

EDITORIALS – 3RD JUL 2026

1. Unwelcome surge (GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'Unwelcome surge' was published in The Hindu on 3rd Jul 2026, highlights that India's GST buoyancy is driven more by imported inflation and rupee depreciation than stronger domestic value addition.

Import-Led GST Buoyancy

- India's June GST collections rose 13.9% to ₹1.95 lakh crore, mainly due to 34.6% growth in import IGST.
- Domestic GST grew only 6.5%, showing that overall revenue buoyancy reflects import-price effects more than broad domestic value addition.
- Petroleum products formed 54% of May import rise by value, while gold added 34%, signalling price-led and hedge-driven imports.
- The gold duty hike from 6% to 15% likely raised the import GST kitty, but also reflected defensive buying during inflationary uncertainty.
- A nearly 6% rupee depreciation, higher freight costs, and 14.5% dearer non-oil imports mechanically enlarged the June tax base.

Weak Domestic Economic Signals

- Eight core industries grew only 2.8% in Q1 FY27, against around 6% last year, indicating slower underlying industrial activity.
- Growth remained weak in crude oil, gas, refinery products, fertilisers and electricity, narrowing the case for strong domestic production momentum.
- The HSBC Manufacturing PMI at 54.2 showed continued expansion, but its second-lowest reading in 13 months marked moderating factory activity.

GST Gains and Structural Limits

- Nine years after GST, the tax base expanded from 66 lakh to over 1.65 crore taxpayers, reflecting better compliance and greater formalisation.
- Unresolved issues around faster refunds, input tax credit, litigation and revenue-sharing federalism still limit GST's institutional efficiency.
- GST has strengthened India's indirect tax architecture, but June's buoyancy appears underwritten by imported inflation rather than stronger domestic demand.

Beyond Editorial

Revenue Quality over Revenue Quantity

- Real buoyancy: Goods and Services Tax (GST) growth looks weaker when June 2026 import revenue rose 34.6%, while domestic revenue rose only 6.5%.
- Net collections: June refunds rose 29.1% to ₹32,436 crore, so net revenue gives a cleaner picture than gross collections.
- Import dependence: April–June FY27 import GST grew 26.2%, while domestic GST grew only 2.8%, exposing revenue to external prices.
- Inflation effect: Gold duty rose from 6% to 15% in May 2026, which can raise tax receipts without proving stronger production.
- Activity cross-check: HSBC India Manufacturing PMI eased to 54.2 in June 2026, showing GST data must be read with factory indicators.
- Compliance quality: GSTN's e-invoicing auto-populates returns and e-way bills, improving compliance but not automatically raising real value addition.
- Federal caution: State collections varied sharply, with Uttar Pradesh rising 19% while Sikkim fell 53%, showing monthly buoyancy can mislead fiscal planning.

2. A shot at life, Mandsaur's model for HPV vaccination (GS Paper II Governance)

This editorial 'A shot at life, Mandsaur's model for HPV vaccination' was published in The Hindu on 3rd Jul 2026, highlights how data-driven planning and behavioural nudges made Mandsaur's HPV vaccination campaign inclusive and effective.

Public Health Context and Targeting

- Cervical cancer is India's major women's health challenge, with over 1.2 lakh cases and 80,000 deaths annually.
- Nearly 95% of cervical cancer cases are linked to high-risk Human papillomavirus (HPV) strains, making vaccination a major preventive intervention.
- The Government of India launched a nationwide campaign on February 28, 2026, offering free HPV vaccination to 1.15 crore girls aged 14–15.
- Mandsaur prioritised hard-to-reach groups, including Banchhadas, nomadic tribes, urban slums and dropouts, treating data invisibility as a core delivery barrier.

Mandsaur's Data-Driven Delivery Model

- District officials combined Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK), SAMAGRA MP and Ladli Laxmi data to create hyper-local target lists.

- Fragmented records became actionable Master Line Lists, using SAMAGRA IDs, school gaps and anganwadi enrolment to identify eligible girls.
- Low-coverage and high-resistance areas were mapped for micro-planning, while vulnerable-group mapping helped tailor culturally sensitive communication.
- Door-to-door surveys and repeated tracking reduced statistical gaps, shifting programme design from broad coverage targets to last-mile identification.

Behavioural Nudges and Community Trust

- The “Nudge Approach” made vaccination the default choice by telling families their daughters were due for vaccination, not asking them to opt in.
- Refusing families received repeated counselling visits, while schools and local bodies arranged transport to remove logistical barriers.
- Infertility rumours were countered through awareness campaigns involving Gen-Z influencers, athletes, doctors, students, religious leaders and media personalities.
- Peer recognition strengthened social norms, as vaccinated families were publicly felicitated and vaccinated girls were projected as community champions.
- Gram panchayat and ward-level data sharing created competition, while digital nudges and red-flag reminders improved frontline-worker accountability.

Implementation Design and Outcome

- Vaccination was conducted under medical supervision at visible health-care facilities, normalising adolescent girls’ vaccination and reducing stigma.
- Women affected by cervical cancer shared experiences, adding emotional resonance and replacing distrust with informed dialogue.
- The campaign was integrated with routine immunisation days, antenatal clinics and Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, enabling service bundling.
- Mandsaur achieved 100% of its target in under 40 days, with 493 sessions across 12 permanent and 27 temporary vaccination sites.
- Girls from 893 villages and 190 urban wards were mobilised, showing how grassroots innovation can convert planning into population-level protection.

Beyond Editorial

Scaling Public Health Nudges with Ethical Safeguards

- Informed consent: The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 requires free, specific and informed consent, making adolescent health targeting privacy-sensitive.
- Target alignment: India’s 2026 HPV campaign for 1.15 crore girls aged 14 supports the World Health Organization’s 90% vaccination target by age 15.

- Digital safeguards: Rajasthan's HPV rollout used U-WIN registration, digital certificates and written consent in low-connectivity areas, balancing tracking with access.
- Safety credibility: Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) surveillance is essential because transparent monitoring protects trust during large vaccination drives.
- Medical reassurance: The national launch cited 93-100% effectiveness of single-dose Gardasil-4 against HPV types causing cervical cancer.
- Continuum of care: Vaccination must link with screening and treatment, because WHO's elimination strategy follows the 90-70-90 framework.
- Replication test: Mandsaur-type nudges become scalable only when consent, data protection, AEFI readiness and local communication work together.

3. Delhi-Tokyo ties face the future (GS Paper II International Relations)

This editorial 'Delhi-Tokyo ties face the future' was published in The Indian Express on 3rd Jul 2026, highlights why India-Japan partnership must deepen amid US uncertainty, China's assertiveness and Indo-Pacific rebalancing.

Geopolitical Uncertainty and Strategic Convergence

- Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's India visit comes amid US uncertainty over China and the Indo-Pacific, raising doubts about Washington's reliability.
- Trump 2.0's transactional engagement, the Pentagon's shift from Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) to Pacific Command (PACOM), and the Trump-Xi summit deepen Asian concerns.
- Modi-Takaichi talks strengthen the India-Japan partnership, as Japan's technology, investment and military capacity complement India's rise.
- Both countries share concerns over China's assertiveness: India faces an unresolved border, while Japan faces maritime and territorial disputes.

Technology and Future Value Chains

- Bilateral cooperation increasingly rests on technology security, as both countries seek reduced dependence on Chinese technologies and rare earths.
- Japan brings capital, advanced manufacturing and semiconductors, while India offers scale, software talent and a vast market.
- A coordinated India-Japan strategy can shape future value chains, linking Japanese industrial strength with India's technological and market capacity.

Indo-Pacific Strategy and Balance of Power

- The Indo-Pacific remains central to India's economic and security strategy, irrespective of whether US recalibration proves tactical or strategic.
- India must accelerate military and technological modernisation while deepening strategic partnerships across the region, with Japan as a key partner.
- A closer Delhi-Tokyo partnership supports a stable rules-based order and helps preserve a favourable regional balance of power.

Beyond Editorial

Managing Constraints in the India-Japan Partnership

- Strategic autonomy: India can deepen Japan ties through Quad cooperation without appearing locked into an exclusive bloc against China.
- Implementation gap: The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail project shows execution risks, as Maharashtra land-acquisition delays affected progress till 2021.
- Trade imbalance: India-Japan trade reached US\$27.47 billion in FY 2025-26, but India's exports were only US\$6.04 billion against US\$21.43 billion imports.
- Investment absorption: Japan's investment pledge above US\$61 billion needs stronger Indian land, logistics and regulatory capacity for timely conversion.
- Japan's limits: Japan's ageing population and high public debt can restrict its ability to sustain larger defence and infrastructure commitments.
- Technology depth: New AI, metals, energy and defence co-development pacts require export-control clarity, intellectual-property safeguards and industry-level execution.
- ASEAN sensitivity: India-Japan cooperation must respect ASEAN Centrality, since the ASEAN Outlook treats it as the core Indo-Pacific principle.