scheme

- **Minimum Vehicle Price:** Imported EVs must have a minimum Cost, Insurance, and Freight (CIF) value of \$35,000 to prevent the influx of cheaper models.
- **Import Cap:** The 8,000-unit annual ceiling ensures that local players are not crowded out.
- **Localization Requirement:** Companies must progressively increase local value addition over time to build a sustainable manufacturing ecosystem.

Expected Outcomes

This move is expected to catalyze technology transfer, job creation, and supply chain enhancement.

While it opens up the Indian EV market cautiously, it balances foreign entry with protection for domestic producers.

Challenges & Critiques

The policy's effectiveness depends heavily on the enforcement of localization targets.

There's concern over market distortion if foreign brands dominate the premium segment.

Indian firms may face heightened pressure to meet international technology and quality benchmarks.

ICMR Study: Rural Healthcare System Ill-equipped for Diabetes and Hypertension

A recent survey by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) reveals major deficiencies in the ability of India's rural health infrastructure to tackle diabetes and hypertension effectively. The study highlights shortcomings in medical diagnostics, human resources, and drug availability.

Relevance: GS 2 (Health, Governance)

Study Details

- Conducted across 19 districts in 7 States, encompassing 415 health facilities.
- Of these, 75.7% were public institutions and 57.6% were primary care centres.
- Over half (53.3%) were located in rural areas.

Readiness Findings

- **Sub-Centres:** Scored lowest with only 61% readiness.
- **CHCs:** Had a 59% readiness level.
- **PHCs:** Performed better at 73%.
- **Private Primary Care (Level 2):** Registered only 57%.
- **District & Tertiary Hospitals:** Surpassed 70%, considered adequately prepared.

Assessment Parameters

The evaluation followed WHO's SARA framework, covering equipment, diagnostics, staffing, medicines, clinical guidelines, and data systems.

Major Shortfalls Identified

- Infrastructure deficiencies plague sub-centres and CHCs.
- District hospitals showed poor diagnostic readiness.
- Weak drug supply chains and inadequate health data systems undermine primary healthcare delivery.
- Even private centres lagged behind public PHCs in preparedness.

Expert Recommendations

- Strengthen human resources at all levels of care.
- Stabilize essential drug supply systems.
- Improve diagnostics, particularly at secondary-level hospitals.
- Appoint dedicated program managers to monitor NCD-related services.
- Enhance data systems and ensure widespread access to clinical guidelines.

Key Implications

The study underscores how frontline rural facilities are unprepared for the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

While PHCs show relative strength, systemic investments are required in infrastructure, workforce, and diagnostics for sustainable healthcare improvement.

President's Rule in Manipur: Constitutional Use and Political Challenges

Context

Since February 2025, Manipur has been under President's Rule due to escalating security concerns.

Recently, a group of 10 MLAs met the Governor, pressing for a government formation as the assembly's term is valid until March 2027.

Relevance: GS 2 (Federalism, Polity)

What is President's Rule (Article 356)?

It is imposed when a state government cannot function per constitutional norms, triggered either by the Governor's report or under Article 365 if the state fails to follow central directives. The Union (President) assumes executive powers of the State.

Imposition Procedure

The proclamation needs approval from both Houses of Parliament within two months.

It is initially valid for six months and can be extended up to three years with certain conditions.

The state assembly may either be suspended or dissolved.

Historical Misuse

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar envisioned Article 356 as a rarely-used measure.

However, it was often exploited to dislodge opposition-led governments—sometimes based on poor law and order or central electoral outcomes.

Dissolution Inconsistencies

There is no uniform protocol:

- Assemblies were dissolved in Kerala (1970) and Punjab (1971) despite questionable majorities.
- In other instances (e.g., UP, MP, Odisha), efforts were made to form new ministries while keeping assemblies intact.

Judicial Safeguards: S.R. Bommai Verdict (1994)

This landmark judgment reined in arbitrary use of Article 356.

Key takeaways:

- Rule must follow breakdown of constitutional machinery.
- It is subject to judicial review.
- Assemblies should not be dissolved before parliamentary approval.

Subsequent Judicial Checks

The Supreme Court invalidated President's Rule in Bihar (2005), Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh (2016), emphasizing constitutional integrity.

In Manipur's Case

With 18 months remaining, a new government with majority support could potentially be formed, averting fresh elections.

Conclusion

Article 356 remains a sensitive and powerful constitutional mechanism.

Its use must be rooted in genuine governance crises—not political considerations.

Japan's AI Law Prioritizes Innovation with Soft Governance

Overview

Japan's new AI law, the *Act on the Promotion of Research, Development and Utilisation of AI-Related Technologies*, emphasizes innovation over stringent regulation.

Relevance: GS 2 (Governance), GS 3 (Technology)

Guiding Assumptions

1. Innovation flourishes best in less restrictive regulatory environments.
2. Voluntary, government-guided collaboration can sufficiently manage risks.

Structural Provisions

- The law establishes an AI Strategy Headquarters under the Cabinet.
- This body is tasked with drafting a comprehensive AI Basic Plan covering R&D, international collaboration, deployment, and education.
- Article 13 outlines non-binding but internationally aligned guidelines to prevent misuse (e.g., privacy breaches).
- Article 17 calls for alignment with global norms and institutions like the G7, OECD, and UN AI initiatives.

Strengths of the Approach

- Encourages innovation without regulatory fear.
- Positions the government as a facilitator rather than an enforcer.
- Promotes inclusive governance by engaging academia, industry, and civil society.
- Supports Japan's goal of rejuvenating its economy and workforce.
- Offers adaptability through periodic legal reviews.

Risks and Limitations

- The absence of binding rules may delay responses to potential harms.

- Accountability remains unclear in cases of bias or misinformation.
- Without strict enforcement, public trust in AI systems could diminish.
- International stakeholders may pressure Japan to define clearer accountability standards in high-risk domains.

Comparative Global Approaches

- **EU:** Enforces a rights-based, risk-tiered AI Act with stringent rules.
- **USA:** Favors sector-specific laws balancing innovation and oversight.
- **UAE:** Promotes innovation with executive-led, experimental frameworks.

Strategic Insight

Japan's law embodies a trust-based strategy banking on coordination and technical leadership. Its success will depend on agility, cooperation, and alignment with evolving international standards.

Conclusion

Japan's AI policy presents a bold middle path between strict regulation and total deregulation. If successful, it could offer a scalable model for other innovation-driven democracies.

Centre Seeks Proposals for De-Addiction Centres in Under-Served Districts

Background

The Union Government has opened applications for setting up District De-Addiction Centres (DDACs) in 291 districts across 30 States and Union Territories.

These districts lack access to core drug rehabilitation services and are targeted under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's NAPDDR.

Relevance: GS 2 (Social Issues, Governance)

What Are Gap Districts?

These are districts without any of the following:

- Integrated Rehabilitation Centres for Addicts (IRCAs)
- Outreach and Drop-in Centres (ODICs)
- Peer-led Community Initiatives (CPLIs)

Purpose of New DDACs

- Deliver both treatment and rehab services for substance abuse.
- Operate as multifunctional hubs with drop-in areas, peer-led support spaces, and inpatient care (15–30 beds).
- Engage in awareness campaigns and early intervention activities.

Implementation Guidelines

- Eligible entities include NGOs and start-ups with at least two years of experience.

- The application deadline is June 30, 2025.
- Each centre must meet infrastructure and staffing standards.

States with Highest Gaps

- **Chhattisgarh:** 31 out of 33 districts
 - **Bihar:** 25
 - **Madhya Pradesh:** 23
 - **Gujarat:** 22
 - **Arunachal Pradesh:** 21
- Other significantly affected states include Punjab, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Assam.

Forward Strategy

MoSJE plans to conduct a new survey to understand the spread and patterns of substance use at the district level.

This data will help tailor interventions more precisely in future phases.

Significance

This move addresses longstanding disparities in rehabilitation access. It is particularly vital for early-stage intervention in rural and tribal belts where substance use is rising.

CCMB Team Sheds Light on Darwin's 'Abominable Mystery'

Background and the 'Abominable Mystery'

Charles Darwin described the sudden and rapid diversification of flowering plants, around 130 million years ago, as an "abominable mystery" because it defied the gradual evolutionary patterns typically observed. Fossil evidence shows that angiosperms (flowering plants) underwent an abrupt diversification in both structure and habitat, which stood out as an evolutionary anomaly.

Relevance: GS Paper 3 – Science and Technology

Breakthrough by CCMB Researchers

A study published in *Nature Plants* by scientists from CSIR–CCMB, Hyderabad, has made significant progress toward solving this mystery. The team identified a gene named **SHUKR** in *Arabidopsis thaliana*, a widely used model organism in plant biology.

About SHUKR:

- Found in sporophyte cells (the diploid generation in plants).
- Plays a key role in forming pollen, the male reproductive cells.
- Regulates F-box genes, which manage protein recycling in developing pollen cells, ensuring optimal formation.

New Insights into Plant Life Cycle Regulation

- In primitive land plants like mosses, the **gametophyte** stage dominates and requires water for sperm to reach the egg.
- In flowering plants, the **sporophyte** stage is dominant, and gametophytes are reduced and enclosed within flowers (as pollen and ovules).
- SHUKR shows that the sporophyte stage now directs gametophyte development, challenging the previous belief that gametophytes developed independently.

Evolutionary Significance of SHUKR

- SHUKR and its associated F-box genes are unique to **eudicots**, a group comprising about 75% of all flowering plants.
- These genes have evolved rapidly, enabling plants to develop pollen that adapts to environmental stresses like heat, drought, and humidity.
- This suggests that SHUKR played a key role in the swift diversification and dominance of flowering plants across the globe.

Implications for Agriculture and Climate Resilience

- Flowering plants are fundamental to human food systems, producing key crops such as cereals, pulses, and oilseeds.
- Climate change threatens plant reproduction by harming pollen viability.
- Understanding SHUKR could aid in developing climate-resilient crop varieties and precision pollination strategies that respond to environmental conditions.
- This opens the door to adaptive, genetics-based agriculture.

Scientific Impact

- This research addresses part of Darwin's long-standing puzzle by connecting a molecular mechanism (SHUKR) with the evolutionary success of flowering plants.
- It also redefines our understanding of plant development by establishing the sporophyte's control over gametophyte formation—a major shift in plant biology.

04th June 2025: Static MCQS

1. Consider the following statements:

1. Austria
2. Bulgaria
3. Croatia
4. Serbia
5. Sweden
6. North Macedonia

How many of the above are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization?

- a. Only three
- b. Only four
- c. Only five
- d. All the six

Correct Option: (b)

2. Consider the following countries:

- 1. Bolivia
- 2. Brazil
- 3. Colombia
- 4. Ecuador
- 5. Paraguay
- 6. Venezuela

Andes mountains pass through how many of the above countries?

- a. Only two
- b. Only three
- c. Only four
- d. Only five

Correct Option: (c)

3. Consider the following water bodies:

- 1. Lake Tanganyika
- 2. Lake Tonle Sap
- 3. Patos Lagoon

Through how many of them does the equator pass?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All the three
- d. None

Correct Option: (d)

4. Consider the following statements about turmeric during the year 2022-23:

- I. India is the largest producer and exporter of turmeric in the world.
- II. More than 30 varieties of turmeric are grown in India.
- III. Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are major turmeric producing States in India.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. I and II only
- b. II and III only
- c. I and III only
- d. I, II and III

Correct Option: (d)

5. Which of the following are the evidences of the phenomenon of continental drift?

- I. The belt of ancient rocks from Brazil coast matches with those from Western Africa.
- II. The gold deposits of Ghana are derived from the Brazil plateau when the two continents lay side by side.
- III. The Gondwana system of sediments from India is known to have its counterparts in six different landmasses of the Southern Hemisphere.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a. I and III only
- b. I and II only
- c. I, II and III
- d. II and III only

Correct Option: (c)