



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 06-08-2025**

### **GS-1**

1. Mahabodhi Temple

### **GS-2**

2. President's Rule

### **GS-3**

3. India needs a defence cess to fund military modernisation
4. Bio-Fortified Potatoes
5. Asian Giant Tortoise

## **Mahabodhi Temple**

Syllabus: GS-1; Ancient History; Art & Culture

### **Context**

- The **Supreme Court of India** is reviewing a petition to **replace the Bodh Gaya Temple Act of 1949** with a central law for better management.



## About

- The **Mahabodhi Temple** is one of the most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites, located in **Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India**. It marks the spot where **Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha)** attained **Enlightenment (Bodhi)** under the Bodhi Tree around 528 BCE.

## Key Highlights of Mahabodhi Temple:

### 1. Historical Significance

- One of the **four main Buddhist pilgrimage sites** (along with Lumbini, Sarnath, and Kushinagar).
- **Emperor Ashoka** built the first temple here in the **3rd century BCE**.
- The **current structure** dates back to the **Gupta period (5th–6th century CE)**.
- Restored in the **19th century** by Burmese Buddhists and British archaeologist **Alexander Cunningham**.
- Recognized as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site (2002)**.

### 2. Architecture

- **50-meter (180 ft) tall pyramidal shikhara (central tower)** with intricate carvings.
- **Four smaller towers** at the corners.
- Houses a **yellow sandstone statue of Buddha** in the inner sanctum.
- **Stone railings** from different periods surround the temple.
- **Vajrasana (Diamond Throne)**: The seat where Buddha meditated.
- **Sacred Bodhi Tree**: A descendant of the original tree under which Buddha attained enlightenment.
- **Ashoka's Pillar**: Stands at the southeast corner.

## Why is it Important?

- A major **spiritual and historical landmark** for Buddhists worldwide.
- A fine example of **ancient Indian brick architecture**.
- A symbol of **peace, meditation, and enlightenment**.

## **President's Rule**

**Syllabus: GS-2; Polity- Emergency**

### **Context**

- Rajya Sabha passes resolution to extend President's rule in Manipur.

### **Meaning and Constitutional Provision**

- **President's Rule**, also known as **State Emergency**, refers to the **suspension of a state government and imposition of direct rule by the Centre**, under **Article 356** of the Constitution.
- It is a part of **Emergency Provisions** under **Part XVIII** (Articles 352–360).

### **Relevant Articles**

Article	Provision
<b>Article 355</b>	Union's duty to protect states from external aggression/internal disturbance and ensure governance as per Constitution
<b>Article 356</b>	President's Rule: Failure of constitutional machinery in a state
<b>Article 357</b>	Parliament can confer powers to make laws on the President or any other authority
<b>Article 365</b>	State's failure to comply with Union's directions implies breakdown of constitutional machinery

### **Grounds for Imposition**

President's Rule can be imposed under the following conditions:

1. **Under Article 356:**
  - If the **President is satisfied** that the governance in a state **cannot be carried out in accordance with the Constitution**.
  - Can be based on **Governor's report** or otherwise.
2. **Under Article 365:**
  - If a **state fails to follow directions** from the Union government, the President may treat it as a failure of constitutional machinery.

### Practical Situations:

- Hung assembly with **no CM elected**.
- **Loss of majority** due to coalition breakdown or **no-confidence motion**.
- **Postponement of elections** due to war/natural disaster.
- **Failure to implement Union directions**.

### Procedure and Duration

1. **Parliamentary Approval:**
  - Proclamation must be **approved by both Houses** within **2 months**.
  - If **Lok Sabha is dissolved**, then **Rajya Sabha** must approve, and Lok Sabha must ratify within **30 days of reconstitution**.
2. **Duration:**
  - Initially for **6 months**.
  - Can be extended every **6 months**, up to a **maximum of 3 years**.
3. **Beyond 1 Year Extension Requires:**
  - A **National Emergency** in force **in the state or whole country**.
  - **ECI certifies** that elections cannot be held.
4. **Revocation:**
  - Can be revoked by **President anytime** without Parliamentary approval.

### Effects of President's Rule

Impact Area	Changes During President's Rule
Executive	President (via Governor) assumes state's executive functions
Legislature	State Assembly may be <b>dissolved or suspended</b>
Lawmaking	Parliament legislates for the state; may delegate to President
Budget	Parliament passes state's budget
Ordinances	President may issue ordinances for the state
Judiciary	Powers of <b>High Court remain unaffected</b>
Council of Ministers	<b>Dissolved</b>

### Supreme Court Judgments

1. **S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994):**

- **Judicial review** of Article 356 is **permissible**.
  - Imposition of President's Rule must be **based on objective material**.
  - **Floor test** in the Assembly is the only constitutional method to test majority.
2. **Rameshwar Prasad Case (2006):**
- Held **dissolution of Assembly before formation of government as unconstitutional**.
  - President's Rule must not be imposed based on **hypothetical scenarios**.

### Key Recommendations

Commission	Major Recommendations
Sarkaria Commission	Use Article 356 <b>only as a last resort</b> ; <b>prior warning</b> to the state
Punchhi Commission	Localised emergency: Apply President's Rule to <b>specific areas</b> instead of the entire state

### Criticism of President's Rule

1. **Misuse for Political Ends:**
  - Used to dismiss opposition governments (e.g., **Indira Gandhi era** - 39 times from 1966–77).
2. **Centralization of Power:**
  - Undermines **federalism** and **state autonomy**.
3. **Suspension of Democracy:**
  - Elected governments and legislatures get **dissolved/suspended**.
4. **Non-objective Grounds:**
  - Imposed for **political instability** or **lack of clear mandate**, not actual constitutional breakdown.

## **Bio-Fortified Potatoes**

### Syllabus: GS-3; Agriculture, Science & Technology

#### Context

- India is making significant progress in addressing **micronutrient deficiencies** and improving **agricultural sustainability** by introducing **iron-rich bio-fortified potatoes**, developed by the **International Potato Center (CIP)** in Peru.



#### What Are Bio-Fortified Potatoes?

- These are **new potato varieties enriched with higher iron content** to combat **iron deficiency and hidden hunger**.
- Developed using **conventional breeding and biotechnology** without affecting taste or yield.
- Led by the **International Potato Center (CIP)**, a global leader in tuber crop research.

#### Current Developments in India

- **Bio-fortified sweet potatoes (rich in Vitamin A)** are already available in **Karnataka, Assam, West Bengal, and Odisha**, with plans to expand to more farmers.
- **Iron-fortified potato varieties** are under evaluation by **ICAR-Central Potato Research Institute (CPRI), Shimla**, for adaptation to Indian conditions.
- A **South Asia regional center** is being set up in **Agra, UP**, to boost **R&D and seed access** in the **Indo-Gangetic plains**, the world's largest potato-producing region.

#### Other Biofortified Crops in India

- ICAR has released **61 biofortified seed varieties**, including:
  - **CR Dhan 416** – Salinity-resistant rice with high zinc & iron.
  - 
  - **Durum Wheat** – Rich in zinc (41.1 ppm), iron (38.5 ppm), and protein (12%).

### What is Biofortification?

It is the process of **increasing nutrient levels in crops** through:

- **Conventional breeding**
- **Agronomic practices**
- **Biotechnology**

This innovation can play a **key role in fighting malnutrition** while ensuring **food security**.

## **Asian Giant Tortoise**

**Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity**

### Context

- Reintroduced into **Zeliang Community Reserve**, Nagaland (Peren district), to boost wild populations.

### About

- **Scientific Name:** *Manouria emys phayrei*
- **Significance:** One of the oldest tortoise lineages in the world.
- **Size:** Largest tortoise species in mainland Asia.
- **Appearance:**
  - Hatchlings: Grayish-brown.
  - Adults: Charcoal-colored.
- **Behavior:** Protects eggs like crocodilians, maintaining incubation temperatures.

### Habitat & Distribution

- **Habitat:** Tropical/subtropical hill forests.
- **Range:** Bangladesh, India (e.g., Nagaland), Indonesia, Malaysia.

### Diet

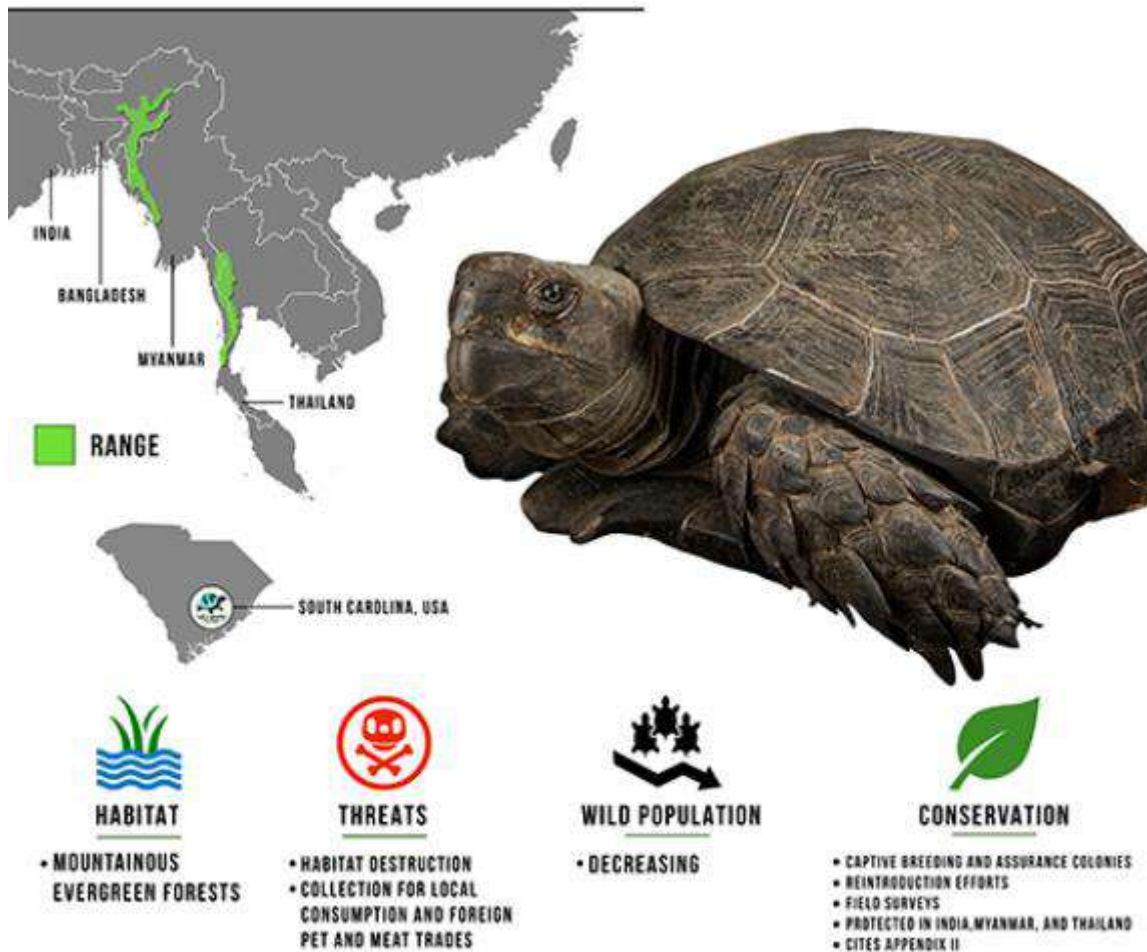
- Bamboo shoots, tubers, juicy vegetation, occasionally invertebrates/frogs.

## Threats

- Hunting for meat.
- Habitat loss (deforestation, slash-and-burn agriculture).
- Human activities (construction).

## Conservation Status

- **IUCN:** Critically Endangered.
- **CITES:** Appendix II.



## India needs a defence cess to fund military modernisation

Syllabus: GS-3; Defence & Security

### Context

- India faces a funding crunch for military modernization due to high personnel costs and budget constraints, prompting calls for a dedicated **defence cess** (tax surcharge) to ensure stable financing for strategic upgrades amid rising geopolitical threats.

### Funding Shortfall for Military Modernisation:

- India's defence budget is insufficient to meet modernization goals, with a large portion allocated to salaries and pensions, leaving limited capital for new equipment and technology.
- The author suggests a dedicated **defence cess** (surcharge) to bridge this gap, similar to existing cesses for education or infrastructure.

### Why a Defence Cess?

- **Predictable Funding:** A cess would provide a steady revenue stream specifically for defence modernization, reducing reliance on fluctuating budgetary allocations.
- **Public Contribution:** Framed as a "national security tax," it could foster public participation in defence preparedness.
- **Avoiding Fiscal Strain:** Unlike borrowing or reallocating funds, a cess would not destabilize other sectors.

### Challenges & Considerations:

- **Economic Burden:** Additional taxation could face resistance, especially amid inflation and post-pandemic recovery.
- **Implementation:** Requires political consensus and transparent mechanisms to ensure funds are used efficiently.
- **Global Examples:** Cites models like the U.S.'s defense surcharges or South Korea's post-war "defense tax."

### Broader Context:

- Highlights rising security threats (e.g., China's military expansion) and the need for indigenous production (Atmanirbhar Bharat) to reduce import dependence.

- Emphasizes that delayed modernization could erode India's strategic edge.

### Conclusion

- A defence cess, while politically challenging, is a viable solution to secure long-term funding for military modernization without compromising other national priorities.