



Learn Beyond

# India to tap augmented solar capacity, coal to weather El Nino, summer power demand

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NEW DELHI

Amidst expectations of further increase in energy demand with peak summers approaching and an El Nino in sight, India could be looking at meeting its increased power requirements from the traditional coal-powered thermal plants and augmented solar plants.

In fact, when the country scaled its peak demand of 256.1 gigawatts on April 25, thermal plants nearly retained its dominant position accounting for 66.9% of the generation, while solar augmented its position to account for 21.5% of the power generated.

The augmented solar capacity and traditional thermal plants are of pivotal importance in the dual paradigm of peak summers and El Nino effects.

### Renewable growth

Solar contribution reaches new highs amid rising peak demand

\* in million units

Date	Peak demand during the day (GW)	Solar generation* (contribution to total daily generation in %)	Wind generation* (contribution to total daily generation in %)	Total generation*
30-05-2024	250	421 (7%)	437 (7.4%)	5,887
09-01-2026	245	488 (9.4%)	274 (5%)	5,168
24-04-2026	252	665 (11%)	199 (3%)	6,014
25-04-2026	256	657 (10.8%)	156 (2.5%)	6,102

Although, speaking to *The Hindu*, highly placed government officials said the country was in a stable position with adequate supplies of coal to meet a potential increase in power demand.

While the historical data assessing contribution of each of the power sources could not be traced, for context, an average contribution of each of the sources through the day indicates solar energy accounted for about 8.9% of power generated on the

day of peak power demand in 2025, 7.3% in 2024, about 6% in 2023 and 5.63% in 2022. Though solar power makes up about 30% of India's installed power capacity at present, it cannot be fully utilised due to limited battery storage. In fact, solar power is frequently curtailed to keep the grid stable.

Manoj Kumar, India Analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) says: "With stronger transmission networks, more flexi-

ble grid operations, and faster battery deployment, a larger share of evening and night-time demand can also be met through non-fossil sources."

Essential to note here that India added a record 44.61 gigawatts of solar capacity in the fiscal year 2025-26, which was more than the double it had added in the preceding fiscal.

#### Hotter months ahead

On Friday, the India Meteorological Department said El Nino conditions –

which usually translate to weak monsoon rains and therefore longer dry spells – are likely to prevail during most of the monsoon months from June to September. Temperatures in May, broadly, would be less searing with more rain than what is usual for May expected over most parts except eastern India. Gujarat, Maharashtra, coastal Odisha, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh and Himalayan foothills are likely to see more than its usual share of 'heatwave' days.

#### Ample coal stocks

India has approximately 200 million tonnes of coal stocks as on date, thus, with approximately 2.3-2.4 million tonnes being utilised daily by thermal plants, the stocks would suffice for more than 83 days, a highly placed government official told *The Hindu*.



## GS Paper II – International Relations

### *Abu Dhabi exits OPEC for an ascent of 'peak oil'*

**A**lthough in recent years the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has frequently threatened to leave the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), its actual announcement, on April 28, took observers by surprise. It was also conspicuous in its context. It provided only three days' notice for exit from OPEC and OPEC+ on May 1, just five days before the next OPEC meeting. The decision was also counterintuitive to the ongoing double blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, staunching oil exports of the UAE and other Gulf states.

A subsequent Emirati official statement was elaborate but elliptical. It sought to both rationalise the decision aimed at pursuing national interest and reassure the stakeholders of its continued intention "to contribute to stability (of the oil market) in a measured and responsible manner", promising "to bring additional production to market in a gradual and measured manner".

These anodyne references prompt the analysts to look deeper to fathom the real reasons for the Emirati step and assess its impact on the global market.

#### **The UAE's grouse**

The UAE's oil and gas reserves, estimated at 113 billion barrels, are the world's sixth largest. These are almost exclusively in the Abu Dhabi emirate. The UAE has a \$150 billion investment plan (2023-27) to raise its oil production capacity to five million barrels per day (mbpd). However, its OPEC production quota is limited to 3.45 mbpd, leaving it with nearly 1.5 mbpd unutilised spare capacity. This has been a source of the UAE's grouse against OPEC, which is perceived to operate under Saudi hegemony. Riyadh, as OPEC's 'swing producer', often trims its oil



**Mahesh Sachdev**

Retired Indian Ambassador with an interest in West Asia and oil matters

production to absorb the global oil glut; it resists Abu Dhabi's pressure for a larger OPEC quota. The UAE's ambitious plans for a post-oil advanced technologies-based economy require mega-investments in Artificial Intelligence, and data centres, ironically, requiring higher oil revenues.

#### **War's impact**

Over the long run, Emirati strategists believe that global oil demand is approaching a "Peak Oil" moment after which crude requirement and unit value would begin their decline. Consequently, they wish to sell as much oil as possible before the "Peak Oil". They contend that the Iran war brings "Peak Oil" even closer by causing an unsustainable surge in oil prices, destroying the demand and accelerating the shift towards alternative fuels. In the short run, the UAE wishes to take advantage of the current higher oil prices. With the 1.5 mbpd Abu Dhabi (Habshan)-Fujairah oil pipeline already operational outside the Strait of Hormuz, the UAE is well placed to do so. By quitting OPEC, Abu Dhabi has unfettered itself from any quota restrictions in anticipation of a scramble among the Gulf exporters for greater market share once the two blockades on the Strait of Hormuz are lifted.

The Emirati statement conspicuously omits the Gulf geopolitics, the 640-pound gorilla in the room. Iran hurled over 2,200 drones and missiles at the UAE during the war as retribution for its strategic ties with Israel. Separately, during the past decade, the barely concealed political and economic rivalry between Saudi Arabia and the UAE has reached a crescendo. It is hardly coincidental that the UAE's OPEC exit announcement was timed with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Consultative Summit,

in Jeddah, on the Iran war, where the UAE was under-represented by its Foreign Minister. The move was widely interpreted as Abu Dhabi flaunting its regional autonomy of action to the GCC states and Iran. By ditching OPEC, the UAE, apparently, aims to steal a march over Iran and Saudi Arabia, both OPEC members, for Asia's very large and thirsty crude markets. The move may also favour U.S. President Donald Trump, who desperately needs lower oil prices before the mid-term Congressional elections. At a wider ambit, this may be the opening overture of the UAE openly pursuing a more nationalistic foreign policy. Most observers believe that the exit of the UAE, OPEC's third-largest producer, would not derail the cartel, although its grip on the global market would slip further below that of independent producers, such as the U.S., Canada, Brazil, and Norway. For some, the departure of the UAE, the fifth member to leave OPEC since 2016 and the biggest producer so far, may even mark the beginning of the end for OPEC.

#### **An opportunity for India**

While the Emiratis have their reasons for quitting OPEC, consumers in India, the world's third-largest and fastest-growing crude importer, would see it with tentative hope for lower pump prices. India enjoys strategic ties with the UAE, its third-largest trading partner and fourth-largest crude supplier. To anchor the hydrocarbon relationship with the "OPEC-free" UAE, India may propose strategic joint investments in Indian downstream projects.

For the past half a century, the OPEC dictates often made Indians shudder and issue a "May Day!" call. Thanks to the UAE quitting the producer cartel, this May could have a different ring.

The UAE's exit marks a potential turning point for global oil governance



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## GS Paper II – Polity

# Govt. empowered ED to fight financial crimes; not to target anyone: Minister

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary on Friday said that under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has been vested with the powers necessary to effectively combat financial crimes and terror funding, not to target anyone.

“There exists an ecosystem in the country that finds problems in every solution and criticises every action. Ever since Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office in 2014 and started taking tough decisions in the national interest, this ecosystem has been unsettled. Such critics often claim that excessive powers have been gi-



MoS Finance Pankaj Chaudhary, right, with ED Director Rahul Navin at the Enforcement Day celebration in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

ven to the Enforcement Directorate, but they only present half the truth,” said Mr. Chaudhary at the 70<sup>th</sup> Enforcement Day event.

### Crimes on the rise

“The complete truth is that these powers have been granted to the ED to com-

bat financial crimes, not to target anyone. These powers became necessary because money laundering, ‘hawala’ transactions, ‘benami’ properties, corporate frauds, and terror financing were on the rise. Black money was being diverted abroad, banking scams were increasing,

and the common citizen’s money was being misappropriated,” he said.

“Such offences are no less than cancer for the country, and they cannot be curbed through mild measures. Therefore, the ED has been strengthened to effectively tackle these threats,” Mr. Chaudhary said, while lauding the agency for its achievements, including the attachments worth ₹2.36 lakh crore since 2005.

Under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act (FEOA), criminals have so far been deprived of properties worth ₹65,872.72 crore till March 31, 2026, of which assets valued at ₹63,142 crore were restored to rightful claimants till now.





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## GS Paper II – Polity

### Changes to Citizenship Rules notified by Centre

#### **Press Trust of India**

NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Thursday notified changes to the Citizenship Rules, 2009, introducing a digital shift across various processes for Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders and citizenship applications.

In a gazette notification published on Thursday, the government has added a specific proviso for citizenship applicants that “the minor child cannot at any time hold the passport of any other country while also holding the Indian passport”.

The Citizenship Rules, 2009, allowed a person to submit an application for the registration of the birth of his minor child born outside India to the Indian consulate in the country where the child was born, together with a declaration that the child does not hold a passport of any other country.

The changes, known as the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026, introduce a slew of online initiatives for OCI cardholders, including a digital application and renunciation process through an official portal, <https://ociservices.gov.in>.



## GS Paper III – Economic Development

# GST revenue hits record ₹2.43 lakh crore in April

**T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan**

NEW DELHI

The government's Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue in April 2026 surged to an all-time high of ₹2.43 lakh crore, up 8.7% over April last year. Growth was once again driven by collections on imports, with revenue from domestic sales growing slower.

Tax experts, however, note that collections in April, which represent activity in March, typically come in higher as both industry and the tax administration make a final push to achieve the financial year-end targets.

Data show that there has been a record collection every April ever since the GST was rolled out in 2017, except for April 2020, which was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown.

"April 2026 GST collections cap off a resilient FY26 for the GST regime,

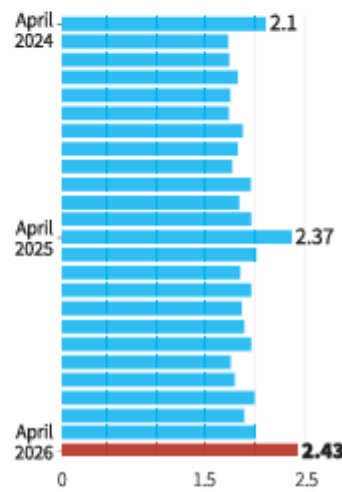
### April highs

The April GST intake reached **₹2.43 lakh crore**, marking the third consecutive year of record highs for the month



Gross collections from imports grew nearly **26%** in April 2026 to **₹57,580 crore**

(In ₹ lakh crore)



SOURCE: MINISTRY OF FINANCE

with gross revenues rising 8.7% year-on-year to about ₹2.43 lakh crore compared to April 2025, despite continued global uncertainty and West Asia-related geopolitical headwinds," Mahesh Jaising, partner & indirect tax leader at Deloitte India, said.

The data show that net collections, once refunds are accounted for, stood at ₹2.11 lakh crore in April 2026, up 7.3% over April

last year.

Notably, the data also show that the growth in collections was once again driven by imports.

Gross collections from imports grew nearly 26% in April 2026 to ₹57,580 crore. Collections from domestic sales grew at 4.3% to ₹1.85 lakh crore in the period.

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## GS Paper III – Economic Development

# In a first, Karnataka govt. unveils digital grievance portal for gig workers

Mechanism developed to act as a bridge between workers and the aggregators they serve, says govt.; gig workforce has so far operated without a formal or legal dispute resolution framework

**Shilpa Elizabeth**  
BENGALURU

**I**n a move to secure the rights of the growing platform-based labour force, the Karnataka government has officially operationalised a specialised grievance redressal mechanism for platform-based gig workers. The mechanism, a first of its kind in India, has been developed by the Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers' Board in collaboration with the Department of e-Governance.

### Transparency

With the new initiative coming into force, gig workers can now officially lodge grievances, including regarding pay, working conditions, and platform-specific disputes, through the Integrated Public Grievance Redressal System (IPGRS) portal.

This creates a formal bridge between lakhs of gig workers in Karnataka and the technology aggregators they serve. This is expected to bring transparency and legal recourse for a work-



Gig workers can lodge grievances, including regarding pay and working conditions through the IPGRS portal. SUDHAKARA JAIN

force that has so far operated without a formal dispute resolution framework.

Under The Karnataka Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act and Rules, every aggregator platform must constitute an Internal Dispute Resolution Committee (IDRC). Grievances filed on the IPGRS will be automatically routed to the respective platform's IDRC to be addressed and settled within a strictly defined timeframe. The government will act as a central facilitator, monitoring the process to ensure a smooth and transparent flow of communica-

tion between workers and platforms.

### 'Every voice is heard'

Labour Minister Santosh Lad said that Karnataka, technology capital of the country, is leveraging this potential for worker welfare as well. "By launching this system, we are ensuring that the gig economy is no longer an informal space, but a structured one where every worker's voice is heard," he said.

So far, details of 12 lakh active gig workers have been shared by platforms, according to G. Manjunath, Additional Labour Commis-

sioner and CEO of the board.

Schemes for gig workers, depending on the platform they are working for, are also being worked out and will be placed for deliberation in the next board meeting.

"The schemes will vary based on the type of platforms. For example, cab rides are mostly undertaken by men whereas urban domestic activity is undertaken mostly by women. It may also be based on the contribution made, and the quantum of gig work done by a gig worker. Some gig workers work for more than eight hours, while some may work on a few gigs. So, workload, nature of work, and time period of work could vary," Mr. Manjunath explained.

"It has to be scientifically structured based on their effort and labour. We are working with experts, including academicians from Bristol University, King's College, and IISc, and other stakeholders, including board members," he said.



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## GS Paper III – Economy

# '48% of NSE firms have no women as key managers'

**A.M. Jigeesh**

NEW DELHI

+ Almost half of the 2,647 companies listed on the National Stock Exchange do not have any women in key managerial positions at all, according to an analysis of company submissions.

On average, there were 0.64 women in these positions per company in 2024-25, with only 10% of firms listed on the NSE employing more than one woman in such leadership positions.

### Formal workforce

The study, conducted by the Udaiti Foundation, a non-profit organisation, found that women's representation in the formal workforce remained at 18%, a decrease of one percentile point compared to 2020-21. The situation is even worse among formal workers earning more

than ₹18,000 per month – while women made up 21% of this group in 2020-21, their share had shrunk to just 12% in 2024-25. In contrast, the representation of women among lower-paid employees, as defined by the Code on Wages, rose from 19% to 23% over the same period, indicating that women are being shut out of higher-paying jobs in the formal sector, and shunted to lower-wage positions.

The largest employment provider for women in the formal sector are hospitals and lab services, where women make up 48% of the workforce, followed by textiles (37%), consumer services (34%), and information technology (34%). In banks and fast-moving consumer goods firms, women account for 26% and 21% of employees respectively. Women make up only 2% of employees in the construction sector, ac-

cording to the Close the Gender Gap (CGG) data, collected by the Foundation.

Udaiti Foundation chief executive officer Pooja Sharma Goyal said the latest periodic labour force survey data (PLFS 2025) reiterates the fact that even when women secure regular wage jobs, the "quality" of that work often fails the test of true formalisation. "Women represent only 24% of regular wage employees. A staggering 57% of women in regular wage jobs have no written job contract and they earn ₹5,664 less than men in a month (₹18,353 vs ₹24,217). The new Labour Codes have clear provisions for pay parity and non-discriminatory hiring. But as the rules are finalised, it is critical that clear ground-level mechanisms are built in to translate these provisions into practice," Ms. Goyal said.