

# NEWS TODAY

## India's Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) imports from United States reached an all-time high

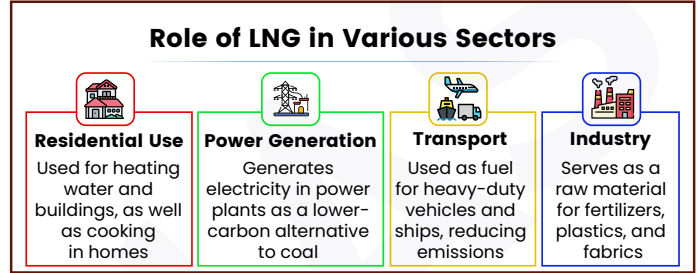
According to **US Energy Information Administration**, India's LNG imports from U.S rose by more than 71% Y-o-Y during first eleven months of 2024.

### About LNG

- It is created by **transforming natural gas into a liquid state**, by **cooling** it to  $-162^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-260^{\circ}\text{F}$ ).
- Since it is **composed primarily of methane** (around 90%), LNG is **odourless, colourless, non-toxic** and **non-corrosive**.
- India is **fourth-largest LNG importer** globally.

### Why is India's LNG dependence increasing?

- Diversify Energy basket:** Coal reduction efforts drive transition to cleaner LNG fuel.
  - Government targets to **raise natural gas share in energy mix to 15% by 2030**.
- Gas-based Economy:** Transitioning towards a gas-based economy to reduce reliance on imported crude oil.
- Climate Change target:** LNG produces **40% less CO<sub>2</sub> than coal** and **30% less than oil**, making it cleanest of fossil fuels.



### Challenges associated with LNG

- High prices and extreme price volatility:** Due to **demand-supply imbalances** (Russia-Ukraine war) etc.
- Inadequate Pipeline Network:** To move LNG from terminals to areas of its application, hindering distribution and availability of LNG throughout nation, especially in isolated regions.
- Limited storage capacity:** It makes India **vulnerable to price fluctuations in global LNG market**.

### India's Initiatives for LNG

- Draft LNG policy** to promote LNG usage in transportation and mining sector.
- Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 modified** in 2017 to include **LNG as transport fuel**.

## 3 years of India- UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

India- UAE CEPA was signed on 18th February 2022 and entered into force on 1st May 2022.

### About India-UAE CEPA

- It is the **first deep and full-fledged Free Trade Agreement**, signed by India with any country in the past decade.
- It covers Trade in Goods and Services, Pharmaceutical products, IPR, Investment, etc.

### Significance of India- UAE CEPA

- Boost bilateral trade in goods to US\$100 billion** and trade in **services to US\$15 billion** over next five years.
- Create **more than one million jobs opportunities** for Indian workforce through enhanced trade liberalisation and market access.
- Enable preferential market access for India's labour-intensive goods** like textiles, engineering goods etc.
- Ensure zero-duty market access for 90% of exports from UAE into India**, benefitting UAE commodity exporters of petrol chemicals, aluminum, and copper.
- Enhance Indian exporters' access to **UAE's neighbouring regions**, especially **Gulf Cooperation Council** states.

### Progress made under India- UAE CEPA

- Bilateral Merchandise trade:** Nearly **doubled** from USD 43.3billion (FY 2020-21) to USD 83.7billion (FY 2023-24).
- Export Growth:** Non-oil exports hit USD 27.4 billion in 2023-24, led by refined crude, gems & jewellery, high-tech goods, and chemicals.
- MSMEs Boost:** Increased market access & employment, with **Bharat Mart in Dubai** enhancing global trade.

### India-UAE Bilateral Relations

- Diplomatic Ties:** Established in **1972**.
- Trade:** UAE ranks as **India's third-largest trading partner** and **second largest export destination**, with exports over US\$ 35.62 billion in FY 2023-24.
- Defense:** **Desert Eagle** bilateral exercise between air forces of both countries, **Joint Military Exercise Desert Cyclone** etc.

## India @2047: Transforming India into a Tech-Driven Economy, Report released by NASSCOM

Report outlines a **strategic roadmap** illustrating how India can transform into a **high income country** with a projected **GDP of \$23–\$35 trillion**.

### Key highlights of the report

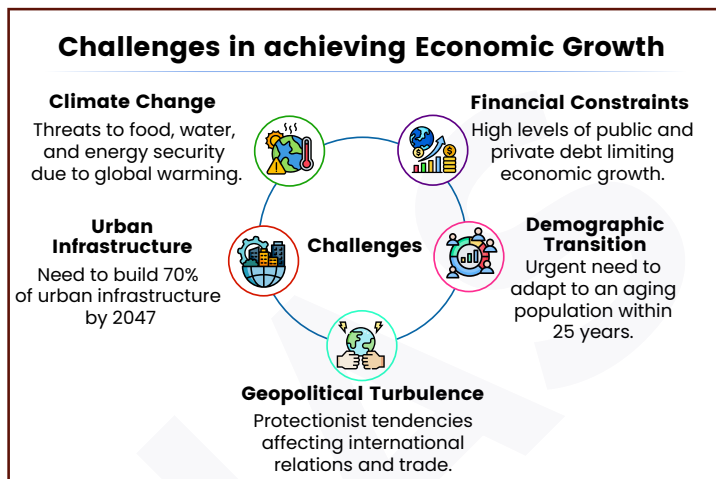
- **Sustained GDP Growth:** Of around 8%–10%, with acceleration on multiple fronts like export-led economy, diverse workforce, etc.
- **Sectoral Shift:** Services and manufacturing could drive India's growth, growing at 10%, with agriculture at around 6%.
- **Renewable Energy:** India's share of renewables in overall energy generation is to rise to **70% (2047) from 24% (2023)**.

### Key Enabling Sectors

- **Electronics:** AI-led product simulation (near term) and design of quantum computers and brain inspired neuromorphic chips (long term), etc.
- **Energy:** Driven mainly by investing in **Microgrids, Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)**, etc.
- **Chemicals:** AI Driven molecular design, customized formulations based on customer needs, etc.
  - ⊕ **E.g., China** has ensured consolidation of manufacturing resources into chemical parks.
- **Automotive:** Electrification and shift to Electric Vehicles, Shift to solid state batteries, etc.
- **Services:** In key areas like **Finance and banking** (block-chain enabled transactions); **health** (immersive tele-presence treatment); etc.

### Key Recommendations

- **For Government:** Building Export-oriented Infrastructure, pursuing India-centric agreements with global groups like ASEAN, EU, etc.
- **For Corporates:** Invest in building foundational layer integrated with latest technology. E.g., incorporating latest technology systems on factory floor for real time data.

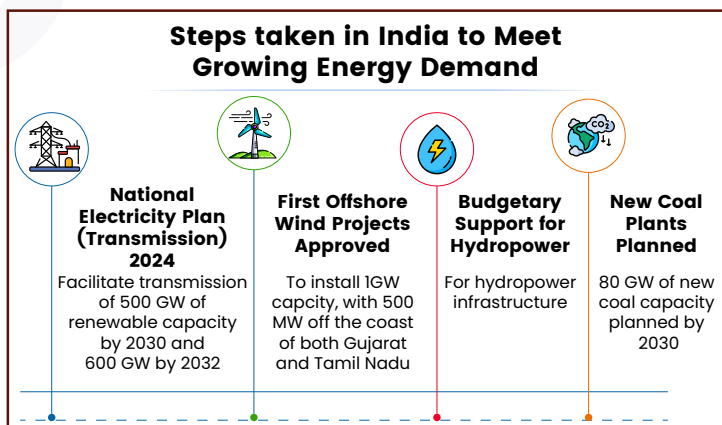


## International Energy Agency (IEA) released Electricity 2025 Report

Report explores emerging trends like growing electrification, expanding power systems and increasing share of weather-dependent energy sources in generation mix.

### Key Highlights of Report

- **Global**
  - ⊕ **Global energy demand rose by 4.3% in 2024** and forecast to continue to grow at close to 4% for next three years till 2027.
  - ⊕ China emerged as **highest consumer of electricity** leaving behind US or EU.
  - ⊕ **Global CO2 emissions** from electricity generation are **projected to stabilize** from 2025 to 2027, following 1% rise in 2024.
  - ⊕ **Renewables** (solar, wind, hydropower) set to **meet about 95% of electricity demand growth** from 2025-2027.
- **India**
  - ⊕ Electricity demand **surged 5.8% in 2024**, and forecast to **grow at an average 6.3% annually** from 2025- 2027.
  - ⊕ **India's thermal power capacity** will rise to **283 GW by 2032**.
  - ⊕ **Coal remains dominant** with **74%** of India's power mix in 2024.
  - ⊕ **Renewable energy share** to grow from **21 and % (2024) to 27% (2027)**, with solar PV leading the expansion.
  - ⊕ **Nuclear power rose 13% in 2024**, and **set to triple** from 8.2 GW to **22.5 GW by 2031-32**.



### Reasons behind rise in Electricity Demand

- **Global:** Growing industrial production (solar PV cells), rising use of **Air Conditioning (AC)**, expansion in **EV charging infrastructure and data centres**, etc. especially in China.
- **India:**
  - ⊕ **High economic growth of 7% (IMF)** and **intense heatwaves** resulting in rising AC demands.
  - ⊕ Schemes like **PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana** and **amendments to Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2024** are streamlining solar plant installations and electricity connections.

## Mercer-Mettl released India's Graduate Skill Index 2025

It deals with the employability of Indian graduates for an AI-enabled workplace.

### Key Findings

- **Overall Employability of Indian Graduates:** Saw a **decline** from 44.3% (2023) to 42.6% (2024) particularly driven by non-technical skills like human resources, digital marketing, etc.
  - ⊖ Indian graduates have however displayed **highest employability amongst technical job** roles like Artificial Intelligence (AI), etc.
- **Gender Disparity:** 43.4% of male graduates are employable, compared to 41.7% for female graduates.
- **Employability across Colleges:** Graduates from **Tier 1 colleges** have the highest employability.
- **Employability across soft Skills:** 50% of Indian graduates are proficient in **soft skills** like emotional intelligence, creativity, etc.

### Reasons for Low Employability of Indian Graduates

- **Education system gaps:** Indian colleges focus more on **theory** than practical skills.
- **AI disrupting jobs:** Automation is changing job roles, requiring **continuous upskilling**.
  - ⊖ **28% of employers** believe that a significant **transformation of technical skills** will be required for a third of their talent base in 2025 to remain competitive.
- **Soft Skills Deficit:** Educational programs overlook critical workplace abilities like communication, teamwork and critical thinking, etc.

### Some Initiatives to Increase Employability in India

- **Skill Development:** Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) Scheme, etc.
- **Women Employability:** Stand Up India, Women in Science and Engineering-KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN), etc.

### Stakeholder's interventions on Increasing Employability

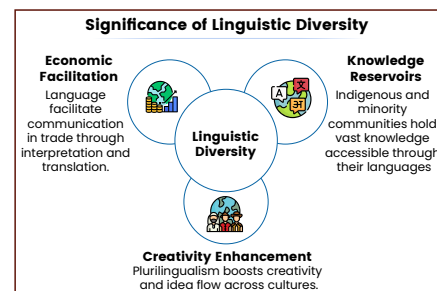


## Highlighting Linguistic Diversity, PM emphasized on the role of Indian languages in influencing and enriching each other

Linguistic Diversity can be understood both as **the absolute number of languages** and the **percentage of the population** speaking any single language in a country.

### Linguistic Diversity In India

- **Status:** As per **Census 2011**, there are more than **99 Non-scheduled languages**, **22 Scheduled languages** and **121 other languages**.



- ⊖ **Peoples Linguistic Survey of India (2010)** identified **780 languages**, of which 50 are extinct in past five decades.

- **Language Families:** Indian Languages belong to Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Burmese and others.
- **Constitutional Provisions promoting Linguistic Diversity in India**
  - ⊖ **Eighth Schedule:** Recognizes **22 scheduled languages**.
  - ⊖ **Article 29:** Safeguards the **language, script, and culture** of any section of citizens.
  - ⊖ **Article 350-B:** Provides for a **Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities** to protect minority language interests.

### Some Initiatives taken to enhance Linguistic Diversity in India

- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:** Provides for medium of instruction to be in mother tongue/ local language upto at least class 5.
- **Sahitya Akademi:** Supports and preserves Indian languages through awards, publications, and research.
- **Technology Initiatives:** Bhashini, AI-driven translation tools, and regional language support in digital platforms.
- **Classical Languages:** Designation accorded to a language based on its historical significance, linguistic contribution, etc.
- **Committee: Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti**, a High Powered Committee for Promotion of Indian Languages constituted in 2021.

## Also In News



### Credit Information Companies (CIC)

Recently, RBI imposed a penalty of Rs 39 lakh on Citibank for failing to provide credit information to **Credit Information Companies(CIC)**.

### About CIC

- **About:** They collect public data, credit transactions and payment histories of individuals and companies regarding loans, and credit cards, among others.
- **Significance:** **Generate a credit score** helping lenders and credit grantors to decide whether to accept or decline the applicant's request for a loan.
- **Licensing and Regulation:** Licensed by **RBI** and regulated by the **Credit Information Companies (Regulation) Act, 2005**.



### Bathousim

Government of Bodoland Territorial Region in Assam has granted official recognition to Bathousim in Religion Column.

### About Bathousim

- **Folk-religion of Bodos** that is **centred around worship of Bathoubwrai or Sibwrai**. i. e. supreme god of Bodos. Hence, it is known as **Bathou religion**.
- In Bodo language, **Ba** means **five** and **thou** means **deep philosophical thought**.
- These **five elements are** - Bar (Air), San (Sun), Ha (Earth), Or (Fire) and Okhrang (Sky).

### Bodo Tribe:

- **Largest indigenous plains tribe** in Assam.
- Homeland has been on **north bank of Brahmaputra**, with foothills of Bhutan.
- Belong to **Assam-Burma group of Tibeto-Burman speakers**.



### Kuno National Park

Recently, five more cheetahs were released into Kuno National Park.

#### About Kuno National Park

- **Location:** Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh and extended in Vindhyan Hills.
- It derives its **name from Kuno River** (tributary of Chambal River).
- It was declared a **Wildlife Sanctuary** in 1981 and **National Park** in 2018.
- It falls under **northern tropical dry deciduous forest**.
- **Flora:** Kardhai, Salai, Khair trees, etc.
- **Fauna:** Spotted deer, Sambar, Nilgai, Barking deer, etc.



### False Killer Whales

Recently, the survival of around **90 False Killer Whales** was reported in a mass stranding incident on a remote beach in **Tasmania**.

#### False Killer Whales

- **Habitat:** Found globally in all **tropical and subtropical oceans** and generally in **deep offshore waters**.
- **Appearance:** **Dark gray, often appearing black** except on a small part of their ventral (underside) surface.
  - ⊕ **Large and slender**, and males are slightly larger than females.
- **Behaviour:** **Gregarious (sociable)** and form **strong social bonds**.
  - ⊕ **Often found in relatively small** subgroups of a single to a few individuals.
- **Threats:** Environmental Contamination, Hunting, Competition for prey, etc.



### Great Lakes

As per recent reports, climate change is threatening **Lake Ontario**, part of the 5 great lakes of North America.

#### About Great Lakes

- **Names:** **Superior** (largest and deepest), **Michigan, Huron** (longest shoreline), **Erie** (Shallowest), and **Ontario** (Smallest).
  - ⊕ Together they are the **largest freshwater system on Earth**, and contain **one-fifth of the world's surface freshwater**.
- **Location:** **Lake Michigan** lies **completely within the United States**.
  - ⊕ The other four form a **natural border between Canada and the United States**.
- **Flow:** Water flows from **Lake Superior, via Lake Huron, Michigan, Erie, Ontario** into the Atlantic Ocean through **Saint Lawrence River**.



### PM Awas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G)

Prime Minister launched the **Phase-2 of PMAY-G**.

#### About PMAY-G

- **Ministry:** Launched by **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)** in 2016.
- **Objective:** Provide **affordable, pucca (solid) homes** with basic amenities to rural poor, ensuring **"Housing for All" in rural India**.
- **Target:** **4.95 crore houses** (originally 2.95 crore by 2023-24, extended with 2 crore more by 2024-29).
- **Financial Assistance:** Loan up to Rs. 70,000 is available to eligible beneficiaries at 3% reduced interest rate for construction of their permanent house.
- **Beneficiaries:** Identified through SECC 2011 and Awaas+ (2018) surveys; verified by Gram Sabhas.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** Houseless Households and Households with Kuccha Houses.



### Jhumoir Dance

Prime Minister of India to attend Jhumoir Binandini (Mega Jhumoir) 2025 in Guwahati, Assam which symbolises 200 years of Assam's tea industry.

#### About Jhumoir (Jhumur) Dance

- **Folk dance primarily performed by Assam Tea Tribe and Adivasi Communities** of Assam during harvest season. It embodies spirit of inclusivity, unity and cultural pride.
- **Women are main dancers and singers, while men play traditional instruments** like madal, dhol, or dhak (drums), cymbals, flutes, and shehnai.
- Attire worn varies from community to community, although **red and white sarees** are particularly popular among women.



### Dharma Guardian

Indian Army Contingent departed for Joint Military Exercise 'Dharma Guardian' which is conducted in Japan.

#### About Dharma Guardian

- It is an **annual event** conducted **alternatively in India and Japan**.
- **Aim:** To **enhance interoperability between two forces** while undertaking joint urban warfare and counter-terrorism operations under UN mandate.

### Place in News



### Honduras (Capital: Tegucigalpa)

India has sent humanitarian assistance to **Honduras** in the aftermath of **Tropical storm SARA**.

#### Political Boundaries

- **Location:** Central America
- **Land Borders:** **Guatemala** and **El Salvador** (West) and **Nicaragua** (South and East).
- **Surrounding water bodies:** The **Caribbean Sea** (North), and the **Pacific Ocean** (South).

#### Geographical Features

- **Major Rivers:** Patuca & Ulúa
- **Highest Peak:** Mount Las Minas.
- **Gulf:** **Gulf of Fonseca**, bounded by El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

