

Pramukh
इवल एडर इहाव



MONTHLY
CURRENT AFFAIRS

Practice Questions (Prelims+Mains)

Preface

PRAMUKH SAMEEKSHA MAGAZINE 2nd Edition compilation attempts to encapsulate crucial editorial analysis published in **The Hindu and The Indian Express** from **August 1 to August 31, 2025**, specifically tailored for aspirants preparing for UPSC and various State PSC examinations.

Each editorial is analyzed with a clear focus on the UPSC examination pattern, highlighting significant aspects such as **political, economic, social, environmental, and ethical dimensions**. Moreover, this analysis emphasizes how editorial insights can be practically leveraged to enrich answers for both **Prelims and Mains examinations**, aiding aspirants in building a **comprehensive, nuanced perspective**.

By systematically connecting current affairs with static syllabus topics, this compilation **aims to bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and contemporary developments**. Aspirants will find these analyses instrumental in refining their critical thinking skills, enhancing their understanding of **national and global events**, and ultimately improving their performance in the examination hall.

We sincerely hope that this dedicated effort supports and empowers you on your journey towards **achieving excellence in your civil services preparation**.

Best Wishes,

BAPS Pramukh Academy

BAPS Pramukh Academy is not merely a UPSC coaching centre — it is a sacred institution born out of the divine vision of His **Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj** to create a spiritually rooted, **value-driven bureaucracy for Bharat**. Inspired by his profound belief that **“Nation-building is not about constructing structures, but about constructing character,”** the Academy prepares aspirants not only to succeed in India’s most prestigious civil services examinations, but to embody the **virtues of integrity, humility, empathy, and righteous leadership in public life**.

Nestled in **green, clean, and serene residential campuses**, the Academy offers a uniquely peaceful and disciplined environment that nurtures both academic excellence and moral growth. The residential facilities are thoughtfully designed to support focused preparation — with **well-equipped libraries, tech-enabled classrooms, guided study hours, nutritious meals, separate secure hostels for boys and girls, and dedicated spiritual spaces for reflection and meditation**. The ambience fosters deep concentration, self-discipline, and enabling aspirants to grow not just in **knowledge, but in character**.

In addition to its offline foundation, the Academy also runs the **‘Pramukh SAMPURN Programme’** — a fully online UPSC preparation initiative that brings the same **spirit of value-based learning to students across Bharat**. This programme ensures that aspirants from remote or **financially disadvantaged backgrounds can access high-quality, structured, and holistic civil services preparation from anywhere in the country**. Through live classes, recorded lectures, daily mentorship, practice tests, and value-enrichment sessions, the online initiative aims to democratize UPSC coaching while upholding the Academy’s commitment to **affordability, accessibility, and ethical guidance**.

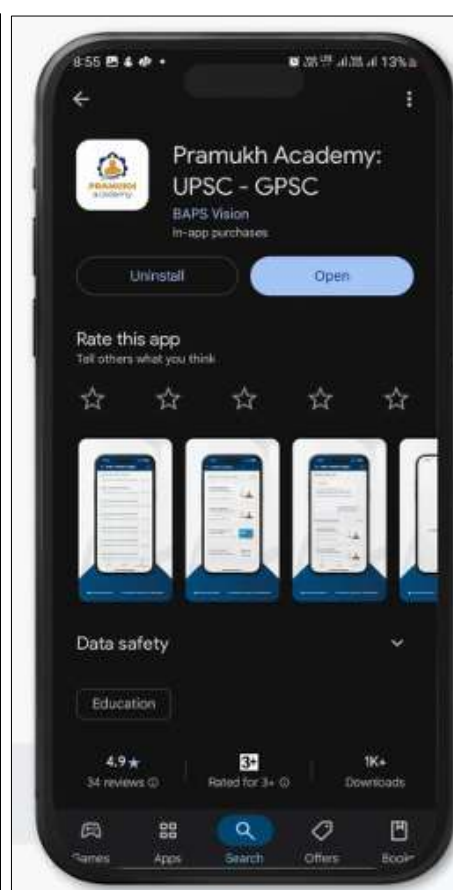
Whether it is through **targeted offline batches for UPSC-CSE, GPSC (Class 1–2), and Class-3 Master programmes**, or through its online reach, **BAPS Pramukh Academy** remains steadfast in its mission: to produce not just officers, but officer-saints — servant-leaders who carry forward India’s administrative legacy with **wisdom, compassion, and unwavering moral strength**. True to **Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s** timeless words — **“Without character, even the most educated person is dangerous to society”** — every initiative at the Academy is a step toward building a **Viksit Bharat** through character-first leadership.

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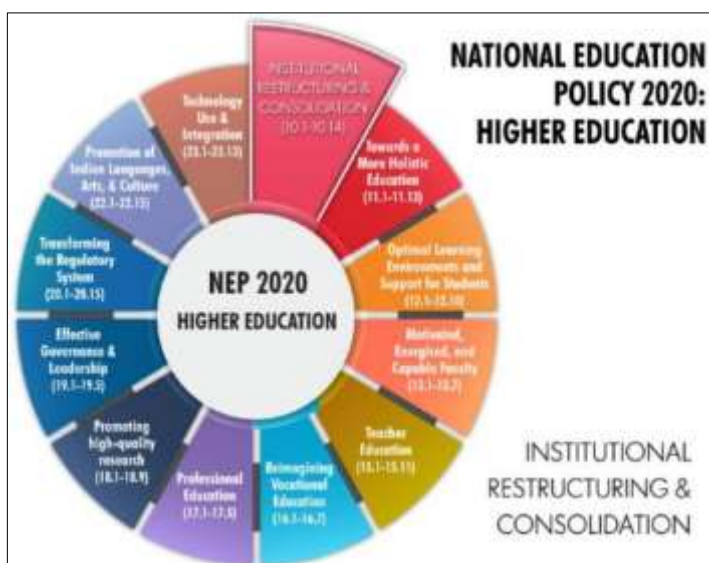
Transforming early childhood care and education

Source: The Hindu

GS PAPER: 2, 3, governance Education, Childhood

Introduction

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** has ushered in a paradigm shift in India's educational landscape, particularly in **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)**. By advocating for universal and quality pre-primary education, NEP 2020 aims to address deep-rooted inequities, especially for the 3–6 year age group. The move, which includes the expansion of ECCE to government schools and migration from Anganwadis to formal preschools, is set to transform India's future human capital foundation and promote greater equity from an early age.



Key Challenges

- Expansion & Universalization:** The vision is to ensure universal ECCE by 2030. However, as of now, only **approximately 14,000 government schools** offer pre-primary classes¹. Achieving full coverage will require substantial capacity-building, fresh recruitment, training, and robust management of resources and skilled ECCE providers.
- Migration from Anganwadis:** With government schools starting to offer pre-primary education, a large-scale shift of children (ages 4–6) is anticipated from **Anganwadis** to schools. This could undermine the role of Anganwadis in early child development, particularly in terms of nutrition, health, and community functions.
- Quality and Learning Outcomes:** There is a risk of new preschool classes focusing narrowly on basic literacy and numeracy, undermining the holistic development approach recommended by NEP¹.
- Home Visit Integration:** Anganwadis' unique tradition of **home visits** supporting child and family well-being could be lost if not integrated into the new ECCE framework¹.
- Teacher Training and Capacity:** Transitioning to universal ECCE requires substantial investment in the recruitment, training, and professional development of preschool teachers, many of whom lack specialized ECCE training.

Fact Wise: The NEP 2020's ECCE vision marks the first time India is aiming at **universal foundational learning** for 3–8-year-olds, shifting from the previous focus on ages 6+.

Global Practice

1. OECD Countries:	Many countries (e.g., Finland, Sweden, New Zealand) offer universal, state-funded early childhood education emphasizing play-based, holistic learning ¹ .
2. Best Practice:	Global frameworks prioritize qualified ECCE staff, integrated health/nutrition, and community involvement. Parental support—including periodic home visits by educators or health workers—is a norm.
3. UNESCO Guidelines:	Emphasize the importance of foundational years (3–8), integration of ECCE with formal schooling, and a balanced focus on cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical development.

4. Lesson for India:	Global experience highlights the importance of not just expanding access but also ensuring quality, inclusiveness, and strong linkage between health, nutrition, and education.
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Indian Committee Suggestions

1. Kasturirangan Committee (drafted NEP 2020):	Advocated foundational learning as the “highest policy priority,” universalization of ECCE by 2030, and mainstreaming preschool education within the formal school system.
2. Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE):	Recommended robust mechanisms for monitoring ECCE quality, training, and inter-sectoral coordination.
3. Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development:	Called for priority funding, recruitment of qualified ECCE professionals, and integrating Anganwadis’ best practices into the school system.
4. NITI Aayog:	Urged large-scale capacity building, especially in rural and underprivileged areas, and developing localized, play-based curricula.

Way Forward

- 1. Universal Access with Equity:** Ensure that every child (3–6 years) has access to high-quality, equitable pre-primary education—especially in marginalized communities and remote areas.
- 2. Strengthen Anganwadi-Schools Continuum:** Integrate core Anganwadi services (health, nutrition, home visits) with school-based ECCE, leveraging existing staff and community trust.
- 3. Focus on Holistic Development:** Adopt NEP’s vision of play-based, experiential, and developmentally appropriate curricula, emphasizing cognitive, emotional, physical, and social growth rather than rote learning.
- 4. Capacity Building:** Invest in large-scale training and continuous professional development for ECCE teachers and Anganwadi workers.
- 5. Community and Parental Engagement:** Expand the role of home visits and parental capacity-building as a structured part of the ECCE framework.
- 6. Monitoring and Quality Assurance:** Establish systems for ongoing monitoring, assessment, and feedback to track both the expansion and quality of ECCE provision.

Conclusion

NEP 2020 has laid the foundation for a game-changing transformation in India’s approach to early childhood care and education. Universalizing and upgrading ECCE is critical for India’s future human capital development and social equity. The success of this shift will depend not only on scaling up access, but on sustaining quality, teacher capacity, and integration across health, nutrition, and education domains. By learning from global best practices and listening to India’s own expert committees, the nation can build a strong, inclusive foundation for all its children, closing the gap between policy vision and classroom reality.

Mains Practice Question

Q1. Discuss the main objectives and challenges of implementing universal Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) under NEP 2020. Evaluate India’s approach in the context of global best practices, and suggest measures to ensure quality, inclusiveness, and the effective integration of Anganwadi services with formal preschool education.

Student Notes 

NISAR has capped a decade-long bilateral effort of NASA and ISRO

Source: The Hindu

GS Paper: Science and technology

Introduction

The successful launch of the **NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR)** satellite marks a **historic milestone in Indo-US space collaboration**, representing more than a decade of bilateral scientific effort. NISAR, which combines NASA's L-band and ISRO's S-band radars, will deliver freely accessible, high-resolution Earth observation data to scientists and policymakers worldwide. This project ushers in a new era of global leadership and innovation for India in cutting-edge space technology and disaster management.



Key Challenges

- Complex Bilateral Coordination:** Managing the intricate integration of NASA's and ISRO's radar systems, tight launch schedules, and technology transfers involved complex diplomatic, technical, and project management hurdles.
- Technical Innovation and Tolerance:** Developing the **S-band radar with strict radiofrequency and mechanical stability requirements** demanded innovation beyond previous Indian satellites.
- Limited Accessibility and Usability:** Ensuring that advanced data (on ground deformation, glacier flow, biomass, and land use changes) is freely and effectively utilized by stakeholders in India—including disaster responders, urban planners, and climate scientists—remains a key challenge.
- Data Processing and Cloud Infrastructure:** Handling, storing, and analyzing the vast volume of satellite data will require upgraded **cloud-based systems, AI/ML integration, and national data infrastructure**.
- Bridging Public Awareness:** Translating scientific insights into actionable policy for climate resilience, disaster mitigation, and sustainable urban planning needs coordinated outreach across ministries.

Fact Wise: NISAR is the world's first dual-frequency radar satellite using both L-band (NASA) and S-band (ISRO), representing an unprecedented international technical partnership.

Global Practices

1. International Earth Observation Programs:	Agencies like NASA (USA), ESA (Europe), and JAXA (Japan) routinely participate in collaborative Earth observation missions, sharing data under clear-access policies and joint management consortia (e.g., Sentinel, ALOS series).
2. Disaster and Climate Collaboration:	Mechanisms such as the International Charter "Space and Major Disasters" bring together the world's major space agencies for rapid satellite data sharing during disasters.
3. Open Data Policy:	Leading agencies emphasize open, free, and global data sharing to maximize the benefits for disaster warning, resource management, and climate studies.
4. Standardization and Capacity Building:	Developed countries invest in training programs for stakeholders to convert space-based data into actionable field measures, something India is increasingly adopting.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Space Commission of India:	Advocated for greater international collaboration to leapfrog Indian capabilities, with a focus on open-access data and dual-use (civilian and strategic) applications.
National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA):	Recommended integrating high-resolution Earth observation data (like from NISAR) into India's disaster forecasting, response, and urban planning frameworks.
NITI Aayog:	Emphasized scaling up cloud analytics, national geospatial platforms, and indigenous skill-building to translate satellite data into accessible public services.
Joint Working Groups (ISRO-NASA):	Set benchmarks for select mission roles, technology exchanges, and data policy harmonization to avoid duplication and maximize scientific outcomes.

Way Forward

- 1. Maximize Data Integration:** Use NISAR's outputs for national priorities—**disaster risk reduction, urban planning, agriculture, water resource management**—with ministries and states integrating insights into their operations.
- 2. Capacity Building and Public Awareness:** Launch national training initiatives (in partnership with NDMA, Ministry of Jal Shakti, etc.) to equip local officials and researchers to use NISAR data for targeted interventions.
- 3. Upgrade Digital Infrastructure:** Scale up **cloud-based analytics, AI, and digital data-sharing networks** to process, store, and distribute large geospatial datasets efficiently.
- 4. Expand International Collaboration:** Build on this Indo-US success to establish new joint missions with agencies like ESA, JAXA, and regional partners—especially for climate adaptation and early warning.
- 5. Strengthen Policy Linkages:** Ensure that data and recommendations from high-tech missions like NISAR directly inform policy, with periodic technical reviews and feedback loops.

Fact Wise: ISRO's partnership with international space agencies was first institutionalized after recommendations by the **Kasturirangan Committee (early 2000s)**, which guided India's long-term space strategy.

Conclusion

The launch of **NISAR** symbolizes **not just Indian and American scientific achievement but the future of global, open, and cooperative space science**. Leveraging this mission requires India to invest in national capacities, robust data infrastructure, and proactive education of users. By integrating NISAR's insights into disaster management, climate resilience, and sustainable development, **India can lead the world in using space science for inclusive and resilient growth**, setting a benchmark for future international collaboration.

Mains Practice Question

Q1. Examine the importance of international collaboration in Earth observation satellites, with special reference to NISAR. How can India leverage open-access satellite data for sustainable development? Propose actionable strategies for maximizing the benefits of such missions at local and national levels."

Student Notes

This is not end of the deal

Introduction

Recent turbulence in **India-US trade relations**—notably after the withdrawal of India’s GSP benefits by the US and imposition of reciprocal tariffs by India—has made headlines. However, these events underscore evolving negotiation strategies rather than a definitive rupture. As global supply chains become increasingly significant, both nations have a strategic imperative to keep bilateral trade on track, address sticking points diplomatically, and nurture long-term institutional mechanisms for cooperation.



Key Challenges

- **Tariff Escalation & Market Access:** The US withdrawal of GSP (Generalized System of Preferences) benefits and **India’s counter-tariffs have raised costs for exporters on both sides, especially affecting key sectors like agriculture, metals, and dairy.**
- **Non-Tariff Barriers:** Issues such as sanitary and phytosanitary standards, price controls (e.g. on medical devices), and regulatory divergence continue to frustrate market access and fair competition.
- **Agriculture & Dairy Sensitivities:** US lobbies aggressively push for greater access to Indian markets for products like dairy and GM crops, but this faces political and livelihood resistance due to India’s large, vulnerable farming base.
- **Dispute Settlement & Retaliation:** Frequent resort to the WTO dispute settlement mechanism or unilateral measures has undermined trust and long-term predictability in trade relations.
- **Strategic and Geopolitical Strains:** Rapid changes in the global order, supply chain “decoupling,” and the US’s transactional approach to trade policy have injected uncertainty into negotiations.

Fact Wise: The end of GSP for India affected **over \$5.7 billion in exports**, particularly in sectors like textiles, engineering goods, and agriculture.

Global Practice

Mutual Concessions:	Advanced nations (EU, US, Canada) employ “give and take” approaches in FTAs—balancing domestic lobbies with strategic needs. Retaliatory tariffs are typically negotiating tools, not permanent stances.
Institutionalized Dialogue:	Permanent joint trade bodies and fast-track dispute resolution—such as US-Japan Trade Partnership and EU-US Trade Council—embed stability into trade relationships.
Support for Vulnerable Sectors:	Global best practices include phased openings, compensation funds, and technical assistance to help domestic industries adjust to foreign competition.
Respect for WTO Framework:	Most major players signal willingness to abide by WTO rules, even while pushing for bilateral settlements.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Chart: Institutional Recommendations on Trade & Investment

Institution / Forum	Key Recommendations
High-Level Forum on Trade & Investment	Continuous engagement in trade discussions Creation of joint working groups for market access & grievances

Ministry of Commerce & Industry Task Forces	Negotiate “win-win” sectoral deals Reduce non-tariff barriers (NTBs) Protect MSMEs and small farmers
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce	Ensure transparency in trade negotiations Conduct comprehensive stakeholder consultations Use WTO-compatible safeguards for vulnerable sectors
NITI Aayog	Enhance industrial competitiveness Upgrade product standards Promote targeted exports post-GSP

Way Forward

- **Institutionalize Dialogue:** Strengthen and regularize bilateral trade forums to iron out irritants before they reach crisis stage.
- **Negotiated Settlements:** Pursue sector-by-sector agreements—especially in agriculture and pharmaceuticals—with phased market access and ample safety nets for domestic players.
- **Reform Domestic Standards:** Upgrade Indian quality, phytosanitary, and technical standards to enhance acceptability in US and global markets.
- **Diversify Export Base:** Encourage Indian exporters to build competitiveness in new product lines and services while leveraging emerging global supply chains.
- **Multilateral and Bilateral Engagement:** Maintain strong advocacy at the WTO, while deepening ties with other major trading partners (EU, UK, Japan) to diversify risk.

Conclusion

India and the US, as two major democratic economies, have far more to gain from sustained engagement than trade confrontation. Recent moves, though contentious, are part of a larger negotiating playbook seen across global trade. Going forward, stability will depend on **robust institutional dialogue, respect for sensitivities, and commitment to systematic reform**—helping transform tactical spats into strategic gains for both nations.

Mains

Q1. "Analyze the recent challenges in India-US trade relations, particularly focusing on tariff escalation, non-tariff barriers, and dispute settlement. How should India strategize to protect domestic interests while sustaining long-term engagement with the US?"

Student Notes

"Right to Repair" Must Include "Right to Remember"

The Hindu | August 2025

GS II – Governance, GS III – Technology & Economy, Essay

Introduction:

India's movement toward a robust **Right to Repair** framework marks a transformative shift in digital and consumer rights. In May 2025, the government took a substantial step with a proposal to include **repairability indices for digital products**, obligating manufacturers to offer spare parts, open-source manuals, and software support. However, as India embraces this global trend, it faces the unique challenge of harmonizing the “right to repair” with the “**right to remember**” the preservation of digital knowledge, indigenous innovation, and sustainable economic principles.



Key Challenges

- Digital Knowledge Gaps:** A focus purely on repairability may neglect the wider pool of traditional, informal repair know-how and contextualized skills—especially with digital and AI-enabled products.
- Blind Spot in Policy:** Current policies often miss the importance of retaining institutional memory and non-digital forms of skill transmission.
- Exclusion of the Informal Sector:** India's historically vibrant ecosystem of repair artisans and informal workers risks being sidelined due to lack of formal certification and digital skills.
- E-waste Management:** The absence of structured repair policies accelerates device obsolescence and contributes to mounting e-waste, undermining sustainability.
- Access and Affordability:** High costs, restrictive spare parts policies, and software locks make repairs tough for ordinary consumers, impeding circular economy goals.
- Digital Divide:** Technology-driven solutions alone may deepen exclusion for the digitally unskilled and exacerbate repair justice issues.

Global Practices on Right to Repair

Global Practice	Key Features
EU's Right to Repair Directive	Mandates that manufacturers provide spare parts, repair manuals, and easy access for consumers to repair their devices.
Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)	Requires manufacturers to enable and promote reuse, repairs, and responsible recycling of their products.
Consumer Training Initiatives	Supports formal training and certification programs to develop repair skills within communities.
Repair-Friendly Product Design	Encourages data-driven design standards to ensure products are easy to repair, boosting circular economy goals.

Indian Committee Suggestions on Right to Repair

Committee/Policy	Key Suggestions
National Policy on Electronics	Promotes sustainable electronics manufacturing and encourages reuse and repair models.
Draft E-Waste Management Rules	Identifies repair and refurbishment as core e-waste management strategies.
NITI Aayog	Recommends upskilling the repair workforce, formalizing the informal sector, and offering certifications.

Ministry of Electronics and IT	Suggests producer obligations and nation-wide awareness campaigns on consumer repair rights.
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Way Forward

1. **Integrate Digital and Human Memory:** Policies must foster both digital documentation/repair indices and the preservation of localized, hands-on know-how.
2. **Empower the Informal Sector:** Recognize, accredit, and upskill informal repair workers as vital contributors to the repair economy.
3. **Consumer Education:** Mandate widespread repair literacy, open manuals, and DIY repair support to democratize access.
4. **Producer Responsibility:** Legislate obligations on manufacturers for affordable and long-term spare parts, open-access manuals, and software updates.
5. **Holistic E-waste Strategy:** Expand repair and reuse networks alongside recycling, to minimize environmental impact.
6. **Repair Justice:** Ensure all communities—including the digitally marginalized—enjoy affordable access to repair information and skills.

Conclusion

India's commitment to a **Right to Repair** policy is a forward-looking step in building a sustainable, equitable digital economy. Yet, truly meaningful right to repair must be complemented by the **right to remember**—retaining lived expertise, curated community skills, and affordable access for all. By integrating global best practices with Indian realities, the nation can set a gold standard for digital sovereignty, ecological responsibility, and inclusive growth in the age of technology.

Mains practice Question

Q1. "Right to Repair must also include the Right to Remember." Critically analyse this statement in the context of India's digital and circular economy goals. (250 words)



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Malegaon Questions: A Case Study in Investigative Lapses

Indian Express | August 2025

For GS Paper II (Governance – Criminal Justice System, Polity) & GS Paper III (Internal Security)

Introduction

The recent acquittal of all accused in the 2008 Malegaon bomb blast case by a Mumbai court—following closely after the Bombay High Court acquitted 12 accused in the 2006 Mumbai train blasts—throws the spotlight on **critical procedural lapses in the investigation and prosecution of terror cases in India**. These events raise urgent concerns about due process, evidentiary standards, and the dangers of politically charged investigations undermining justice and national security.

1. **Background:** The Malegaon Blast Case (2008)
2. **Date of incident:** September 29, 2008
3. **Location:** Outside a mosque in Malegaon, Maharashtra
4. **Impact:** 6 people killed, ~100 injured
5. **Timing:** Just before Navratri, during Ramzan — indicating intent to incite communal tension

Key Challenges

1. **Procedural Lapses:** Both Malegaon and other recent cases **suffered from severe procedural flaws—missing witness statements, inadmissible electronic records, unauthorized interceptions, delayed permissions, and gaping inconsistencies.**
2. **Quality of Evidence:** Failure to collect, preserve, or **authenticate electronic and physical evidence** made key materials inadmissible in court, weakening the prosecutions.
3. **Investigative Delays:** Probes and trials stretched over a decade; evidence became stale and witness accounts vulnerable to contradictions, impacting the integrity of the findings.
4. **Political and Media Pressure:** The communally sensitive nature of cases often results in heavy media coverage and political overtones. **This creates additional pressure, distracts investigative agencies,** and may lead to a climate of **“Hindu terror” vs. “Muslim terror”** labels—diverting attention from objective fact-finding.
5. **Lack of Accountability:** The probe repeatedly shifted between different agencies (ATS, NIA), with little institutional accountability or lessons learnt from past errors.
6. **Judicial Observations:** The court underlined that **“evidence on record creates the grave suspicion against the accused but mere suspicion is not sufficient for conviction.”** This highlights the high threshold of proof required for a criminal conviction, especially in terror cases governed by stringent laws like MCOCA.

Fact Wise:

Fair trial and robust investigative procedure are protected under Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty) and reinforced by Supreme Court guidelines on criminal justice and evidence handling.

Global Practice on Investigation and Prosecution in Terror Cases

Aspect	Global Practice
Evidence Collection	Strict evidence collection procedures and chain-of-custody management to ensure reliability in court.
Forensic Technology	Use of advanced forensic technology and internationally certified laboratories for credibility.
Oversight Mechanism	Oversight by independent bodies (e.g., police complaints commissions, judicial review panels) to ensure transparency, accountability, and review of high-profile cases.

Witness Protection	Well-funded witness protection programs and mechanisms for speedy trials, recognizing the vulnerability and importance of witnesses in terror-related crimes.
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Indian Committee Recommendations on Investigation & Judicial Oversight

Committee/Body	Recommendations/Insights
Law Commission of India	Repeated recommendations for reforms in forensic science, robust evidence protocols, and adoption of modern investigative techniques.
Malimath Committee	Emphasized professionalism in investigations, statutory witness protection, accountability among investigation/prosecution agencies, and continuous judicial oversight.
NIA Guidelines	Special protocols for handling terror cases, including chain-of-custody, meticulous record maintenance, and inter-agency coordination.
Parliamentary Standing Committee	Advocated mandatory inter-agency coordination, regular capacity building, and specialized training for investigators in complex/sensitive cases like terrorism.

Way Forward

- Professionalization and Training:** Upgrade the **quality of investigation through modern training in evidence collection, forensic certification**, and cybercrime management.
- Accountability Mechanisms:** Institute mechanisms to review and address lapses. Learnings from acquittals must become part of institutional memory, not repeated failures.
- Inter-Agency Coordination:** Ensure seamless transfer of cases between state and central agencies (e.g., ATS, NIA), so that changes do not break continuity or lose evidence.
- Judicial Oversight:** Fast-track special courts **must emphasize evidence admissibility, witness protection, and respect due process** at all times.
- Depoliticization:** Insulate investigative agencies from political or communal biases, so that only facts and evidence—not labels—guide justice.

Conclusion

The Malegaon acquittals are not isolated failures but symptomatic of systemic issues in India's approach to terror investigations. Without urgent reforms ranging from training and forensic upgrades to legal accountability the risk of miscarriages of justice will persist, harming both national security and constitutional values. As observed by the court, suspicion, no matter how grave, can never substitute for robust evidence. **The NIA and all investigative agencies must treat these setbacks as opportunities for introspection and overhaul, firmly upholding due process and the rule of law.**

Mains practice Question

Q1. Discuss the key challenges in investigating and prosecuting terror-related cases in India. How do global practices and Indian committee recommendations suggest improving transparency, accountability, and efficacy in such cases? (Answer in 250 words)

Student Notes

Against imperialism

by Pratap Bhanu Mehta

Source: Indian express

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** International Relations – Impact of developed countries' policies on India's interests; role of international organizations; diplomacy and foreign affairs.
- **GS Paper 1:** Post-colonial legacies; Neo-imperialism.
- **GS Paper 4:** Ethics – Integrity in international relations, national dignity.

Introduction

India's engagement with global powers, particularly the US, has often involved subtle but **significant external pressures to adapt its economic and strategic policies**. This editorial highlights how acquiescing to such pressures—framed as reforms or global resets—could amount to a modern form of imperialism, undermining India's sovereignty and self-respect

Key Issues

1. **Loss of Policy Sovereignty:** India's autonomy is threatened when foreign policy **changes are driven by external pressure** rather than national interest.
2. **Economic Coercion:** The use of trade barriers, tariff threats, and sanctions by developed nations (notably the US) compels India to compromise on sensitive issues—such as agriculture, IPR, and market access.
3. **Technological Dependence:** Forcing technology standards or strategic alignments (e.g., in 5G, data governance) narrows India's room for indigenous growth and innovation.
4. **Climate Double Standards:** Developed nations often evade substantive climate responsibility, while pushing demanding targets on India without adequate technology or finance support.
5. **Strategic Autonomy Erosion:** Aligning too closely with one bloc risks undermining India's historic commitment to non-alignment and multipolar diplomacy



Global Practices

US and EU	Use economic might and regulatory standards to shape global norms, often sidelining the interests of emerging economies.
China	Expands geopolitical influence through economic investments and technology (e.g., Belt and Road Initiative), creating new forms of dependence.
Developing World Response: G77, BRICS, NAM	Emphasize sovereignty, equitable negotiations, and South-South cooperation. Resist neo-imperialist trends and advocate for a multipolar global order.

Indian Committee Recommendations

National Security Advisory Board (NSAB)	Advocates for strategic autonomy to protect India's independent global position. Warns against excessive foreign alignment or dependence.
NITI Aayog & Economic Surveys	Recommend cautious liberalization in trade. Prioritize domestic industries and adopt proactive negotiation strategies aligned with Atmanirbhar Bharat .

PM-STIAC (Prime Minister's Science, Technology & Innovation Advisory Council)	Pushes for technology self-reliance . Advocates data sovereignty to reduce India's dependence on foreign platforms and interests.
National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)	Emphasizes equity and common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) in climate negotiations. Advocates climate justice for developing nations at global forums.

Way Forward

1. **Assertive Diplomacy:** India must **clearly define its red lines** and protect its **core national interests** in international negotiations. It should **resist asymmetric agreements** or **unilateral "resets"** that undermine sovereignty or long-term strategic goals.
2. **Strategic Multi-Alignment:** Rather than aligning with any **single bloc**, India should deepen partnerships across a **diverse geopolitical spectrum**—from **QUAD** and **BRICS** to **Global South coalitions**—to maintain **strategic flexibility**, reduce overdependence, and **withstand global shocks**.
3. **Strengthen Domestic Capabilities:** Invest heavily in **research and development (R&D)**, build **resilient and competitive industries**, and promote **critical technologies** such as **semiconductors, AI, and green tech** to reduce dependence on foreign supply chains.
4. **Champion Reform of Global Institutions:** India must be a **vocal advocate for reform** of global governance bodies like the **UN, WTO, and IMF**, pushing for greater **equity, inclusivity, and voice for the Global South**. Upholding **climate justice, technology equity, and fair trade** must be key planks of this engagement.
5. **Empower Negotiators and Institutions:** Build a cadre of **well-trained, domain-specific negotiators** with deep institutional memory and expertise. Encourage **inter-agency coordination** and **strategic foresight** to **anticipate coercion, negotiate confidently**, and protect India's interests in complex multilateral forums.

Conclusion

Imperialism in the 21st century does not wear the garb of territorial conquest—it manifests subtly through **economic dependency, technological control, and institutional manipulation**.

As a **rising civilizational power**, India must **guard its strategic autonomy**, resisting the temptation of **short-term gains** masked as reform or partnership.

The future demands a **morally rooted, economically independent, and diplomatically assertive India**.

UPSC Mains Question (GS Paper 2 / GS Paper 3)

Q1. "Imperialism in the 21st century is driven more by technology and institutional control than territorial conquest." In this context, critically examine India's strategy to maintain its strategic autonomy while engaging with global powers. Also suggest key policy steps to ensure a dignified and self-reliant global posture. (250 words)

Student Notes 

The missing link in India's battery waste management

by Arun Goyal

Source: The Hindu

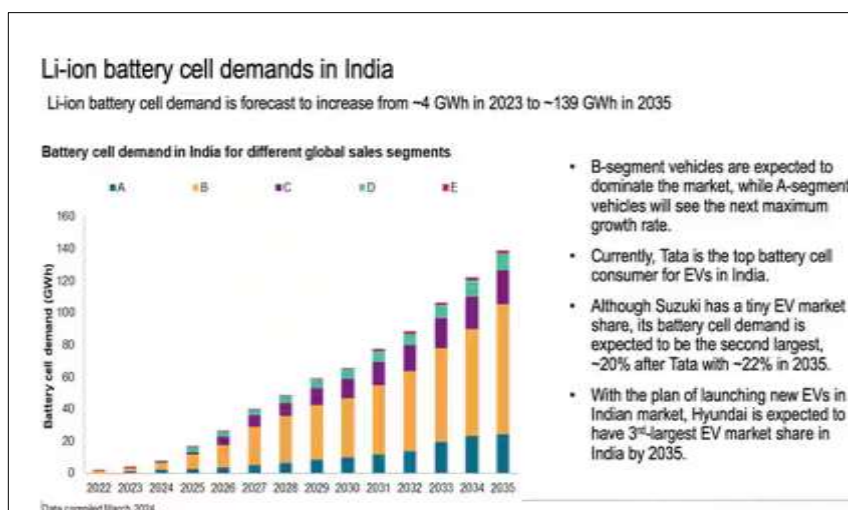
GS Paper UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 3:** Environment – Waste management, pollution, sustainable development, e-waste rules.
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance – Policy implementation, regulatory frameworks.
- **GS Paper 1:** Geography/Infrastructure – Industrial growth, urbanization, sustainable practices.

Introduction

India's ambitious drive for decarbonisation—via rapid EV expansion and renewable energy—has led to a surge in lithium battery usage. By 2035, the EV battery demand in India is projected to reach 139 GWh (from 4 GWh in 2023). However, this growth risks causing environmental harm, as improper disposal of lithium batteries contributes to hazardous waste. In 2022 alone, India generated

roughly 1.6 million metric tonnes of e-waste, with lithium batteries accounting for 700,000 tonnes. Recognizing these challenges, the government launched the Battery Waste Management Rules (BWMR) in 2022 to facilitate safe and sustainable recycling.



Key Issues

1. Inadequate Floor Price for Recyclers

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) mandates that producers finance recycling, but the minimum "floor price" offered to recyclers is often set too low.
- Expensive recycling processes and inadequate compensation threaten the economic viability of recycling businesses.

2. Compliance Challenges

- Manufacturers may evade meaningful recycling by procuring false or fraudulent EPR certificates.
- Poor enforcement may allow improper recycling or outright dumping, distorting the market and undermining environmental goals.

3. Global Market Distortions

- Countries like the UK set EPR floor prices (\$6,000/ton) far higher than under consideration in India (less than a fourth), even after purchasing power adjustment.
- Low floor prices in India risk deterring investment in battery recycling infrastructure and skilled manpower.

4. Technological and Financial Barriers

- Recycling lithium battery waste is resource-intensive, needing advanced tech and trained labor.
- Indian industry estimates that improper waste management can cause over \$1 billion in foreign exchange losses by 2030.

Global Practices

1. **UK and Europe:** Rigorous EPR regimes ensure recycling is financially viable. High floor prices guarantee investment and accountability.
2. **International Benchmarks:** Fair pricing, robust audit systems, and traceability of recycled material are global best practices that foster sustainable circular economies.

Indian Committee/Policy Recommendations

Need for Transparent and Adequate Pricing:	Immediate dialogue among policymakers, experts, and recyclers to establish an equitable and globally comparable EPR floor price reflecting real recycling costs.
Stronger Enforcement Mechanisms:	Implement robust audit trails, digital certificate tracking, regular compliance checks, and strict penalties for fraud.
Integration of Informal Sector:	India's informal recyclers should be formalized, given capacity-building and regulatory support so that existing labor can transition to safe, accountable recycling.
Circular Economy Promotion:	Encourage manufacturers and consumers to invest in products designed for recycling and reuse, closing the battery value chain loop.

Way Forward

1. **Set EPR Floor Price Scientifically:** Government must set a viable EPR floor price based on realistic cost structures, incentivizing quality recycling and sustainable business models.
2. **Reform Enforcement:** Move towards global best practices—track, audit, and verify the entire recycling chain and hold all actors accountable via audits and digital systems.
3. **Capacity-Building & Innovation:** Invest in advanced recycling technology, R&D, and skill development to make India a leader in battery waste management.
4. **Integrate Informal Sector:** Support informal workers to shift to formal recycling systems, ensuring a just transition.

Conclusion

As India moves towards a clean energy future, robust battery waste management is essential. With appropriate pricing mechanisms, transparent enforcement, and integration of the informal sector, India can transform battery recycling from a regulatory challenge into an economic and environmental opportunity—delivering on both sustainability and circular economy goals.

UPSC Mains Question (GS Paper 3)

Q1. India's battery waste management framework under the Battery Waste Management Rules (2022) is a step in the right direction, but its execution suffers from economic and enforcement challenges. Critically analyze the major issues with the EPR mechanism for lithium battery recycling in India. Suggest policy reforms to strengthen sustainable and accountable battery waste management. (250 words)

Student Notes

India's Presence Amid a Broken Template of Geopolitics

Source: The Hindu

GS Paper: International Relations

Introduction

In April 2025, India launched **Operation Sindoor**, a calibrated strike against terror camps in Pakistan following the brutal **Pahalgam terror attack**, which killed 26 tourists. This assertive move exposed the **global silence** on Pakistan's state-sponsored terrorism and highlighted the **fracturing of the post-Cold War global order**. Simultaneously, the **EU's targeting of Indian energy interests**, **U.S. indifference**, and **China's regional consolidation** underscore a shifting power landscape where India must reassert its strategic autonomy.



Key Issues

1. Western Hypocrisy on Terrorism

- Despite clear evidence linking Lashkar-e-Taiba to Pahalgam attackers, **no global condemnation** followed.
- Western nations, especially the **U.S.**, continue to view terrorism through selective lenses (e.g., Afghanistan, Israel–Gaza), ignoring India's security concerns.

2. Weaponization of Trade & Energy

- The **EU sanctioned India's oil imports from Russia** (e.g., Naftan Refinery in Belarus), affecting Indian energy security.
- Over **50% of EU's Russian LNG imports** are exempted while India faces restrictions.

3. India's Diplomatic Isolation in G7 & Quad

- U.S. President Trump threatened India with tariffs under the **"Russian war machine"** logic.
- Japan and Australia, despite Quad ties, have not backed India on cross-border terrorism issues.

4. China's Parallel Strategic Expansion

- Proposed **Kunming trilateral corridor** (China–Myanmar–Bangladesh).
- Support to Pakistan on FATF and BRI; building ties with Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Global Practices

1. Israel:	Rapid international response to hostilities and guaranteed U.S. backing.
2. Turkey:	Used coordinated diplomacy with military assertiveness to gain NATO leverage.
3. Ukraine:	Despite being under siege, gained firm U.S. and EU support through cohesive lobbying and media diplomacy.
4. ASEAN:	Uses regional consensus mechanisms (e.g., Code of Conduct in South China Sea) to protect member interests.

Indian Committee Recommendations

1. Kargil Review Committee (1999)	Recommended real-time international diplomacy during military crises. Emphasized institutional response mechanisms for strategic signalling.
2. Raja Mohan Committee on Strategic Autonomy	Called for reduced over-dependence on Western security structures. Advocated deeper Eurasian and South-South diplomatic engagements.
3. Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs (2023)	Urged better coordination between intelligence, diplomacy, and trade. Recommended fast-tracking India's neighborhood infrastructure.

Way Forward

1. **Rebalance Diplomatic Priorities**
 - Move beyond the West-centric approach; deepen ties with **Africa, Latin America, and ASEAN**.
2. **Strategic Use of Trade Leverage**
 - Prioritize **energy diplomacy** and **bilateral trade agreements** in Eurasia.
3. **Assertive Narrative Building**
 - Invest in media, academic, and strategic think-tank partnerships to counter Western biases on terrorism.
4. **Institutionalize Tactical Responses**
 - Enhance **quick-response doctrines** like Operation Sindoor with **legal and strategic frameworks**.
5. **Multilateral Realignment**
 - Push for reforms in **UNSC** and **FATF** and assume leadership in **BRICS+** and **SCO** as platforms of counter-West narratives.

Conclusion

India stands at a geopolitical crossroads. Operation Sindoor reflects its growing willingness to act decisively, yet the **lack of global acknowledgement** exposes the asymmetry of global power dynamics. The **West's selective morality**, **China's assertiveness**, and **India's vulnerable dependencies** point to a need for recalibrated diplomacy rooted in **strategic autonomy**, **regional coalitions**, and **technological strength**. The time has come for India to write its own rules in a world where the old templates are collapsing.

Mains Practice Question (GS Paper 2):

Q1. In an increasingly fragmented world order, India must recalibrate its foreign policy to protect its core interests. In this light, discuss the significance of Operation Sindoor and analyze how India can restructure its strategic autonomy.

Student Notes

“Reimagining India’s Tech Diplomacy in the Age of AI and Silicon Geopolitics”

Source: Indian Express

GS Paper: 3 Science and Technology

Introduction

On the anniversary of India’s landmark Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), the editorial reflects on how India once benefited immensely from **international technological collaboration**—especially with the U.S.—but is now entering a new phase of global **“techno-politics.”**

The global digital architecture is being reshaped by two transformative forces:

1. The **AI and semiconductor race**
2. The increasing **geopoliticization of technological systems**, especially in the U.S. and China.

India must now rethink its approach to **tech diplomacy**, balancing innovation, sovereignty, and global partnerships.



Key Issues

1. **Decline of Open Tech Collaboration**

- India’s early tech progress was powered by **joint U.S.–India efforts** (SITE, ISRO–NASA collaboration).
- Today, international tech collaboration has become **competitive and strategic**, rather than cooperative.

2. **Rise of Techno-Nationalism**

- U.S. and China now treat technologies like **AI, quantum computing, and semiconductors** as geopolitical assets.
- Trump-era deregulations of AI and cryptocurrencies changed the **rules of global tech engagement**.

3. **India’s Tech Sovereignty is Underdeveloped**

- India lacks **domestic chip fabrication**, AI compute capacity, and indigenous data ecosystems.
- Critical tech sectors remain dominated by U.S. Big Tech and Chinese hardware.

4. **Need to Recalibrate India’s Role**

- India risks becoming a passive consumer if it does not **proactively shape global tech norms**.
- India has yet to fully align its diplomatic machinery with its **digital economic ambitions**.

5. **Competing Models of Governance**

- China’s techno-authoritarian model and U.S.’s techno-libertarian model are both unsuited to India’s **constitutional and democratic framework**.

Global Practices:

Country/Bloc	Model	Characteristics
US USA	Libertarian Tech Capitalism	Deregulation, Big Tech-led innovation, Silicon Valley dominance
CN China	Authoritarian Techno-nationalism	State surveillance, data localization, AI nationalism
EU European Union	Rights-based Regulation	GDPR, AI Act 2024, Digital Services Act – prioritizes ethics and user rights

KR South Korea	State–Industry Partnership	Robust R&D in AI, semiconductors, public investment
IL Israel	Security-Tech Innovation	Close military–tech synergy, especially in AI, drones, and cybersecurity

Indian Committees & Recommendations

AI Task Force (Ministry of Commerce & Industry, 2018):	Called for an AI-led public sector transformation and AI research clusters.
MeitY's National Strategy for AI (NSAI)	Emphasized “AI for All,” and focused on agriculture, health, education, and smart cities.
Digital India Act (Draft 2023)	Seeks to regulate platforms, ensure algorithmic transparency, and enable user data rights.
Semiconductor Mission (2022)	₹76,000 crore initiative to develop chip fabs, but progress is slow due to lack of private traction and global tech partnerships.

Way Forward

- India as a Rule-Maker, Not a Rule-Taker**
 - Leverage G20, Global Partnership on AI (GPAI), and WTO to set **ethical digital trade norms**.
- Secure Strategic Tech Partnerships**
 - Strengthen Quad-tech cooperation, EU–India Digital Partnership, and U.S.–India initiative on **Critical and Emerging Tech (iCET)**.
- Invest in Foundational Tech Infrastructure**
 - Boost indigenous chipmaking, AI labs, and high-performance computing (HPC) infrastructure.
- Regulate with Trust and Innovation**
 - Find a middle path between **surveillance-heavy China** and **unregulated U.S. libertarianism**.
- Elevate Tech Diplomacy in MEA**
 - Appoint a dedicated **Technology Ambassador** under India’s external affairs for shaping multilateral tech rules.

Conclusion

India must transition from being a passive recipient of global technology to an **active architect of its own digital destiny**. The SITE era was about learning and leapfrogging. The AI era demands **leadership, values-based regulation, and technological sovereignty**. Only by asserting its own voice in the global digital debate can India secure its place in the emerging tech order of the 21st century.

Mains Question

Q1. Discuss how the global realignment of digital technologies is shaping India's foreign policy priorities. How can India balance innovation, strategic autonomy, and democratic regulation in this context?

Student Notes

Decoding China — the lessons for a vulnerable India

Source: The Hindu

by Shashi Tharoor

GS Paper UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** International Relations – India’s foreign policy, effect of China’s economic and strategic actions on India, regional power dynamics.
- **GS Paper 3:** Economy – Geo-economic strategies, manufacturing, trade policies, economic security.
- **GS Paper 1:** Society/Geography – Demographics, impact on labor, migration, and technological transformation.

Introduction

China’s engineered exodus of over 300 engineers from Apple’s iPhone manufacturing in India isn’t just an administrative move—it’s a **calculated geo-economic step to protect its advanced manufacturing secrets and reinforce regional technological dominance**. This incident highlights China’s nuanced use of talent retention, resource control (notably rare earths), and trade policy to maintain economic hegemony—offering India profound lessons as it strives to climb the global value chain.



Key Issues

1. **Geo-Economic Maneuvering:** China’s withdrawal of experts undermines India’s tech transfer aspirations and illustrates Beijing’s deliberate throttling of advanced electronics know-how to maintain strategic advantage.
2. **Control of Critical Resources:** China restricts export of rare earths and other vital materials, impeding India’s ambitions in green tech and advanced manufacturing.
3. **Export and Capital Controls:** Beijing uses tariff waivers and informal restrictions to select beneficiaries, and shapes global supply chains in its favor.
4. **Strategic Resilience:** By safeguarding its technological lead, China ensures its manufacturing sector remains central to global value chains—viewing even manufacturing shifts as existential threats.
5. **Demographic & Consumption Challenges:** China faces aging populations and downturns in property and consumption. Export primacy and manufacturing strength become vital buffers for internal stability.
6. **Lessons for India:** India must anticipate **supply chain disruptions, focus on indigenous R&D, secure critical inputs, and avoid over-dependence** on foreign expertise.

Fact Wise: In 2022, China dominated about 60% of global rare earth production, elements critical for electronics and EVs, wielding this as a strategic tool to shape global supply chains.

Global Practices

Concept	Description
Friend-shoring	Western economies diversify supply chains, seeking alternatives to China while still dependent on its high-value exports.
Rare Earth Cartels	Nations like Australia and the US seek to break China’s monopoly but face steep technological and cost barriers.
Proactive Industrial Policy	East Asian countries invest in upskilling, innovation, and resource security, offering blueprints for India’s Make in India strategy.

Indian Committees and Policy Recommendations

No.	Concept	Description
1	Friend-shoring	Western economies diversify supply chains, seeking alternatives to China while still dependent on its high-value exports.
2	Rare Earth Cartels	Nations like Australia and the US seek to break China's monopoly but face steep technological and cost barriers.
3	Proactive Industrial Policy	East Asian countries invest in upskilling, innovation, and resource security, offering blueprints for India's Make in India strategy.

Way Forward

1. **Build Indigenous Capabilities:** Invest in domestic R&D, training, and tech development to reduce dependence on foreign experts.
2. **Secure Critical Inputs:** Formulate a "rare earths strategy" for exploration, extraction, and recycling to protect key sectors.
3. **Strengthen Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborate with like-minded nations for technology sharing, supply chain resilience, and market access.
4. **Enforce Smart Industrial Policy:** Use incentives, regulatory reforms, and public-private partnerships to attract sustainable, high-tech manufacturing.
5. **Institutionalise Monitoring & Compliance:** Set up cross-ministerial task forces on critical technology sectors, oversee talent migration and export controls.
6. **Embrace Circular Economy:** Prioritize recycling and sustainable resource use to cushion against shocks in raw material supply.

Conclusion

China's strategic assertiveness, manifest in **talent withdrawal and resource controls**, reflects its determination to protect economic primacy even amid demographic slowdown. **For India, the lesson is clear—sustainable ascent up the value chain requires robust, homegrown capabilities, diversified global partnerships, and vigilant economic statecraft.** Only then can India turn vulnerabilities into opportunities and secure its place in the post-unipolar Asian order.

Mains Question

Q1. China's recent strategic withdrawal of skilled personnel from India highlights its use of geo-economic tools like talent retention and resource control. Discuss how such strategies impact India's ambitions in advanced manufacturing and global value chains. What policy responses can India adopt to build resilience and competitiveness? (Answer in 150–200 words)

Student Notes

Steady amid turbulence

Source: Indian Express

by Rajani Sinha

GS Paper UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 3:** Indian Economy – Monetary Policy, Inflation, Growth, RBI functioning, financial stability.
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance & Policy – Role of RBI, macroeconomic decision-making, fiscal-monetary interactions.

Introduction

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has opted to maintain status quo on policy rates, underscoring its confidence in India's growth momentum despite persistent inflationary pressures. **The decision signals a careful balancing act: keeping inflation expectations anchored, especially given volatile food prices, while sustaining an optimistic growth outlook.** For FY26, the RBI continues to project robust GDP growth at 6.5%, a testament to India's relative resilience amid global economic headwinds.



Key Issues

1. **Persistent Food Inflation:** High and volatile food prices remain the primary driver of inflation, posing risks to price stability and consumer welfare.
2. **Cautious Optimism on Growth:** RBI's maintained growth projection at 6.5% for FY26 reflects underlying economic robustness, driven by investment activity and steady domestic demand.
3. **Limited Scope for Rate Cuts:** The unchanged policy stance indicates that conditions do not yet warrant a rate cut, as further monetary easing could jeopardize inflation control.
4. **External and Domestic Headwinds:** Factors such as global commodity price swings, monsoon dependencies, and the risk of global demand slowdown influence RBI's cautious approach.
5. **Transmission of Policy and Lending Rates:** Banks have passed on earlier rate hikes to borrowers, and thus, the incremental benefit from cutting rates now is deemed marginal.
6. **Fiscal-Monetary Co-ordination:** Stable macroeconomic policies and prudent fiscal management enable RBI's neutral stance, mitigating the risk of supply-side shocks.

Fact: RBI kept the repo rate unchanged, projecting 6.5% GDP growth for FY26, while inflation is expected around 2% plus or minus, and CPI inflation is projected to average 4.5% for FY26.

Global Practices

1. Inflation Targeting:	Central banks in advanced economies also maintain a cautious policy stance during periods of food or commodity-driven inflation, emphasizing inflation targeting until price pressures subside.
2. Gradualism in Rate Adjustment:	Major central banks prefer gradual rate changes, especially in uncertain external environments, to avoid market disruptions and preserve economic resilience.

Relevant Indian Committees and Regulator Recommendations

1. **RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC):** Sets policy rates after a thorough assessment of inflation, growth prospects, and global uncertainties.

2. **Economic Survey of India:** Recommends judicious policy calibration and data-driven decision-making for price stability and growth.
3. **Finance Ministry-Reserve Bank Consultations:** Focus on ensuring adequate liquidity and coordinated fiscal-monetary frameworks to safeguard growth and macroeconomic stability.

Way Forward

1. **Data-Driven Monitoring:** Continuously assess inflation and growth data to respond nimbly as conditions evolve.
2. **Strengthen Supply Chains:** Address supply-side bottlenecks in food and essential commodities to mitigate inflation risks.
3. **Maintain Vigilance on Global Developments:** Monitor external shocks—such as commodity prices and geopolitical tensions—that could impact domestic inflation and growth.
4. **Encourage Investment and Consumption:** Sustain momentum in capital expenditure and targeted government support to bolster medium-term growth.
5. **Enhance Policy Communication:** Ensure transparent, forward-looking guidance to guide market expectations and sustain investor confidence.

Conclusion

The RBI's decision to hold rates reflects a prudent, forward-looking policy anchored in macroeconomic realities. **By prioritizing inflation control without sacrificing growth, the RBI signals its confidence in India's underlying economic strength and its commitment to maintaining stability during uncertain times.** Strengthening structural reforms, supply-side efficiencies, and institutional co-ordination will further insulate India's growth trajectory from domestic and global turbulence.

Mains Question (GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Q1. The Reserve Bank of India's recent decision to maintain policy rates reflects a balancing act between inflation control and growth support. In this context, discuss the role of monetary policy in managing inflation expectations and ensuring macroeconomic stability in India. (Answer in 150–200 words)

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Respect the Mountain (Editorial on Uttarakhand Floods)

GS Paper UPSC Relevance

- GS Paper 3:** Environment & Ecology – Disaster management, sustainable development, mountain and Himalayan ecology, impacts of development on fragile ecosystems.
- GS Paper 1:** Geography – Physical geography (mountains, river systems), human-environment interaction.
- GS Paper 2:** Governance & Policy – Institutional disaster response, environmental policy, land use planning.

Introduction

The devastating floods that struck Uttarakhand—**resulting in the loss of more than 50 lives, widespread destruction of homes and hotels, and the disruption of vital infrastructure**—cast a harsh spotlight on the fragile ecology of the Himalayas. These recurring disasters underscore the incompatibility of hasty, unplanned development with the region's delicate environmental balance.



Key Issues

- Ecological Fragility:** The unstable **Himalayan slopes, active tectonics, and monsoon-driven river** systems render the region highly susceptible to **landslides, flash floods, and soil erosion, exacerbated** by any disturbance.
- Unsustainable Development:** Rapid, unregulated construction—including dams, roads, hoteliers, and real estate expansion—magnifies natural disaster impacts.
- Ignored Scientific Warnings:** Hydro-meteorological and **geological expert bodies have repeatedly cautioned against overexploiting Himalayan ecology**. Recommendations, such as the Environmentally Sensitive Zone (ESZ) notifications for river valleys, are too often diluted or delayed.
- Complex Governance Challenges:** Multiplicity of agencies, weak policy enforcement, and inadequate disaster preparedness hinder effective risk mitigation in hill states.
- Climate Change Acceleration:** Increased glacial melt, erratic rainfall, and more frequent extreme weather intensify disaster risks in mountain regions.

***Fact Wise:** During the 2013 Kedarnath floods, Uttarakhand lost thousands of lives and infrastructure, highlighting the high human and economic cost of neglecting ecological sensitivity in*

Global Practices

1. Zoning and Development Controls	Countries like Switzerland and Nepal enforce strict land-use regulations and construction norms in mountainous regions.
2. Catchment Management	Integrated watershed management is used to preserve ecological balance, prevent soil erosion, and maintain water regimes.
3. Community-based Disaster Planning	Japan and New Zealand invest in local capacity-building and real-time monitoring of hazards, empowering local communities.

Relevant Indian Committees, Policies & Recommendations

- Madhav Gadgil Committee (Western Ghats):** Strongly advocated for strict regulatory zones and restrictions on large-scale infrastructure in ecologically sensitive regions (lessons extend to the Himalayas).

2. **Expert Panels (e.g., Ravi Chopra Committee, MoEFCC):** Recommended limiting dam construction, ensuring cumulative ecological impact assessments, and enforcing ESZ along Himalayan rivers.
3. **NDMA (National Disaster Management Authority):** Calls for integrating disaster risk reduction with developmental planning and strengthening monitoring systems.
4. **Supreme Court & MoEFCC ESZ Notifications:** Judicial and executive orders emphasize the need for timely and effective application of ESZ norms in sensitive regions such as Uttarakhand.

Way Forward

1. **Prioritise Ecological Sustainability:** Strictly enforce ESZs, ban high-risk construction in active floodplains/slopes, and regulate infrastructure growth.
2. **Strengthen Scientific Monitoring:** Deploy early-warning systems, real-time data-based hazard mapping, and transparent public information mechanisms.
3. **Community-Driven Disaster Preparedness:** Involve local populations in risk assessment, evacuation planning, and environmental stewardship.
4. **Integrate Policy and Institutional Response:** Ensure coordinated action among central, state, and local agencies for land use planning, emergency relief, and sustainable tourism.
5. **Promote Green Livelihoods and Responsible Tourism:** Encourage eco-friendly industries, promote traditional wisdom, and minimize the environmental footprint of pilgrimage and recreation.

Conclusion

The increasing frequency and severity of floods in Uttarakhand—and across the Himalayas—are not only natural calamities but a dire warning against the unbridled pursuit of development at the cost of ecological balance. **Vigorous implementation of scientific recommendations, policy coordination, and genuine respect for the region's fragility are essential.** Failure to do so will mean tragedies like this one will no longer be exceptions, but a recurring feature of an ignored mountain warning system.

Mains Practice Question:

Q1. Evaluate the impact of unplanned development on the fragile ecology of the Himalayas, with reference to Uttarakhand floods. What measures can be adopted to ensure sustainable development and disaster resilience in this region?

Student Notes

New Delhi will have to take a hard call: For now, economy-greasing oil from Russia, and a plan for diversification in the future

Source: The Hindu
by Manjeet Kripalani

GS Paper UPSC Relevance

1. **GS Paper 2:** International Relations – India's foreign policy, strategic partnerships, energy security, effect of great power rivalry on India.
2. **GS Paper 3:** Economy – Energy resources, import diversification, financial and trade policy.
3. **GS Paper 1:** Geography – Energy infrastructure, global oil markets.

Introduction

India faces a **complex geopolitical dilemma**: securing affordable Russian oil to grease its high-growth economy while navigating mounting Western pressure and sanctions following the Russia–Ukraine conflict. Russia now supplies over 40% of India's crude imports, up from 2% two years ago—helping contain domestic inflation and support economic stability. Yet, this reliance stands at odds with long-term energy security and exposes New Delhi to global diplomatic risks.



Key Issues

1. Strategic Dependence vs. Diversification:

- Heavy dependence on discounted **Russian oil** has helped **control inflation and support industrial growth in India**.
- However, this creates vulnerability amid fluctuating geopolitics and Western sanctions.

2. External Pressures and Sanctions:

- Western nations, especially the **US**, **discourage Russian energy imports**. India's oil payments now often bypass US dollars, sometimes using rupees or dirhams to evade restrictions.
- Secondary sanctions or banking curbs could impact India's energy security or trade finance system.

3. Energy and Economic Security:

- Russian supply offers India a vital buffer of **cheap energy, crucial amid global volatility, but over-reliance risks future supply shocks**.
- The Indian economy's size and growth trajectory demand uninterrupted and affordable energy resources.

4. Geopolitical Balancing Act:

- India must maintain ties with both **Moscow (energy/security)** and **Washington (technology/investment)**, complicating alignment.
- Defense and energy import decisions are closely watched by global powers, especially in current contests.

5. Future Diversification Plans:

- The government signals intent to **diversify, investing in new energy partnerships (Middle East, US, Africa)**, and expanding renewable energy at home.

Fact Wise: In 2023–24, India's Russian oil imports averaged over 1.5 million barrels per day, making Russia the largest crude supplier to India, outpacing traditional partners Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

Global Practices

China	Purchases discounted Russian oil but diversifies sources across the Middle East and Africa to avoid over-dependence and mitigate risk.
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Japan/South Korea	Maintain diversified energy portfolios, secure long-term contracts with multiple suppliers, and invest heavily in renewables to reduce strategic risk.
EU	Post-Ukraine crisis, implementing plans to phase out Russian oil/gas by expanding LNG imports and speeding up the green transition.

Key Indian Committees, Policies & Recommendations

1. **NITI Aayog:** Regularly emphasizes the need for fuel import diversification and a phased energy transition to ensure resilience.
2. **Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (Strategic Petroleum Reserves):** Pushes for strategic oil reserves to buffer against supply shocks and actively scouts for global supply partnerships.
3. **Economic Survey:** Advocates for a balanced mix—traditional oil, gas, and renewables—and for leveraging India's market size to secure better energy deals.
4. **Standing Committee on Petroleum (Parliament):** Recommends enhanced investment in renewables, overseas exploration assets, and improved refinery adaptability for varied crude sources.

Way Forward

1. **Implement a Clear Diversification Roadmap:** Fast-track new partnerships and diversify crude suppliers, reducing heavy skew toward any single country.
2. **Shield Financial Channels:** Develop alternate payment mechanisms and enhance rupee trade settlements to withstand sanctions pressures.
3. **Boost Strategic Reserves:** Expand domestic oil storage to insulate against temporary disruptions in external supply.
4. **Accelerate the Energy Transition:** Increase investments in renewables, domestic exploration, and refinery upgrades for flexible crude intake.
5. **Strengthen Diplomatic Engagement:** Balance relations with the US/EU (for technology, investment) and Russia (for energy, defense), asserting India's strategic autonomy in external forums.

Conclusion

India's dependence on Russian oil has eased energy costs and supported growth but also exposes it to geopolitical volatility and diplomatic crossfires. **The best way forward is proactive diversification—securing multiple suppliers**, investing in green energy, and using global diplomatic capital to pursue autonomous, resilient energy security. Robust policy action, as recommended by NITI Aayog and parliamentary panels, will be key to insulating India's growth story from future shocks and ensuring a confident, sustainable economic ascent.

Mains Practice Question:

Q1. Discuss the geopolitical and economic challenges India faces by increasing its reliance on Russian crude oil imports amid the Russia–Ukraine conflict. How can India balance its energy security with diplomatic relations?

Student Notes

Industrial Accidents, the Human Cost of Indifference

Source: The Hindu

By: Shrikant Madhav Vaidya is former Chairman of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.

GS Paper UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 3: Disaster management, industrial safety, regulatory frameworks, labor welfare.**
- **GS Paper 2: Governance – Institutional accountability, policy implementation, labor rights.**

Introduction

Recent years have seen a disturbing rise in industrial accidents across India's manufacturing, mining, and construction sectors, exacting a grave human and economic toll. **Between 2019 and 2024, more than 6,500 workers lost their lives in factories, mines, and construction sites—amounting to about 3 fatalities every day, according to government and RTI-based reports.** Catastrophic incidents such as the Sigachi Industries explosion in Telangana and the firecracker disaster in Tamil Nadu highlight a recurrent pattern: preventable tragedies resulting from regulatory failure, disregard for safety norms, and a culture of indifference towards the most vulnerable workers.



Key Issues

1. Systemic Regulatory Failure and Lack of Accountability

- Many deaths arise from skipped No-Objection Certificates, absence of mandated fire and safety approvals, dysfunctional alarms and extinguishers, and high-risk jobs for untrained contract and migrant workers.
- **Example:** Recent disasters have found factories running without fire safety certification or proper exits, with safety protocols routinely ignored.

2. Underreporting and Invisibilization of Victims

- Most fatalities occur among contract laborers, migrants, and informal sector workers, whose deaths rarely make it into formal statistics or prompt timely compensation.

3. Negligence and Token Compliance

- Many industries conduct only box-ticking checklists, lacking real hazard audits, training, or job safety analysis. Audits, when done, are sometimes merely formalities.

4. Societal Indifference and Cost-Cutting Bias

- There is a pervasive silence from the public and inertia from regulators, compounded by a profit-first mindset that treats worker safety as optional, not essential.

5. Inadequate Crisis Preparedness

- Absence of operational fire safety systems, emergency protocols, and accountability mechanisms increases the likelihood and lethality of mishaps.

Fact Wise:

1. **In Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu alone**, more than 200 fatalities occurred in the last decade from industrial mishaps.
2. **As per Labour Ministry and RTI data**, India's industrial death toll is about 6,500 for the last five years, likely an undercount due to informal sector exclusion.
3. Auditing by independent agencies is rare, and the **"act of god"** narrative is used to deflect from real, preventable causes.

Global Practice

1. **Stringent Regulation and Criminal Liability:** Countries such as Germany, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore hold senior management criminally accountable for systemic safety lapses.

2. **Active Worker Committees:** In Europe and Australia, worker-elected safety officers are legally mandated in high-risk industries, ensuring constant safety vigilance.
3. **Fire Safety and Training:** Advanced economies enforce regular and meaningful fire drills, intensive safety training, and robust reporting of near-miss incidents.
4. **Whistleblower Protection:** Many countries have stringent protection and incentives for employees who report safety violations.

Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations

Parliamentary Committees on Labour and Industry:	Call for strengthening the Factory Act implementation, more stringent audits, and penalizing non-compliance.
Second National Commission on Labour:	Advocated consolidated safety codes, mandatory refresher training, and formalizing informal labor.
National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA):	Urges integrating disaster risk management into industrial policy, establishing crisis management protocols, and real-time tracking of workplace accidents.
Labour Ministry and Ministry of Home Affairs:	Recommend digitalizing compliance, enhancing inspector training, and empowering local authorities to act urgently upon violations.

Way Forward

1. **Robust Enforcement of Safety Regulations:** Make operational safety audits mandatory and frequent, with legal consequences for lapses.
2. **Institutionalize Worker Training and Empowerment:** Mandate comprehensive, periodic safety training; empower worker-elected safety committees.
3. **Accountability and Transparency:** Ensure transparent public reporting of all industrial accidents; hold management criminally liable for gross negligence.
4. **Integration of Informal Sector:** Extend protections, compensation schemes, and training to contract and migrant workers in hazardous sectors.
5. **Promote a Culture of Safety:** Move beyond compliance mentality; foster industry and public awareness that industrial safety is non-negotiable.
6. **Leverage Technology:** Use real-time monitoring and digital compliance platforms for early warning and efficient crisis response.

Conclusion

Industrial accidents in India are not random but symptoms of systemic indifference, loose regulatory enforcement, and societal apathy—disproportionately affecting the poor and voiceless. The only path to safer workplaces lies in a comprehensive overhaul: enforcing laws, empowering workers, strengthening institutions, and prioritizing human lives over profits. India's growth trajectory must embed the dignity and safety of every worker, ensuring tragedies spark reform—not just fleeting outrage.

Mains Question

Q1. "Industrial accidents in India are manifestations of deep-rooted regulatory, institutional, and societal neglect." Discuss major causes for recurring industrial accidents in India. Suggest comprehensive reforms drawing from committee recommendations and global best practices. (250 words)

Global free market is a myth

Source: Indian Express

Editorial by Pulapre Balakrishnan

GS Paper UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** International Relations – Global trade regimes, India's foreign economic policy, impact of developed countries' policies.
- **GS Paper 3:** Economy – International trade, market access, economic sovereignty, competitiveness.
- **GS Paper 1:** Modern History – Neo-imperialism, legacy of global economic power structures.

Introduction

Global free trade is **often extolled as the engine of prosperity**, but ongoing realities prove otherwise. The **recent imposition of a 50% tariff on Indian steel by the US—mirroring a wider trend of tit-for-tat tariffs, sanctions, and regulatory barriers**—highlights how powerful nations manipulate global rules for their advantage. Instead of a genuinely open marketplace, smaller and developing nations like India continually confront protectionism, economic coercion, and geopolitical bullying—raising tough questions about the true nature of the global free market.



Key Issues

1. Myth of the Free Market:

- The doctrine of global free markets is undercut by real-world practices: **frequent tariff hikes, sanctions, and arbitrary import restrictions**.
- Example: US imposition of 50% steel tariffs on Indian exports; **ongoing trade wars with China and tight controls on technology/export flows**.

2. Economic Sovereignty at Risk:

- Powerful countries use economic leverage to force weaker nations into compliance—**whether via trade policy, access to financial systems (like dollar payments)**, or conditionalities on loans and aid.
- India's **recent experiences with US sanctions and pressure over buying oil from Russia**, and threats of secondary sanctions, spotlight these vulnerabilities.

3. Asymmetrical Negotiating Power:

- Dominant countries set global standards and rules, often ignoring the interests and developmental needs of emerging nations, leading to unequal gains from trade.

4. Erosion of Multilateralism:

- WTO's dispute resolution system is frequently bypassed or undermined; major economies prefer unilateralism or selective alliances.

5. Impact on Indian Industry:

- Without assured market access, Indian producers face sudden disruptions, reduced competitiveness, and limited ability to scale up globally.

Fact Wise: In recent years, the US and China have both ramped up tariffs on imports worth hundreds of billions of dollars, while groups like the EU increasingly impose non-tariff barriers (e.g., carbon taxes, digital rules), eroding the idea of a universally level playing field.

Global Practices

1. **Strategic Trade Policy:** US, China, EU routinely use tariffs, quotas, and ‘national security’ exceptions to protect industries while **pressing others to liberalize**.
2. **Bilateralism and Blocs:** Major powers increasingly favor bilateral deals and economic blocs over truly global multilateral solutions—e.g., **Indo-Pacific partnerships, USMCA, RCEP exclusions**.
3. **Standards as Barriers:** Non-tariff measures—like environmental standards, technical regulations, and digital trade controls—are used as gatekeeping tools.

Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations

NITI Aayog	Advocates for prioritizing domestic competitiveness and capability-building over blind faith in global markets ; recommends calibrated protection and robust anti-dumping tools.
Ministry of Commerce & Industry:	Calls for regular review of free trade agreements, strong defence against unfair trade, and a focus on securing energy, technology, and supply chains.
Economic Survey (recent years):	Argues for building domestic champions, strategic diversification of export markets, and active engagement in global standard-setting forums.
Parliamentary Standing Committees:	Suggest a pragmatic, interest-based trade policy, stronger safeguards against predatory pricing, and investment in skills/technology to support exports.

Way Forward

1. **Assert Economic Sovereignty:** Prioritize national interests and resilience; make trade decisions based on strategic calculations rather than ideological commitment to “free markets.”
2. **Strengthen Domestic Competitiveness:** Invest in R&D, skill development, logistics, and supply chain resilience to withstand global shocks.
3. **Proactive Trade Diplomacy:** Actively engage in global and regional standard-setting, leverage coalitions of the willing, and seek fairer terms in trade pacts.
4. **Diversify Export Markets and Sources:** Reduce overdependence on any single partner or bloc; seek new markets and invest in alternative energy/critical technology sources.
5. **Promote a Level Playing Field at Home and Abroad:** Use tariff/non-tariff barriers judiciously to counter unfair practices; enhance quality, safety, and environmental standards of Indian products.

Conclusion

The ideal of a global free market remains largely aspirational, as major economies actively shape and bend rules to protect their own interests. **India must approach external engagements with a clear-eyed realism—combining strategic autonomy, proactive diplomacy, and robust domestic industry policies—while striving for a genuinely equitable global trade system.** Safeguarding sovereignty and creating enduring competitiveness should form the bedrock of India’s response to the shifting tides of global economic power.

Mains Question

Q1. “The global free market remains a myth, shaped more by power politics than by rules.” In light of recent trade tensions and tariff wars, critically analyze the limitations of the current global trading system. Suggest comprehensive strategies for India to safeguard its economic interests in a challenging international environment. (250 words)

Student Notes

Reaching Out to Patients – Bridging India's Rural Diagnostics Gap

Source: Based on health policy & rural diagnostics developments discussed in *The Hindu* editorial.

UPSC Reference: *GS Paper 2 – Issues relating to health, healthcare delivery models, governance, social sector development; GS Paper 3 – Science & Tech in health, Public Health Infrastructure.*

Introduction

The lack of accessible and reliable diagnostic services remains a major obstacle to effective healthcare in India, especially in rural areas. Accurate laboratory diagnosis is crucial—not only for proper treatment but for preventive health strategies and the clinical management of chronic and infectious diseases. The article foregrounds how plugging the diagnostics gap at rural health centres is vital to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the goals outlined in the National Health Policy 2017 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Key Challenges

- Insufficient Rural Diagnostic Infrastructure:** Most rural communities are served by Primary Health Centres (PHCs) that lack basic laboratory facilities for early and accurate disease diagnosis.
- Trained Manpower Shortage:** There is a deficit of laboratory technicians and diagnostic support staff in the public sector—aggravated by limited training and retention.
- Over-reliance on Outpatient Care:** Over 60% of health expenditure is outpatient; lack of diagnostics leads to misdiagnoses and improper therapy.
- Private Sector Inequity:** Urban-centric diagnostics and expensive private labs create disparities; rural populations rely mainly on limited government facilities.
- Chronic and Infectious Disease Burden:** Rising cases of diabetes, TB, cardiovascular diseases add pressure to an already stretched rural system, which cannot provide timely biochemical, hematological, or infectious disease testing.
- Quality, Accuracy, and Access:** Absence of standardized protocols, equipment maintenance, and continuous quality monitoring lead to unreliable results.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Features
USA, Western Europe	Robust local laboratory networks, point-of-care diagnostics at community clinics, remote tele-pathology support.
China	Village-level diagnostic centres integrated within township hospitals, standardized technician training.
Africa (Botswana, Rwanda)	National laboratory networks supported by mobile diagnostic vans and multi-skilled health workers.
WHO Guidelines	Emphasis on Essential Diagnostics List; regular technician upskilling; decentralised sample collection.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Suggestions/Recommendations
National Health Policy 2017	Provision of free diagnostics at public facilities, emphasis on rural diagnostic “hubs” and labs.
NITI Aayog/Health Ministry Task Forces	Upskilling of lab technicians, periodic audits of facility-based diagnostics, mobile laboratory pilots.

Parliamentary Committee on Health	Standing	Strict regulatory standards for rural diagnostics, public-private models for rapid scale-up.
Ayushman Implementation Groups	Bharat	Diagnostics as part of the Health and Wellness Centres package with assured funding and trained staff.
Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)	Medical	National Essential Diagnostics List (EDL) and training programs for lab personnel across districts.

Way Forward

1. **Expanding Rural Laboratory Network:** Rapidly scale up PHC and sub-centre diagnostics, with portable/mobile labs and sample collection for advanced testing at district hubs.
2. **Quality Assurance:** Institute national protocols for equipment maintenance, result validation, and technician certification in partnership with ICMR and state labs.
3. **Manpower Training:** Launch large-scale training and continuing education programmes for lab staff, including digital record-keeping and telemedicine support.
4. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage collaborations for faster scale-up, especially in remote areas, leveraging private labs and technology platforms.
5. **Integration with Ayushman Bharat:** Make diagnostics an assured part of service at Health and Wellness Centres, with dedicated funding and infrastructure.
6. **Community Awareness:** Sensitize rural populations about preventive screenings, early diagnosis benefits, and the availability of services.

Conclusion

Ensuring universal access to basic diagnostic services is essential for India's health system to move from symptomatic treatment to true preventive care and disease control, especially in rural areas. By combining national policy vision, global best practices, focused committee recommendations, and urgent scale-up measures, India can transform rural health outcomes and close the diagnostics gap—making quality healthcare a reality for all.

Mains Question

Q1. "Lack of diagnostic infrastructure in rural India is a major barrier to achieving Universal Health Coverage." Discuss in the context of the National Health Policy 2017, Ayushman Bharat, and the recommendations of key health committees. Suggest measures to bridge the rural diagnostic gap.

Student Notes

Language Policy in School Education – Beyond the Hindi Debate

Source: Editorial analysis based on *The Hindu*.

UPSC Reference: GS Paper 2 – Governance, Policies in Education;
GS Paper 1 – Cultural Diversity; Essay and Policy Analysis

Introduction

Recent steps by **Tamil Nadu and Karnataka** to **implement two-language formulas in school education**, diverging from the three-language policy in the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, have reignited debates about language policy, linguistic diversity, and educational equity in India. The focus on compulsory Hindi as a third language has often diverted attention from core education challenges, highlighting the need for policies tailored to local needs, multilingual realities, and inclusive growth.



Key Challenges

1. **Imposition vs Choice:** Pressure for compulsory Hindi (as promoted by Central policies) is seen as linguistic imposition in non-Hindi states, threatening regional identities and educational autonomy.
2. **Educational Priorities Ignored:** The obsession with language politics shifts focus away from urgent priorities like curriculum reform, teacher quality, infrastructure, and critical thinking.
3. **Equity and Inclusion:** Uniform language mandates risk excluding tribal students, first-generation learners, and children whose home language isn't one of the prescribed options.
4. **Quality and Outcomes:** Confusing language policy changes can disrupt learning outcomes by prioritizing form over educational substance.
5. **Local Relevance:** States like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have highlighted the importance of home/mother tongue and English for local employability and global competitiveness.
6. **Social Cohesion:** Language disputes can contribute to political polarization and undermine nation-building.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Features
Finland, Sweden	Education begins in mother tongue, second/third languages offered as options, not mandates; strong bilingual support.
Canada (Quebec)	Dual-language (French-English) policies, choice according to regional/individual context.
South Africa	Multilingual education policy recognizing 11 official languages; strong home-language start and gradual transition to English.
UNESCO Guidelines	Emphasis on mother tongue in early years, flexibility for second/third languages, inclusive policy to support minority and tribal languages.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee / Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
Kothari Commission (1964–66)	Advocated Three-Language Formula: regional language, Hindi/other Indian language, and English.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020	Endorsed flexibility, with emphasis on mother tongue/home language up to at least Grade 5; three-language policy optional.
Karnataka & Tamil Nadu State Education Commissions	Recommended two-language formula (mother tongue + English), local curriculum, bilingual teaching methods.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education	Urged policies that reflect regional diversity, protection for tribal/minority languages, critical thinking over rote learning.
NCERT and CBSE Expert Groups	Emphasis on foundational learning, critical skills, and avoidance of excessive compulsory language burden.

Way Forward

1. **Respect State Autonomy:** Language policy should be decentralized, allowing states to design contextually relevant formulas, as per the constitutional principle of cultural and educational autonomy.
2. **Focus on Quality:** Curriculum, pedagogy, and foundational skills—rather than language imposition—must dominate educational reform efforts.
3. **Inclusive and Flexible Approach:** Mother tongue/home language prioritized, with options for English and third languages as per student/community needs.
4. **Support for Vulnerable Learners:** Special modules for tribal, minority, and first-generation learners, with extra resources for foundational education.
5. **Promote Multilingualism, Not Uniformity:** Encourage appreciation of India's linguistic diversity and leverage it for social integration, not division.

Conclusion

The latest state-level moves in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka underline that effective language policy cannot be uniform, but must reflect India's diversity, educational realities, and local aspirations. True reform requires shifting attention from identity politics to quality, inclusiveness, and lifelong learning—making language a bridge, not a barrier, to India's educational progress.

Mains Practice Question:

Q1. "Language policy in Indian school education must balance cultural diversity and educational outcomes." Critically examine recent state-level initiatives to redesign language formulas in light of NEP 2020, global best practices, and committee recommendations. Suggest policy measures for equity and quality in multilingual education.

Student Notes

Himalayan Flash Floods – Not Just a Matter of Climate Change

Source: Editorial Analysis (The Hindu, by Stephen Alter)

UPSC Reference:

GS Paper 1, 3 – Geography (Disaster Management, Environmental Degradation), GS Paper 2 – Policy and Governance (Environmental Policy, Planning)

Introduction

Flash floods and landslides in the Himalayas have become increasingly frequent and destructive, but blaming these events solely on climate change is a misleading oversimplification. The real crisis is driven by a combination of rapid, ill-planned development, tourism pressure, and ecological neglect—compounded, but not caused alone, by global warming. Preventing disasters in the region requires a holistic approach that integrates climate adaptation with sustainable planning and regulatory reform.



Key Challenges

1. **Unregulated Construction:** Sprawling resorts, hotels, guesthouses, and camps proliferate along fragile riverbanks and mountain roads, overwhelming the region's ecological carrying capacity.
2. **Poor Land Use Planning:** Settlements and pilgrimage centers often violate basic zoning laws and encroach on riverbeds and slopes, increasing vulnerability to floods and landslides.
3. **Tourism and Pilgrimage Pressure:** Mass tourism, especially during pilgrimage "season," overwhelms local resources and safety protocols, putting thousands at risk.
4. **Neglected Geology and Hydrology:** Construction and road-widening fail to respect the region's unique topography, seismic risk, and natural water flow patterns.
5. **Lack of Disaster Preparedness:** Absence of robust early warning systems, evacuation plans, and local capacity building results in preventable deaths and infrastructure loss.
6. **Environmental Degradation:** Deforestation, riverbank erosion, and improper waste disposal further destabilize already sensitive landscapes.
7. **Climate Change Amplification:** While erratic monsoons and intense rainfall events are partly climate driven, their lethal impact is magnified by unscientific development.

Global Practices

Country/Region/Institution	Best Practice/Feature
Switzerland (Alps)	Strict zoning and building codes, hazard mapping, and mandatory evacuation drills.
Japan (Mountainous Areas)	Advanced warning systems, regulated tourism access, and investment in slope stabilization.
Nepal (Himalayan Region)	Community disaster training, ecological restoration programs, and geo-spatial monitoring.
UNDRR/UNEP	Integrated disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate-resilient development, and river basin management strategies.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendation/Policy Action
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment	Emphasize stringent building regulations in hill areas, mandatory EIAs, and control of tourism pressure.
National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)	Advocate for integrated hazard mapping, early warning systems, and swift disaster response in Himalayan states.
NITI Aayog	Recommend sustainable mountain development, ecologically-sensitive planning, and limiting construction in hazard-prone zones.
State Governments/Expert Panels	Push for riverbank restoration, afforestation, controlled urbanization, and community-based DRR.

Way Forward

- Enforce Building and Land Use Regulations:** Implement strict zoning, hazard mapping, and eco-sensitive construction bans in fragile zones.
- Tourism Management:** Limit tourist/festival numbers, solidify crowd and traffic control, and shift to low-impact, sustainable pilgrimage models.
- Disaster Preparedness:** Install robust early warning systems, run evacuation drills, and invest in community training for rapid response.
- Environmental Restoration:** Prioritize afforestation, riverbank reinforcement, and sustainable watershed management.
- Integrated Planning:** Harmonize climate adaptation with local geology, hydrology, and socio-economic needs—involve experts, communities, and scientists in decision making.
- Monitoring and Accountability:** Regular audits, transparent data collection, and penalties for illegal development or non-compliance.

Conclusion

While climate change amplifies natural disasters across the Himalaya, the primary driver of increasing flash floods and landslides is uncontrolled, unplanned human intervention. India must integrate environmental, social, and institutional reforms—moving beyond blame to build a resilient mountain region where development and ecological safety go hand in hand. Only then can Himalayan communities truly thrive amid changing climatic realities.

Mains Practice Question:

Q1. "Flash floods in the Himalayas are driven not only by climate change but also by unplanned development and poor disaster preparedness." Critically discuss the interplay of natural and human factors in recent Himalayan disasters. Analyse global and Indian policy recommendations, and propose a comprehensive strategy for sustainable mountain development and risk reduction.

Student Notes

A Court Ruling with No Room for Gender Justice

Source: Editorial analysis (*The Hindu*, by Tulasi K. Rai).

UPSC Reference:

GS Paper 2 – Polity (Judiciary, Gender Justice, Law);

GS Paper 1 – Society (Gender Inequality, Women’s Rights); Essay & Ethics.

Introduction

A recent Supreme Court ruling in *Shivangi Bansal v. Sahil Bansal* has led to the effective suspension of arrests under Section 498A IPC, which is designed to protect women from domestic violence and dowry harassment. The judgment prioritizes presumed misuse over the realities of abuse, setting a dangerous precedent for gender justice and criminal law. It highlights the persistent tension between safeguarding against false complaints and ensuring real protection and justice for women in India.

Key Challenges

- Undermining Section 498A & Gender Laws:** The judgment halts coercive action on dowry/violence complaints, impacting victims’ paths to justice.
- Systemic Bias & Social Norms:** Women face discrimination, violence, and skepticism from police, courts, and society, which delays or denies their complaints.
- Burden of Proof on Victims:** Suspension of arrest/prosecution due to presumed misuse shifts burden onto women to prove genuine harassment.
- Fragile Implementation:** Police and courts display bias, asking for extensive “proof” before action, limiting scope for urgent protection.
- Legal Reform vs. Public Sentiment:** Balancing prevention of misuse with real protection—without adequate data or institutional mechanisms—has left victims more vulnerable.



Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
UK, USA, Australia	Stringent domestic violence statutes enable prompt police protection; complaints presumed genuine unless disproven.
European Union	Survivor-centric laws, immediate protection orders, legal aid, and rapid relief without prolonged verification.
UN CEDAW Guidelines	Stress “due diligence” in investigating gender violence, fast-track protection, and minimal reliance on suspecting complainants.
Singapore, Canada	Rapid victim protection and independent victim support systems; evidence-based checks against misuse, not procedural delays.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee / Body	Recommendations / Policy Action
Justice J.S. Verma Committee (2013)	Urged survivor-centric reforms; administrative and police training in handling gender violence cases.
Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women	Advocated fast-track courts, proactive police action, and improved legal literacy for victims.
Law Commission of India	Recommended balanced investigation to prevent misuse, but cautioned against blanket suspension of arrest.

National Commission for Women (NCW)	Suggested case-by-case review for alleged misuse, not automatic suspicion; restoration of victim support systems.
Supreme Court Precedents	Earlier rulings upheld need for due process without prejudging complaints as possibly “false.”

Way Forward

1. **Restore Survivor-Centric Procedures:** Reinstate urgent, safe investigation, prompt protection orders, and compulsory victim aid.
2. **Balanced Safeguards:** Target actual misuse with discretionary review, not blanket suspension or procedural hurdles.
3. **Police & Judicial Sensitization:** Mandatory gender sensitivity training; police to treat every complaint with care and neutrality.
4. **Legal Literacy & Access:** Specialized support for victims—helplines, legal aid, fast-track court referrals.
5. **Improved Data & Monitoring:** Regular audits on misuse and genuine cases, with policy based on evidence not stereotypes.
6. **Community Mobilization:** Boost role of local support groups, NGOs, and awareness campaigns to encourage reporting and protection.

Conclusion

This Supreme Court ruling risks reversing decades of progress in gender justice and exposes women to renewed vulnerability. Effective laws must balance protection against misuse without presuming guilt or discouraging complaints. A robust approach—grounded in global best practices, expert committee recommendations, and survivor-centric reforms—is vital to ensure India’s commitment to gender equality and the rule of law remains unwavering.

Mains Practice Question:

Q1. "Recent judicial trends have put survivor-centric gender justice at risk, often citing misuse of laws like Section 498A IPC." Critically discuss the dilemma between preventing false complaints and ensuring protection for genuine victims, referring to global best practices and Indian committee recommendations. Propose policy reforms for a balanced and just approach.

Student Notes

CBSE's Open-Book Exam Plan – Lessons from Global and Indian Experiences

Source: *The Indian Express*

UPSC Reference:

GS Paper 2 – Education Policy & Governance; GS Paper 4 – Ethics in Education, Pedagogy & Reforms; Essay

Introduction

The CBSE's proposal to introduce **open-book assessments for Classes 9 to 12** marks a potentially transformative shift in Indian school education. By **encouraging critical thinking and conceptual application over rote memorization**, open-book exams aim to modernize assessment methodology. The move is informed by global best practices but faces unique challenges in Indian classrooms.



Key Challenges

- Change in Mindset:** Students and teachers accustomed to **rote-learning** may struggle to adapt to **analytical**, application-based questioning.
- Resource Inequality:** Open-book tests require good textbooks, reference materials, and teacher training—resources that are inconsistently available, especially in government schools.
- Assessment Design:** Formulating robust, non-repetitive, and higher-order thinking questions is complex for teachers.
- Implementation Scale:** Ensuring fairness, minimizing cheating, and standardizing formats across diverse regions and backgrounds is logistically daunting.
- Evaluation Paradigm:** Traditional grading methods may not align with open-book exams, necessitating rethinking of marking rubrics and assessment goals.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Key Features / Lessons Learned
USA (AP, SAT Subject Tests)	Used in higher-ed for disciplines needing synthesis; focus on analysis, not recall.
Netherlands	Open-book testing in pre-university exams to encourage referencing and application skills.
Singapore	Some national O-level/A-level papers incorporate open-resource tasks for analysis.
Australia & UK	Universities pilot open-book digital exams, emphasizing sources, reasoning and argumentation.
OECD & IB (International Baccalaureate)	Emphasis on inquiry-based, open-book assessments as part of holistic learning.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee / Body	Recommendations / Reforms
National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 & 2023	Stress on application-based, formative, and non-rote assessment.
NEP 2020	Move towards competency-based education and higher-order skills.

CBSE Expert Panels	Advocate teacher capacity building in assessment design, periodic evaluation, and orientation for both students and parents.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education	Suggest pilot-based, phased rollout and regular reviews of outcomes and learning gaps.
National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)	Periodic assessment and re-benchmarking of quality in institutions implementing new formats.

Way Forward

1. **Capacity Building:** Intensive training for teachers on assessment design, marking, and guiding students in open-book methodology.
2. **Resource Accessibility:** Ensure quality, equitable access to textbooks, reference materials, and digital content to all students.
3. **Gradual Implementation:** Begin with pilot projects, analyze data, then scale with stakeholder feedback and process refinement.
4. **Parental and Student Orientation:** Awareness drives to ease anxiety and recalibrate expectations about “success” in open-book systems.
5. **Monitoring & Research:** CBSE and educational bodies should track outcomes and revisit policies to maximize learning, fairness, and inclusion.
6. **Integration with NEP Vision:** Align open-book assessments with NEP 2020’s aims—critical thinking, competency, and 21st-century skills.

Conclusion

CBSE’s open-book exam experiment is a bold step towards dismantling rote learning, placing India **alongside global pioneers in progressive pedagogy**. Realizing its full potential will require systemic reforms, **resource investment, teacher training, and a cultural shift across the education system**. If implemented thoughtfully, it can nurture a generation of students equipped for deeper inquiry and real-world problem-solving.

Mains Practice Question:

Q1. "India’s reliance on rote-based assessment has hindered critical and creative learning. Critically examine the proposal for open-book exams by CBSE in the context of global best practices and recent policy recommendations. Suggest steps for effective and equitable implementation."

Student Notes

Some Stray Thoughts – Ethical Responses to the Stray Dog Crisis

Source: *The Hindu* editorial by Anuradha Roy

UPSC Reference:

GS Paper 2 – Social Justice (Animal Welfare, Municipal Governance, Urban Issues); GS Paper 4 – Ethics (Human-Animal Relations); Essay

Introduction

India faces an intensifying stray dog crisis—with increasing urbanization, dog populations have risen, often leading to public health concerns and social tensions. While the situation is real and urgent, solutions that involve cruelty, mass culling, or neglect betray both legal mandates and deeper ethical responsibilities. The debate, as described by the author, mirrors society's struggle to balance human safety, compassion, and systemic reform.



Key Challenges

- Public Safety and Animal Welfare:** Stray dog bites, rabies cases, and attacks on humans—especially children—have raised public anxiety and demand for harsh measures.
- Failures in Population Control:** Despite policies such as sterilization and vaccination (Animal Birth Control, ABC), implementation is patchy and poorly funded.
- Urban Infrastructure Gaps:** Poor waste management and open garbage attract and sustain stray populations; lack of shelters and municipal oversight compounds the issue.
- Legal Gaps and Litigation:** Sporadic enforcement, judicial intervention, and varying municipal regulations lead to confusion and conflict.
- Ethical Dilemmas:** Calls for culling often stem from fear rather than fact; cruelty or blanket removal ignores both animal rights and successful long-term models.
- Distrust Between Communities:** Polarization between “dog lovers” and those seeking safety fuels litigation and social divides rather than solution-building.

Global Practices

Country/Region/Model	Best Practice/Features
Netherlands, Germany	“No-kill” policies: Strict enforcement of sterilization, vaccination, microchipping; no culling.
Italy	Municipality-managed shelters, public education, adoption drives, and responsible ownership campaigns.
Singapore	Integrated stray management: Licensing, robust waste control, fines for abandonment, and public reporting.
USA (city examples)	State-enforced neutering/adoption, dog registration, and “trap-neuter-return” (TNR) for feral animals.
WHO Guidelines	Focus on community-inclusive, humane dog population management and rabies control.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules, MoEFCC	Mandate ABC-Vaccination, ban culling, require responsible local authority implementation.

AWBI (Animal Welfare Board of India)	Promote humane management, mass sterilization/vaccination, public awareness drives.
Supreme Court (various rulings)	Uphold right to life for animals under Article 21, endorse “no cull” except in rare, validated cases.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Urban Development	Urge better urban waste management, funding for shelters, and municipal accountability.
National Rabies Control Programme	Advocate city/state partnerships and mass dog immunization for holistic rabies control.

Way Forward

1. **Scale Humane Population Control:** Rapid expansion of ABC-sterilization and mass vaccination, with dedicated municipal teams.
2. **Fix Urban Waste Management:** Reduce open garbage to limit food sources sustaining stray population.
3. **Expand Shelters and Adoption:** Build local government and community-run shelters, offering fostering/adoption options and support.
4. **Legal and Regulatory Clarity:** Standardize rules and responsibilities across municipalities; enforce stray management uniformly.
5. **Community Engagement:** Sensitize public about dog behavior, safe interactions, and benefits of non-lethal management.
6. **Partnerships:** Foster collaboration between civic authorities, NGOs, animal welfare groups, and healthcare providers for both animal and community safety.
7. **Integrated Health Response:** Maintain focus on rabies awareness, quick medical access post-bite, and inclusion in public health policy.

Conclusion

India’s stray dog crisis demands urgent action—but not at the cost of cruelty, exclusion, or flawed quick fixes. Humane, community-driven, and legally sound approaches, modeled on global and Indian best practices, are the only sustainable path forward. Compassion and public safety can—and must—coexist, reflecting the values of a civilized society.

Mains Practice Question:

Q1. "The stray dog crisis in Indian cities highlights the intersection of public health, animal welfare, and urban governance. Critically evaluate the main challenges and responses, citing global models and Indian policy recommendations. Suggest a sustainable, humane strategy for managing the issue"

Student Notes

Limited Gains – The Temporary Relief in Inflation and Its Real Impact

Source: Editorial ("Limited gains: A temporary blip in inflation will help, but not by much")

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 3:** Indian Economy (Inflation, RBI, Growth, Monetary Policy)
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Policy Response, Committees, Recommendations)
- Essay, Prelims (Current Affairs, Economic Policy)

Introduction

India's retail inflation in July 2024 hit 1.55%—the lowest since June 2017—mainly due to a sharp drop in food prices and improved monsoon conditions. This temporary dip brings inflation within the RBI's comfort band, but deeper economic issues persist: sluggish growth, weak consumer demand, and troubling trends in industrial output highlight that easing inflation alone isn't enough for economic revival.



Key Challenges

1. **Temporary Relief:** The fall in inflation is largely food-driven and may not sustain as base effects fade, potentially picking up again in 2026.
2. **Growth Slowdown:** Index of Industrial Production at a 10-month low; car sales and GST revenue growth also weak; direct tax collection has shrunk.
3. **Demand Weakness:** Low capital and consumer activity signal underlying problems in the economy, despite the temporary inflation respite.
4. **Risk Factors:** Geopolitical uncertainties (e.g., future shifts in fuel sourcing) could raise costs and inflation unexpectedly.
5. **Limited Policy Space:** RBI's inflation target achieved more by coincidence (monsoon, base effect) than by robust policy. Real stimulus for growth is lacking.
6. **External Vulnerabilities:** Global tariff changes (US tariffs, Russia oil deals) can still affect inflation and growth trajectories.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
USA, EU	Use robust fiscal and monetary stimulus along with inflation targeting for sustained recovery.
OECD Countries	Regular investment in demand-side measures (infrastructure, welfare) beyond just inflation control.
China	Coordinated approach: controlling inflation while boosting industrial and consumer demand.
IMF/World Bank Advice	Focus on inclusive growth policies, not just headline inflation numbers, as benchmarks for stability.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendation / Policy Action
RBI Monetary Policy Committee	Inflation targeting with explicit comfort band (2-6%), focus on transparency.

NITI Aayog	Stress on capacity building, investment, and boosting rural/urban demand.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance	Calls for supporting MSMEs, structural reforms, monitoring fiscal deficit and stimulating growth, not relying only on inflation dips.
Finance Ministry Task Forces	Regular reviews of industrial production, tax collection, GST, and suggest flexible fiscal policies for real economic revival.

Way Forward

1. **Multi-Faceted Growth Focus:** Shift policy discourse from only inflation reduction to strategies for revitalizing growth, capital formation, and consumer spending.
2. **Strengthen Industrial & Consumption Demand:** Provide incentives and targeted support to key sectors and small businesses.
3. **Monitoring & Early Warning:** Continuous tracking of CPI/WPI, IIP, consumer sentiment, and tax collection to foresee risks and plan pre-emptive action.
4. **Inclusive Policy Design:** Ensure rural, marginalized, and informal sector needs are built into all economic revival plans.
5. **Global Risk Preparedness:** Diversify export/import markets and oil supply sources to shield against external shocks or trade disruptions.

Conclusion

India's recent inflation respite is welcome, but structural slowdown and weak demand persist. Temporary dips should not mask the challenges in growth revival, job creation, and resilience against global risks. Policy must go beyond managing numbers, aiming for robust, broad-based economic recovery—drawing on global lessons and India's expert committee insights.

Mains Practice Question:

Q1. "A short-term dip in inflation in India, as seen in July 2024, offers only limited gains unless accompanied by structural reforms and real sector revival. Critically analyze, drawing on global practices and committee recommendations, the role of monetary policy in economic recovery and stability."

Student Notes

Clear the Myths, Recognise Organ Donation as a Lifeline

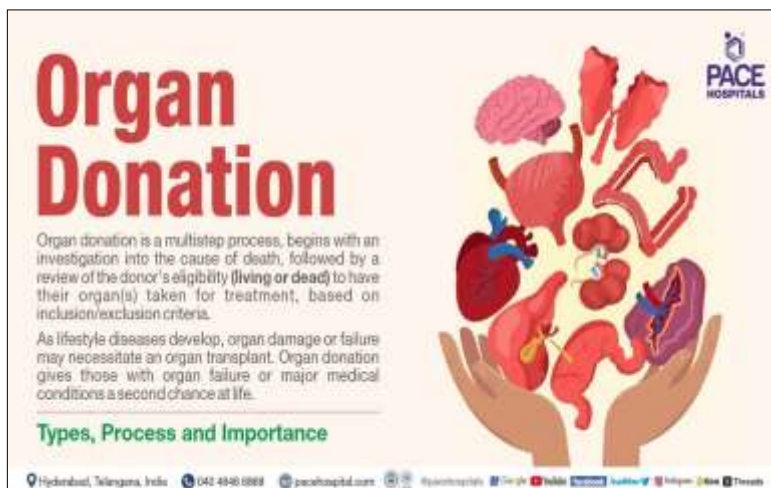
Source: Editorial by Dr. Prathap C. Reddy, *The Hindu*

UPSC Reference:

GS Paper 2 – Health (Issues & Reforms, Awareness, Ethics); GS Paper 4 – Ethics in Medicine, Social Issues; Essay

Introduction

Organ transplantation represents **one of modern medicine's greatest achievements—yet in India, myths, low awareness, and procedural challenges mean organ donation rates are critically low. Despite rising transplant numbers, India's per-million organ donation rate lags far behind global benchmarks, leading to half a million avoidable deaths every year.** Bridging this gap is not only a medical imperative but a social, ethical, and policy challenge.



Key Challenges

- Deep-rooted Myths and Misconceptions:** Families often refuse donation due to fear, stigma, and religious/cultural beliefs.
- Procedural and Legal Barriers:** Strict criteria and documentation requirements after brain death slow down or block timely organ harvesting.
- Lack of Awareness:** Most Indians have limited understanding of brain death, eligibility, or the organ donation process.
- Capacity and Training Deficit:** Medical staff and hospitals may lack training and confidence to counsel grieving families or manage the logistics.
- Empathy and Counselling:** Hospitals often fail to communicate sensitively, missing crucial opportunities for consent in critical moments.
- Low Cadaveric Donation Rate:** India's rate (0.8 per million) is among the world's lowest, compared to Spain (45+) or US (over 40).

Global Practices

Country/Region/Institution	Best Practice/Feature
Spain, US (Global Leaders)	Opt-out donation system, strong public campaigns, family counseling, hospital networks.
UK & Australia	Dedicated transplant coordinators, mandatory brain death audits, continuous staff training.
Singapore, South Korea	Incentivized donor registries, national awareness events, religious/community leader endorsement.
WHO Guidelines	Emphasis on ethical protocols, brain death standardization, and ongoing national campaigns.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee / Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
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National Organ & Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO, MoHFW)	Uniform policies, national registry, standard protocols for brain death and consent.
Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act (THOTA)	Legal framework for organ retrieval, brain death certification, donor sources.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health	Public awareness drives, inclusion in medical curriculum, incentives for hospitals and coordinators.
Law Commission of India	Ethical safeguard frameworks, strengthening of legal provisions, improved hospital accountability.
ICMR Guidelines	Roster of certified brain death assessors, protocols for documentation and family approach.

Way Forward

1. **Sustained Mass Awareness:** Nationwide **campaigns leveraging media, schools**, and workplaces to demystify donation and celebrate heroes.
2. **Counseling & Training:** Specialist counselors and medical teams trained to support families empathetically and prompt timely consent.
3. **Legal Simplification & Scrutiny:** Streamlined, technology-enabled process for brain death declaration, documentation, and coordination.
4. **Hospital Incentives:** Logistical and financial support for rapidly scaling certified donor and transplant infrastructure—especially in public sector.
5. **Community & Religious Engagement:** Involve spiritual leaders, NGOs, and community champions to break taboos and reassure families.
6. **Medical Curriculum & CME:** Make organ donation and default counseling a regular part of both undergraduate and continuing medical education.

Conclusion

Organ donation is a moral and public health imperative for India. **Overcoming the gap between demand and availability will require battles on many fronts**—public education, empathetic counseling, robust legal reforms, and strong medical leadership. By learning from global best practices and acting on domestic committee recommendations, India can transform thousands of preventable deaths into stories of hope, healing, and human solidarity.

Mains practice Question:

Q1. "India continues to lose thousands of lives every year due to the acute shortage of organ donors. Critically examine the social, procedural, and policy barriers to organ donation in India and suggest a comprehensive strategy, with examples from global best practices and Indian committee recommendations, to bridge the gap."

Student Notes

The Quality of Freedom – Fostering Critical Citizenship and Public Reason

Source: Editorial by Suhas Palshikar (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** Polity & Governance (Rights, Freedom, Constitutional Morality, Judiciary, Democracy)
- **GS Paper 4:** Ethics (Citizenship, Reason, Dissent, Conformity)
- **Essay**

Introduction

Freedom in a democracy is more than just national sovereignty or protection from external threats. The quality of freedom rests on nurturing critical, reasoning citizens and lively, plural public debate—not just constitutional guarantees. Yet, as the editorial notes, Indian democracy faces worrying trends: passive conformism, lack of dissent, and institutional alignment that discourages active, critical citizenship.



Key Challenges

1. **Constitutional Freedom vs. Actual Practice:** Mere legal protection of rights does not guarantee meaningful civic freedom or critical engagement.
2. **Rising Conformism and Compliance:** Social, legal, and bureaucratic pressures are incentivizing conformity and discouraging dissent. Citizens, parties, and even Opposition leaders may self-censor or avoid protest.
3. **Docility of Institutions:** Executive, judiciary, and legislature often converge to uphold authority and discourage robust public contestation.
4. **Suppression of Diversity:** Surveillance, procedural hurdles, and a climate of suspicion limit the scope of dissenting and minority voices.
5. **Tokenism in Democratic Debate:** Focus on external threats or competitive patriotism overshadows substantive debate on citizens' rights and freedoms.
6. **Failure of Public Reason:** Public reason, debate, and the right to question are undervalued, resulting in a passive and non-critical citizenry.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
USA & Western Europe	Formal constitutional protection of dissent; public protest as a valued civic tool; strong civil rights jurisprudence.
Germany	Civic education for critical citizenship; government supports diverse debate and inclusion.
South Africa	Institutional promotion of "constitutional morality," state-funded mechanisms for fostering debate.
United Nations (OHCHR)	Advocacy for pluralism, rights to assembly, protest, and frameworks for participatory democracy.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC)	Emphasized protecting dissent, public reason, and constitutional morality.
Law Commission of India	Advised narrowing restrictions on free speech, consultation on sedition and protest laws.

Parliamentary Committee on Ethics	Called for strengthening citizens' right to information, protest, and government accountability.
Supreme Court Precedents	Reiterated the value of dissent and the "right to reason" as part of constitutional democracy (e.g., Sabarimala, Shreya Singhal judgments).

Way Forward

1. **Promote Critical Citizenship:** Embed civic and value-based education that emphasizes questioning, debate, and ethical dissent from early schooling to higher education.
2. **Safeguard Institutional Autonomy:** Ensure judiciary, legislature, and media remain independent defenders of citizen freedoms.
3. **Broaden Public Debate:** Encourage open forums, participatory platforms, and inclusive media that give space to dissenting and minority voices.
4. **Legal Safeguards:** Clarify and protect protest, assembly, and speech rights; roll back excess surveillance and bureaucratic controls that stifle participation.
5. **Celebrate Pluralism:** Policy and practice must nurture not just tolerance but active respect for difference and contestation in democratic spaces.

Conclusion

True freedom in a democracy is measured not by the absence of foreign control, but by the ability of citizens to reason, question, and dissent. As India celebrates its formal freedoms, revitalizing the public sphere with critical engagement, debate, and plural voices is vital. Only a democracy that values and protects public reason, critical dialogue, and civic courage can claim a high quality of freedom.

Mains Practice Question:

Q1. "Freedom in a democracy is not merely the protection of national sovereignty, but the guarantee of public reason and critical citizenship." Critically evaluate India's current democratic culture in light of this statement, using global models and relevant Indian committee/judicial recommendations. Suggest measures to strengthen civic freedoms and pluralism

Student Notes

Crossing a Line – The Pitfalls of Anti-Illegal Immigrant Drives in India

Source: *The Hindu* editorial

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** Polity & Governance (Migration, Citizenship, Law & Order, Federal Issues)
- **GS Paper 1:** Society (Demographic Issues, Regionalism)
- **GS Paper 4:** Ethics (Dignity, Discrimination, Rights)
- **Essay**

Introduction

Crackdowns on so-called ‘illegal immigrants’ in India—especially in border states like Bengal and Assam—have intensified, with increasing police action aimed at detecting undocumented immigrants through language, accent, or arbitrary suspicion. This approach, as the editorial argues, erodes the rights and dignity of Indian citizens, deepens divisions, and results in wrongful detentions and social turmoil.

Key Challenges

1. **Discrimination and Profiling:** Native citizens are mistakenly targeted and harassed based on language, accent, and surname—violating constitutional rights.
2. **Regulatory Overreach:** Aggressive police action, arbitrary detentions, and data checks have sown fear among genuine Indian families, especially minorities.
3. **Impact on Social Fabric:** Bengali-speaking and other minority citizens in Assam, Bengal, or Tripura face stigma, separation, wrongful detention, and institutional neglect.
4. **Administrative Overlaps:** NRC/Detention drives, Aadhaar-based verification, and legal ambiguities place the burden of proof unfairly on poor and marginal groups.
5. **Political Polarization:** The issue is being exploited for electoral gains, driving deeper wedges between communities and propagating “insider vs. outsider” narratives.
6. **Legal Loopholes:** Complex citizenship laws, inconsistent application, and inadequate safeguards encourage harassment of citizens, not just immigrants.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
USA, Canada	Due process and strict judicial oversight on detention/deportation; community legal support for accused.
Germany, France	Rights-based policies; transparent hearings; clear appeal mechanisms for disputed citizenship/deportation.
UNHCR Guidelines	Emphasis on human dignity; ban on statelessness; international standards for identification and redress.
Australia	Immigration checks with legal representation and humanitarian considerations; no profiling by language.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
NRC State Coordination Committees	Transparent documentation, grievance redressal mechanism, avoid harassment of verified citizens.
Law Commission of India	Calls for humane and fair identification processes; strong legal aid for vulnerable citizens.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs	Recommend safeguards against wrongful detention, periodic audit of immigration drives.

Supreme Court Precedents (various)	Mandate “due process” and “natural justice” for all, including suspected undocumented migrants.
National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)	Urges avoidance of arbitrary profiling and emphasizes the right to dignity for all residents.

Way Forward

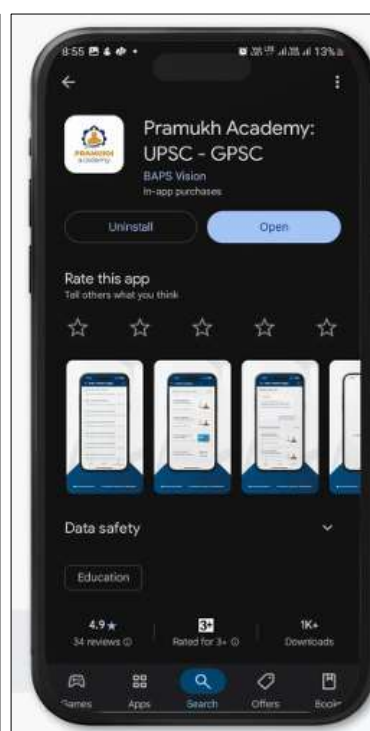
1. **Due Process Protections:** Clear legal standards and judicial oversight of any drive; ensure no wrongful harassment or detention of bona fide citizens.
2. **Independent Review:** Create effective grievance mechanisms and independent review boards for disputed cases.
3. **Community Sensitization:** Police and administrators must be trained to avoid bias, profiling, and scapegoating.
4. **Transparent Procedures:** Lay down clear, accessible routes for verification with legal aid for those at risk.
5. **Protecting Social Fabric:** Curb rhetoric that promotes animosity; invest in integration, inclusion, and support for diverse linguistic/cultural groups.
6. **Periodic Review:** Parliamentary and judicial audit of detention policies to ensure fairness and constitutional morality.

Conclusion

Zero-tolerance rhetoric against “illegal immigrants” should not become a license for harassment or injustice against Indian citizens. Only a rights-based, transparent, and just approach—rooted in due process and guided by constitutional morality—can address migration issues without sacrificing the security, dignity, and unity of India’s diverse populace.

Mains Practice Question:

Q1. "The drive against illegal immigrants in India risks violating the rights of citizens as well. Critically analyze the legal, ethical, and governance challenges, referring to global best practices and Indian committee recommendations. Suggest a fair and humane policy roadmap."

The Politics of Insurgency and the Decline of Naxalism

Source: Editorial, *The Hindu* M.K. Narayanan is a former Director, Intelligence Bureau

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 3:** Internal Security, Left Wing Extremism, Counter-Insurgency Strategies
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance (State Response, Policy), Vulnerable Sections
- **Essay**

Introduction

Naxalism, once one of India's **top most challenging and widespread internal security threats**, is now in marked decline that we are seeing now. Naxalism **refers to a radical communist movement in India inspired by Maoist ideology**, which seeks to achieve **social and economic justice through armed struggle** against the state. Naxalism is a Left-Wing Extremist movement in India, **originating from Naxalbari (1967)**, aiming to overthrow the state through armed struggle based on Maoist ideology."

Key Challenges & Evolution

1. **Historical Spread:** The Naxalite movement was **inspired by the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)**—notably drawing on Maoist revolutionary ideas, and at its **height spread across central and eastern India, especially Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Chhattisgarh**.
2. **Internal Factors:** Leadership charisma (e.g., **Charu Mazumdar, Kanu Sanyal**) and rural discontent fueled Widespread violence, **especially in the 1960s–1970s—often competing** with other ideological influences.
3. **Violence & Tactics:** Early momentum led to **"Spring Thunder"** campaigns; in modern times, shifted to hit-and-run attacks, landmines, and ambushes in forested regions (**like Bastar region, Chhattisgarh**).
4. **Doomsday Predictions:** Persistent warnings of unstoppable terror have proven exaggerated—Naxal violence is at its lowest in decades (as of early 2020s).
5. **State Response:** Sustained campaigns since the late 2000s, especially after events such as Dantewada attacks (2010) and Sukma attacks, led to unprecedented security operations and coordinated state efforts.
6. **Checks and Balances:** Despite violence, tactical security errors are now rare; effective counter-insurgency blends force, developmental outreach, and community engagement.



Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
USA (War on Terror, Counter-Insurgency)	Mix of military, intelligence, and outreach operations with checks against excess, although occasionally controversial.
Colombia (FARC Insurgency)	Negotiation, reintegration, and gradual enforcement combined with development projects.
Nepal (Maoist Conflict)	Peace accords, mainstreaming of armed groups into politics post-conflict.
Philippines (NPA)	Sustained military strategy plus community-level socioeconomic investments.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Actions
Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA, LWE Division)	Multi-pronged approach: Security operations + Development + Rights/Grievance redress.
Standing Committee on Home Affairs	Calls for people-centric policies, strengthening local governance and inclusive economic development.
National Policy and Action Plan for LWE (2015)	Focused on clear-and-hold strategies, road infrastructure, telecom, and financial inclusion in Naxal regions.
Supreme Court Judgments	Emphasize constitutional rights, monitoring excess force, and balance between state action and civil liberties.

Way Forward

1. **Balanced Counter-Insurgency:** Blend military operations with development, social justice, local governance, and grievance redress.
2. **Community Engagement:** Enhance trust in state institutions, involve tribal and local leaders, and prioritize basic infrastructure.
3. **Intelligence-Led Policing:** Continue robust intelligence sharing, rapid response, and inter-agency coordination.
4. **Reform and Rehabilitation:** Create pathways for surrendering militants, reintegration, and protection of rights post-conflict.
5. **Vigilance Against New Threats:** Monitor new patterns and prevent resurgence by addressing root causes and not just symptoms.

Conclusion

The sustained decline of **Naxal violence in India**—aided by strategic state action, intelligence, and developmental outreach—shows that even severe insurgencies can ebb when policy is holistic and people-focused. However, risks persist: complacency, heavy-handed tactics, or ignoring local grievances can reverse gains. India's approach must draw from global best practices and committee recommendations to secure both peace and justice in affected regions.

Mains Practice Question:

Q1. "The decline of Naxalism in India underscores the importance of a balanced strategy combining security, development, and social justice. Critically analyze the main causes for the decline and evaluate India's response, citing global models and committee recommendations. Suggest policy reforms for sustained peace."

Student Notes

Figure of Speech – Concerns, Challenges, and Assurances in the PM’s I-Day Address

Source: *The Hindu* Editorial

UPSC Reference:

- GS Paper 2: Governance (National Security, Development, Social Cohesion, Leadership);
- GS Paper 1: Society (Demographic Issues, Communalism);
- GS Paper 3: Security, Policy

Introduction

Prime Minister Modi’s **12th Independence Day** address focused on the themes of national security, **self-reliance**, and **social unity** but also surfaced apprehensions around what was termed as **'deliberate conspiracy'** and **'demographic challenges'**—issues that intersect security and communal harmony.



Key Challenges

1. **Demographic Narrative and Social Anxiety:** PM’s warnings on **'deliberate demographic conspiracy'** risk fueling social paranoia, divisiveness, and targeting of minority identities.
2. **Communal Overtones:** Reference to religious-based challenges and calls for 'infiltrator' vigilance can polarize communities and increase mistrust.
3. **Competing Development vs. Security Focus:** Balancing rapid infrastructure growth (e.g., new airports, highways, Vande Bharat trains, Mission Chandrayaan) with progress on social harmony and inclusion.
4. **Defence Modernization and Preparedness:** Strong push for indigenous defence production, but public messaging leans heavily on external threats.
5. **Leadership Confidence vs. Apprehension:** The address sought to assure progress but acknowledged deep-seated concerns—especially around unity and security.
6. **Policy Trade-offs:** Pursuing big ticket infrastructure and defence projects is crucial, but risks sidelining inclusive development and democratic debate.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
USA, UK	Security addresses employ optimistic tone, actively discourage targeting ethnic/racial minorities; ensure inclusive narrative.
Singapore	Social cohesion is prioritized in national policy; demographic debates handled by commissions, not in political speeches.
Germany, Canada	National unity speeches focus on economic/social progress; demographic issues debated with transparency and safeguards.
UN / OECD Models	Balanced discourse promoted in state addresses; development and inclusion presented as symbiotic goals.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Action
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs	Caution against use of divisive language in national messaging; focus on consensus and inclusion.

NITI Aayog	Emphasizes balancing security needs with inclusive development and social cohesion.
Law Commission of India	Stress transparent debate on demographic change, protect minority rights, avoid alarmism.
Standing Committee on Defence	Urges indigenous defence modernization, but recommends robust civil-military dialogue and safeguards against radicalization.
National Integration Council	Reinforces pluralism, unity, and constructive leadership—warns against communally polarizing discourse.

Way Forward

1. **Inclusive Messaging:** National leaders must ensure security rhetoric does not foster anxiety or exclusion—unity and inclusion should guide all public discourse.
2. **Evidence-based Debates:** Demographic or social change discussions should be transparent, data-driven, and avoid alarmist tones.
3. **Balanced Policy Focus:** Combine infrastructure and defence gains with renewed investment in education, health, social justice, and minority protection.
4. **Empowered Institutions:** Leverage independent commissions (e.g., National Integration Council, NITI Aayog) for bridging divides.
5. **Positive Leadership:** Project optimism, foster constructive criticism, and invite broad-based dialogue in all national addresses.

Conclusion

While the **Prime Minister's address highlighted national resolve and development**, the recurrence of anxiety-inducing rhetoric risks undermining social trust and inclusive progress. **Lasting strength comes from a confident nation that embraces pluralism**, balanced policy, and open debate—drawing on committees and global experience to keep democracy robust and resilient.

Mains Practice Question:

Q1. "National leadership must balance assurance, security, and inclusive messaging. Critically analyze the implications of demographic and security rhetoric in high-profile addresses, drawing on domestic committee recommendations and global best practices. Suggest ways to strengthen constructive and plural national discourse."

Student Notes

Roll Recall – The Supreme Court’s Intervention and ECI’s Procedural Failures

Source: *The Hindu* Editorial

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** Polity & Governance (Electoral Reforms, Constitutional Bodies, Supreme Court, Rights)
- **Essay**

Introduction

The Supreme Court’s direction to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to publish the names of over 68 lakh excluded voters from Bihar’s Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise **highlights significant procedural lapses in electoral rolls management**. This is a warning on the need for due process, transparency, gender justice, and robust citizen redress in voter exclusion and correction processes.



Key Challenges

1. **Lack of Transparency:** No consolidated, accessible list of excluded voters; the process behind exclusions is not transparent or standardized.
2. **Gender and Demographic Skew:** Data indicates more women excluded than men (by nearly 25 lakh); skewed trends suggest possible bias or procedural issues.
3. **Deficient Redressal Process:** Excluded voters often not given proper notice, reasons, or appeal opportunity. Many had valid IDs and proof of residence.
4. **Data & Procedural Gaps:** Reports show names removed as “dead,” “fake,” or “duplicate” often aren’t, with recent death rates in lists higher among men than women.
5. **Burden of Proof:** Citizens forced to contest exclusions using Aadhaar and ration cards, sometimes not enough, and hearing outcomes remain uncertain.
6. **Legal & Constitutional Issues:** The Supreme Court must still consider whether the whole SIR exercise met constitutional standards and did not disenfranchise genuine voters.
7. **Administrative Overreach:** Opaque handling by the ECI, inconsistency in handling claims/objections, and lack of clarity on inclusion/exclusion processes undermine electoral trust.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
USA	Voter roll updates with legal notification; voters informed and given time to appeal changes.
UK	Electoral Commission must publish all changes; city councils hold regular public voter roll challenges.
Australia	Citizens notified about exclusions/inclusions with clear appeals and correction deadlines.
EU Member States	Data systems cross-verified; digital inclusion lists open for public objection before finalizing.
UN/IDEA Guidelines	Stress maximum transparency, gender balance, community oversight, and judicial recourse for voter rights.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/ Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
Law Commission of India	Transparent, tech-enabled roll management; mandatory notices before exclusions.
ECI Expert Groups (various)	Use of digital/biometric verification but with robust grievance redress & audits.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law & Justice	Regular audits of voter rolls, gender/region inclusion analysis, better coordination with UID/Aadhaar & local records.
Supreme Court (recent judgements)	Upheld citizen's right to be heard before exclusion and timely, reasoned decisions on objections.
National Commission for Women	Flagged gender-based exclusion; called for review and correction where female voters disproportionately affected.

Way Forward

1. **Guarantee Due Process:** Mandatory, accessible publication of exclusion lists with robust timelines for objections and corrections.
2. **Transparent Appeals:** Provide written notice and clear reasons for all exclusions; **ensure simple, free avenues for appeal with judicial oversight** if needed.
3. **Gender-Responsive Review:** Analyze all exclusions for demographic bias, with automatic review for high-exclusion areas and women.
4. **Digital and Paper Verification:** Integrate Aadhaar, ration, and locally valid documents as proof—but no exclusion solely on lack of one document.
5. **Community and Civil Society Role:** Local watchdog groups and NGOs should help citizens file claims and navigate the process.
6. **Continued SC Oversight:** Supreme Court should enforce constitutional norms on universal adult franchise and timely, fair voter roll management by ECI.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court's intervention **highlights both a crisis and an opportunity for India's electoral democracy**. Rights-based, transparent, and technically sound voter roll management is vital to enfranchise every eligible citizen, **uphold constitutional values, and restore trust in the ECI**. Reforms modeled on global best practices and committee recommendations must now be fast-tracked.

Mains Question:

Q1. "The credibility of electoral rolls is central to democracy. Critically examine recent procedural lapses and exclusion trends during roll revisions in India, citing global models and committee recommendations. Propose reforms to guarantee transparency, gender equity, and robust citizen redress."

Student Notes

A Conservation Manual, Drafted by the Ordinary Citizen

Source: *The Hindu* Editorial

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 1:** Indian Heritage and Culture (Monument Conservation, Culture Policy)
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Citizen Participation, Decentralized Management)
- **GS Paper 4:** Ethics (Civic Responsibility, Plurality in Policy)
- **Essay**

Introduction

India's conservation of monuments has **long relied on top-down, expert-led models**. The editorial emphasizes that effective, sustainable heritage conservation **must be participatory, drawing on the knowledge, priorities, and lived experience of ordinary citizens as well as experts**. It calls for a new "conservation manual" reflecting local perspectives for nuanced, inclusive management of historical sites.



Key Challenges

1. **Marginalized Local Voices:** Policies are typically formulated by central agencies (like ASI), often overlooking the insights and needs of communities living around monuments.
2. **Rigid Regulations:** Uniform buffer zones and building bans ignore context and local realities—creating conflict and undermining conservation goals.
3. **Outdated or Sparse Documentation:** Many sites lack up-to-date, citizen-generated information on condition, usage, and changes.
4. **Lack of Policy Adaptability:** The absence of mechanisms for continual feedback and citizen input results in disengagement and neglect.
5. **Disjointed Management:** Conservation work is siloed, lacking synthesis between archaeology, urban planning, local governance, and community histories.
6. **Limited Awareness & Agency:** Without public education and involvement, stewardship remains weak and conservation unsustainable.

Global Practices

Country/ Region	Best Practice/Feature
UK (English Heritage, National Trust)	Local partnerships in management, public involvement in planning and monitoring.
Italy	Civic groups and resident organizations participate in site maintenance and heritage zoning.
Japan	Living monuments model—sites integrated into daily community life and shared custodianship.
UNESCO World Heritage	Community consultation, local documentation, and open reporting as policy prerequisites.
USA (NPS, Landmark Initiatives)	Citizen science, crowdsourced site records, 'adopt a monument' volunteer programs.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
National Monuments Authority	Regular stakeholder input, context-sensitive buffer zones, adaptive, inclusive management
12th Five Year Plan Policy	Promote NGO-public participation, decentralized decision-making, "citizen audits"
INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage)	Community programs for heritage awareness, local documentation campaigns
Heritage Regulation Task Forces (Delhi, Jaipur)	Flexible zoning, urban integration, regular feedback from local users
73rd/74th Constitutional Amendments	Institutionalize local body and panchayat participation in culture and heritage governance

Way Forward

- Co-create Conservation Manuals:** Involve citizens, local artisans, user groups, and subject experts in site-specific rulemaking and manuals.
- Citizen Documentation:** Launch community surveys, oral history projects, and digital mapping tools for real-time site monitoring.
- Flexible, Context-Sensitive Rules:** Adapt buffer zones, use restrictions, and restoration decisions to each site's needs and local realities.
- Cross-disciplinary Teams:** Blend archaeology, landscape, sociology, architecture, and local knowledge for holistic management.
- Continuous Engagement:** Set up regular forums or digital platforms for feedback, volunteer reporting, and stewardship.
- Public Heritage Education:** Integrate monument care awareness in school curricula and citizen outreach drives.

Conclusion

Heritage protection is most successful when it is shared—**when ordinary citizens, not just officials and experts, are empowered stewards of monuments.** A truly "Indian" conservation manual must institutionalize participatory, adaptive, and context-driven approaches inspired by global models and Indian committee insights. Inclusion, not insulation, will sustain India's diverse heritage for future generations.

Mains Question:

Q1. "Participatory and context-sensitive approaches are essential for sustainable heritage conservation in India." Critically discuss, citing global models and Indian committee recommendations. Suggest a practical institutional framework for citizen-led monument care.

Student Notes

The Path to Ending Global Hunger Runs Through India

Source: *The Hindu* (by Chief Economist, FAO)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Food Security, Service Delivery, SDGs)
- **GS Paper 3:** Agriculture (Public Distribution, Innovation, Inclusivity)
- **Essay**

Introduction

The world's chronic undernourishment is now on a downward trend, with the UN SOFI 2025 report citing a drop to 673 million (8.2% of global population) undernourished in 2024. India's decisive role—via policy innovation, technology, and massive food support—has been pivotal in this global shift, even as challenges remain in nutrition, equity, and affordability.



Key Challenges

1. **Persistent Undernourishment:** India's undernourishment fell from 14.3% (2020-22) to 12% (2022-24), but overall numbers remain high due to population size.
2. **Cost of Healthy Diets:** Over 60% of Indians cannot afford nutritious diets due to high prices, poor market integration, and thin supply chains.
3. **Malnutrition Beyond Food Access:** Caloric support is robust, but nutrition gaps persist—especially for women, children, migrants, and smallholder households.
4. **Implementation Gaps:** Limited effectiveness in innovators like cold chains, market linkage, women's agri-enterprise, and digital delivery to the last mile.
5. **Fragile Food System:** Urbanization, climate change, and economic shocks threaten progress, requiring sustained policy focus and adaptation.

Global Practices

Country/Org/Model	Best Practice/Feature
Brazil (Zero Hunger)	Integrated food/nutrition support with local procurement, education, and targeted cash transfers.
China	Investment in agri-tech, cold storage, and bundled rural social support to drive nutrition.
EU (CAP Reform)	Sustainable farming incentives, farmer consortiums, nutrition in welfare design.
FAO/WFP	Nutrition-sensitive agriculture and emergency food support, resilience-building for crises.
Africa (CAADP)	Coordinated regional targets and public-private nutrition investments.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee or Policy Body	Recommendations / Policy Action
NITI Aayog	Expand digital delivery (e-NAM, AgriStack), link with nutrition and market reforms.
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & PD	Broaden PDS coverage, encourage fortification, innovate in last-mile delivery.
National Food Security Act (NFSA)	Legal right to subsidized food grains for over 800 million; update beneficiary lists.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Food	Stitch food, agriculture & health for inclusive nutrition, support women's collectives, audit PDS/ICDS.
ICAR, Ministry of Agriculture	Push Farmer Producer Orgs (FPOs), enable climate-resilient and women-led farming.

Way Forward

1. **Deepen Digital, Inclusive Delivery:** Upscale platforms like e-NAM, AgriStack, and geotagged monitoring to bridge last-mile gaps.
2. **Nutrition-Linked Schemes:** Ensure PM-POSHAN, ICDS, and targeted nutrition interventions converge with food & agri policy.
3. **Support Women, FPOs, and Innovation:** Focus on women-led cooperatives, climate-resilient cropping, and local smallholder empowerment.
4. **Strengthen Supply Chains:** Invest in cold stores, logistics, and decentralized procurement to cut loss and boost diet affordability.
5. **Integrate with SDGs:** Link food security strategies to SDG2 (Zero Hunger), poverty, and gender goals for cumulative impact.
6. **Build Crisis Resilience:** Monitor urban/rural shifts and global disruptions, update registries for migrants and excluded populations.

Conclusion

India's policy drive on food security, tech, and inclusive service delivery is key to recent global gains against hunger. Achieving true "zero hunger" demands continued innovation, integration of nutrition with food systems, and special focus on affordability, equity, and resilience. India's leadership will be central to the world's hopes of ending hunger for good.

Mains Question:

Q1. "India's role is pivotal in the global fight against hunger. Examine its contributions, key policy challenges, and lessons from global models. Suggest a way forward for making food and nutrition security inclusive, resilient, and sustainable."

Student Notes

Familiar Impasse – Why Global Plastic Treaty Negotiations Stall

Source: *The Hindu* Editorial

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 3:** Environment (Pollution, Plastic Management, International Treaties),
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Multilateral Negotiations),
- **Essay**

Introduction

Efforts toward a global treaty to end plastic pollution—led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) since 2022—remain deadlocked. Despite agreement on the dangers of plastics, negotiations stall over binding commitments to limit or phase out production, reflecting deep divides between developed and developing country blocs.



Key Challenges

1. **Resistance to Binding Limits:** Many nations resist a universal treaty enforcing plastic production caps, citing economic interests or development needs.
2. **Rising Plastic Production:** Global plastic output has soared—production grew at a CAGR of 3.7% from 314MT in 2016-17 to 420MT in 2022, mostly in single-use forms.
3. **Low Recycling Rates:** Only 30% of plastic waste worldwide is recycled, with billions of tonnes accumulating in land and oceans.
4. **Behavior Change vs. Systemic Reform:** While personal choices help, systemic transformation in industry, waste management, and design is lagging.
5. **Limited Success of Alternatives:** Reliance on single-use-paper or “biodegradable” alternatives is hampered by costs, new waste streams, and unclear environmental benefits.
6. **Global Equity Issues:** Developing nations highlight unfair costs, technology gaps, and trade risks from blanket bans or restrictions imposed by richer countries.
7. **Implementation Gaps:** Even where national bans or controls exist, plastic remains ubiquitous due to poor enforcement, consumer habits, and supply chain inertia.
8. **Common but Differentiated Responsibility:** Talks stall as countries argue over who should bear the cost and leadership for ending plastic pollution.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
European Union	Single-use plastic bans, extended producer responsibility (EPR), mandatory recycled content rules.
Rwanda, Kenya	Strict bans on plastic bags, high fines, and community engagement for compliance.
Japan	Circular economy: high recycling, deposit-refund schemes, design for recyclability.
Canada	National roadmap for plastic phaseout, public-private waste partnerships.
UNEP	Convened ongoing global treaty talks; guidance on differentiated global action, inclusive negotiation.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
NITI Aayog & Ministry of Environment	National Action Plan for Plastic Waste Management (2019): phaseout schedule, EPR, bans, recycling market.

Parliamentary Committee on Environment	Calls for stricter monitoring, incentives for biodegradable plastics, and urban waste management reform.
Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)	Guidelines for brand responsibility, plastic waste audit and mandatory reporting.
Indian Plastics Institute	Encourages industry innovation in alternatives, recycling, and life-cycle assessment.
State Governments	Successful models (Sikkim, Maharashtra) with localized bans, awareness programs, and penalties.

Way Forward

1. **Global Treaty with Equity:** Push for a universal yet differentiated framework where richer countries lead with finance, technology, and ambitious caps while supporting developing nations' transitions.
2. **Producer Responsibility:** Make EPR, design-for-recycling, and mandatory recycled content global norms.
3. **Investment in Alternatives and Recycling:** Fund innovation in biodegradable materials; build robust waste management and recycling systems.
4. **Consumer Awareness & Compliance:** Scale up global and national education drives, with local incentives to swap plastic for safer options.
5. **Data, Audits, Enforcement:** Mandate plastic footprint and life-cycle audits for all producers and importers; bolster regulatory enforcement.
6. **International Support for Transition:** Facilitate technology transfer, technical assistance, and concessional finance for developing countries.
7. **Trust, Transparency and Common Good:** Negotiate on the basis of fairness, transparency, and recognition that plastic pollution is a shared global emergency.

Conclusion

Plastic pollution is a transboundary crisis, demanding global trust and mutual responsibility. Treaties must balance global ambition with local realities—and move beyond impasse by forging enforceable, equitable, and transparent commitments for the global common good.

Mains Question:

Q1. "Global resistance to binding curbs on plastic production has stalled treaty talks. Critically examine the challenges and lessons from global and Indian practice, and propose an equitable path forward for ending plastic pollution."

Student Notes

A Test of Trust – Why Electoral Transparency is Non-Negotiable

Source: *The Hindu* Editorial by SY Quraishi

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** Polity (Election Commission, Electoral Reforms, Constitutional Bodies)
- **Essay**

Introduction

Free and fair elections depend on trustworthy, inclusive, and accurate electoral rolls. The editorial highlights the pivotal role of the Election Commission of India (ECI) in ensuring a transparent and credible electoral process, warning that any dilution in transparency threatens both procedural legitimacy and broad faith in democracy.

Key Challenges

1. **Erosion of Public Trust:** Opaque or insufficiently explained deletions/inclusions in electoral rolls and reduced transparency feed suspicion and delegitimization of results.
2. **Inconsistent Transparency:** Earlier innovative, citizen-centric models (e.g., SAD—Shifted, Absent, Dead—listings from 2007) have been replaced by less open, less participatory procedures.
3. **Faulty Roll Management:** Bulk deletions, insufficient notice or grievance redress, and technical errors often disenfranchise genuine voters.
4. **Legal & Democratic Repercussions:** Roll errors violate the “one person, one vote” ideal, hitting constitutional rights, especially for marginalized groups.
5. **Dependence on Data Intermediaries:** Over-reliance on Aadhaar, without adequate safeguards or procedures, can create new forms of exclusion.
6. **Declining Civic Participation:** Loss of faith and exclusion erode turnout, public involvement, and ultimately the legitimacy of the electoral process.



Global Practices

Country/ Region	Best Practice/Feature
UK	Regular, open publication/updating of rolls; community review periods; clear appeals processes.
Australia	Automatic and continuous voter registration, direct mail demand for objections/confirmations.
USA (several states)	Voter roll corrections announced in advance; independent standards for deletion/inclusion; robust public notice.
Germany, Canada	Easily accessible, regularly scrutinized rolls; courts available for electoral grievances.
UN/EU Guidelines	Prioritize procedural transparency, open access for observation, and legal recourse for challenges.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
Law Commission of India	Mandate open, participatory roll revision with reasoned notice for changes and accessible appeal.
Supreme Court (various judgments)	Upheld voter inclusion/exclusion as a part of Constitution’s basic structure (‘one person, one vote’).

ECI Committees (Election Reforms)	SAD approach and strict protocols for public consultation in roll management.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law and Justice	Calls for social audit, stakeholder review, and data-driven transparency.

Way Forward

1. **Restore Maximum Transparency:** Reinstate citizen-friendly innovations like SAD lists, proactive public display of changes, and open periods for objections/clarifications.
2. **Due Process and Notice:** Serve timely, reasoned notices for any intended deletions, with accessible appeal channels and minimal technical burdens on voters.
3. **Inclusive, Data-Protected Verification:** Use technology (e.g., Aadhaar seeding) only with parallel, robust manual safeguards and alternative recourse for those affected.
4. **Public Monitoring and Social Audit:** Institutionalize regular, local participatory audits and allow for redress/objection through both online and physical interfaces.
5. **Continual Supreme Court Oversight:** Encourage the judiciary to ensure the ECI adheres to its own best practices, upholding the core democratic mandate.

Conclusion

The credibility of Indian democracy depends not only on holding elections, but on visible, uncompromising transparency throughout electoral roll management and voter participation. Only by returning to gold-standard openness can the ECI sustain citizen faith and the constitutional promise of political equality.

Mains Question:

Q1. "Transparency in electoral roll management is non-negotiable for democracy. Critically discuss India's best innovations and present trends, referencing global benchmarks and committee recommendations. Suggest reforms to anchor the ECI's credibility."

Student Notes

Shelter in a Storm – India Needs Early Warning Systems for Climate Extremes

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 1:** Geography (Disaster Management, Cloudbursts, Floods)
- **GS Paper 3:** Environment (Climate Change Adaptation, Resilience)
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Policy, Early Warning Systems, Infrastructure)
- **Essay**

Introduction

Extreme rainfall events—cloudbursts, flash floods, and landslides—are rising across India, from mountain states to big cities. The loss of over 60 lives in recent Jammu & Kashmir cloudbursts highlights the urgent need for robust early warning systems, climate-proof infrastructure, and collaborative disaster planning.

Key Challenges

1. **Increasing Extremes:** Widespread havoc from cloudbursts in Northeast India, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and cities like Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai.
2. **Infrastructure Failure:** Waterlogging, crumbling drainage, and poor urban planning compound monsoon shocks.
3. **Warning System Gaps:** India's climate information system is inadequate; limited real-time data and communication hinder advance warnings.
4. **Cloudburst Complexity:** Difficult to forecast—officially, cloudbursts = >100mm/hour rain over <30 sq km; triggers landslides, flash floods, and urban chaos.
5. **Limited Rainfall Instruments:** Sparse, unevenly distributed weather stations leave vast regions unmonitored.
6. **Climate Change & Topography:** Himalayan microclimates intensify cloudbursts; global warming enhances unpredictability.
7. **Coordinated Response Lacking:** Task is too vast for IMD alone—saving lives requires scientists, governments, and community together.



Global Practices

Country/Region/Model	Best Practice/Feature
Japan, South Korea	Dense meteorological sensor networks, real-time public alerts, local drills for flash floods.
USA (NOAA, FEMA)	Satellite and radar integrated early warning, evacuation planning with local governments.
Switzerland	Hazard zone mapping, dynamic rainfall/runoff models, public engagement in risk planning.
EU (EFAS/EWS)	Centralized early warning, cross-border climate data sharing, tech-enabled citizen alerts.
UNDRR Guidelines	Multi-stakeholder early warning, community engagement, investment in climate-proofing infrastructure.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Actions
National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)	Upgrades for IMD, expansion of automatic weather stations, integrating local capacities.
National Institute of Disaster Management	Disaster risk zone mapping, local alert protocols, simulations, inter-agency coordination.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs	Call for smart urban drainage, city-level planning, data-driven designs.
IMD Task Force	Deploy more high-resolution sensors, leverage satellite data for micro-zone alerting.
15th Finance Commission Disaster Grant	Finance for local governments to climate-proof high-risk zones, disaster training.

Way Forward

- Expand Early Warning Networks:** Dramatically increase dense, real-time weather instrumentation in mountain and urban danger zones.
- Integrated Climate Information:** IMD to use satellite data, local sensors, and community input for rapid, accurate micro-zone alerts.
- Collaborative Planning:** Scientists, planners, state, and local authorities must co-create land-use policies for high-risk regions—guided by historical and satellite data.
- Strengthen Urban/Drainage Infrastructure:** Invest in climate-resilient drainage, landslide mitigation, and robust stormwater systems in vulnerable cities and towns.
- Community Engagement:** Train and mobilize local communities for response and planning; embed climate awareness in urban/rural development.
- Mandatory Disaster-Proofing:** Make climate adaptation and disaster-resilience upgrades compulsory for all new public works in prone areas.

Conclusion

Cloudbursts and extreme rain are intensifying—India must act now. With world-class early warning, better infrastructure, and all-level cooperation, loss of life can be minimized. Only urgent, science-driven action and empowered local response can turn imminent storms into survivable events.

Mains Question:

Q1. "Timely early warnings and climate-resilient infrastructure are crucial for protecting life in the face of cloudbursts and extreme rainfall. Critically discuss India's current gaps and suggest actionable reforms, drawing from global models and Indian committee recommendations."

Student Notes

Shortcut by Law – The Dangers of Ejecting Ministers on Criminal Charges

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*) by Faizan Mustafa

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** Polity (Criminalization of Politics, Executive Accountability, Separation of Powers)
- **GS Paper 4:** Ethics (Governance, Rule of Law, Justice)
- **Essay**

Introduction

Recent proposals to disqualify ministers facing criminal charges—a shortcut for “cleaning politics”—may be well-intentioned but risk gross misuse. The editorial critiques the discretionary use of criminal law for political vendetta and cautions against bypassing due process and foundational principles of justice and democracy.



Key Challenges

1. **Criminal Law as a Tool of Power:** The state’s use of criminal law often reflects executive or police interests rather than true justice (historically, “who controls the crime, controls the regime”).
2. **Rampant Discretion and Misuse:** Arbitrary application leads to targeted arrests, delays, and judicial manipulation—often for political gain.
3. **Mass Prevalence of “Under-Trials”:** As per data, over 75% of prison inmates are under-trials, not convicts—symptomatic of systemic flaws and misuse.
4. **Low Conviction Rates:** Despite frequent arrests and high-profile investigations (e.g., CBI, ED), conviction rates in political, economic crime are as low as 19%.
5. **Politically Motivated Cases:** Investigative agencies (CBI, ED, police) have been repeatedly accused of “crossing limits” and selective prosecution against opposition leaders, ministers, or rivals.
6. **Constitutional Principles at Risk:** Removing ministers merely based on pending criminal cases undermines the presumption of innocence, due process, and the separation of powers (election, parliament, judiciary).
7. **No Uniform Safeguards:** Proposals lack adequate checks to prevent misuse, ensure fair investigation, and avoid vitiating the electoral process.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
UK, Australia, Canada	Disqualification only after conviction, not merely on filing of charges; due process is supreme.
USA	Office holders removed only for proven felonies or severe ethical violations, not pending charges.
South Africa	Constitutional safeguards for public office; judicious checks before removal of ministers.
EU Countries	Emphasis on “innocent until proven guilty” in political disqualification.
UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime)	Prioritizes anti-corruption legal frameworks protecting due process and non-arbitrary use of penal laws.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
Law Commission of India (244th, 255th Reports)	Disqualification after conviction for serious crimes (2+ years), not just on charges; fast-track courts for politicians.
Supreme Court (various judgments)	Stressed presumption of innocence, separation of powers; cautioned against misuse of investigative agencies.
Ethics & Privileges Committees (Parliament/State)	Called for ethical codes, greater transparency, and bipartisan review for action against ministers.
Election Commission of India (ECI)	Advised strict scrutiny of affidavits, criminal antecedents, but warned against penalizing mere accusations.
Parliamentary Standing Committee	Endorsed judicial scrutiny, mandatory disclosures, and time-bound trials for public office bearers.

Way Forward

- Uphold Due Process & Presumption of Innocence:** Removals must follow established legal procedures; mere FIR or chargesheets are not grounds for disqualification.
- Fast-Track, Fair Trials:** Expedite judicial processes for cases involving public servants and elected representatives.
- Independent Investigations:** Insulate agencies (CBI, ED, police) from political influence; monitor for selective prosecution.
- Increase Transparency and Disclosure:** Mandatory, real-time disclosure of criminal and financial cases against sitting ministers/candidates.
- Constructive Parliamentary Oversight:** Ethics committees and bipartisan panels to vet proposals for removals and protect against vendetta.
- Civic and Media Vigilance:** Sustain public debate about probity without trampling on constitutional freedoms and rights.

Conclusion

Cleaning politics through shortcuts risks violating foundational legal principles. True reform lies in upholding the rule of law, due process, and institutional checks—not arbitrary or politically-motivated removals. Only then can India balance governance ethics with justice, fairness, and constitutional values.

Mains Question:

Q1. "The reliance on mere criminal accusations to disqualify ministers risks politicizing justice and undermining democracy. Critically analyze this trend with reference to global models and committee recommendations. Suggest balanced, constitutionally-sound reforms"

Student Notes

India's Democracy is Failing the Migrant Citizen

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Citizenship, Voting Rights, Welfare Exclusion)
- **GS Paper 1:** Society (Migration, Social Inequality, Vulnerable Groups)
- **GS Paper 3:** Inclusive Growth, Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT)
- **Essay**

Introduction

Despite India's large-scale internal migration, millions of migrants are systematically excluded from exercising basic rights, including voting and welfare access. The editorial highlights how static, place-based identification systems (ration cards, voter IDs, Aadhaar) and administrative rigidity deny migrants full citizenship, relegating them to the margins of democracy.



Key Challenges

1. **Exclusion from Voting:** Migrants are unable to vote at worksites or destinations as their voter IDs are tied to their native districts.
2. **Welfare Inaccessibility:** Access to subsidized food (PDS), DBT, and other benefits is limited for those unable to prove local domicile, despite national schemes.
3. **Administrative Inflexibility:** The focus on permanent address verification and bureaucratic hurdles mean migrants face repeated exclusion and denial.
4. **Social and Economic Marginalization:** Without portable welfare or voting rights, migrants are politically invisible and economically vulnerable.
5. **Continued Discrimination:** Migrants often struggle for essential services, face stigmatized treatment, and cannot integrate easily into new localities.
6. **Complex, Patchy Policy Implementation:** Center-state cooperation is weak, and "portable" schemes like ONORC and eShram are hampered by poor execution.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
European Union (EU)	Portability of voting, healthcare, and welfare across member states and localities.
United States	National voter registration and welfare portability, regardless of internal movement.
Australia	National digital ID for voting, welfare, and financial inclusion nationwide.
South Africa	Mobile units for registration, temporary IDs for internal migrants and urban dwellers.
UN Agencies	Advocate universal, portable digital identity and benefit access ("leave no one behind").

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
Standing Committee on Labour (2022-23)	Speed up "One Nation, One Ration Card", eShram, and cross-state welfare portability.

Election Commission of India (ECI)	Pilot remote voting for migrants, permit proxy or digital/mobile voting.
NITI Aayog	Advance "One Nation, One ID"; integrate DBT, welfare, and voting through Aadhaar or similar systems.
Supreme Court	Reinforce right to life, work, food, and shelter for migrants; ask states to cooperate and avoid exclusion.
Ministry of Labour & Employment	Expand eShram coverage, enhance social protection portability, cross-link with state welfare databases.

Way Forward

1. **Universal Portable ID:** Roll out a national, digital portable identity enabling access to voting, welfare, and essential services anywhere in India.
2. **Remote and Mobile Voting:** Implement proxy, postal, or digital voting solutions for internal migrants, especially in urban work sites.
3. **Complete Welfare Portability:** Make PDS, health, education, and cash subsidies portable; update and use databases like ONORC and eShram consistently.
4. **Inter-state Policy Coordination:** Build robust center-state data integration and cooperation for migrant inclusion.
5. **Regular Registration Drives:** Facilitate eShram, voter, and ration card updates at worksites and through mobile outreach.
6. **Civic Empowerment:** Promote local sensitization, information hubs, and help lines to empower migrant workers and their families.

Conclusion

India's democracy, economy, and cities are built by migrants—yet they remain among the most disenfranchised. Delivering truly portable identity, voting, and welfare is urgent for both justice and national progress.

Mains Question:

Q1. "India's migrant workers face routine denial of voting and welfare. Analyze the roots and effects of their exclusion, and propose a portable, inclusive identity and welfare framework, citing Indian and global models."

Student Notes

The Skills Check – Reinventing India’s Vocational Training for Employability

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** Governance, Education, Skill Development
- **GS Paper 3:** Inclusive Growth, Human Capital
- **Essay**

Introduction

India’s vocational education and training (VET) system is at a crossroads—amid a volatile global economy, upskilling and demand-aligned training are essential for higher productivity and employability. The editorial calls for a bold reinvention of VET—moving from an academic-dominated model to one that is skill- and workforce-ready.



Key Challenges

1. **Low Formal VET & Utilization:** Only 4% of Indian workforce is formally skilled (2021), compared to much higher in advanced economies. Actual utilization of VET seats remains below 50%.
2. **Academic Bias:** India’s system is academic-driven, not work-integrated; vocational pathways often seen as lesser than academic ones.
3. **Mismatch with Industry Demand:** Course content and delivery poorly aligned to actual market/sector needs; limited flexibility.
4. **Poor Funding & Infrastructure:** Only ~3% of public education spend goes to VET, compared to 10-13% in Germany, Singapore or Canada.
5. **Low ITI Autonomy:** Most Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) lack financial and operational autonomy, limiting innovation or links to local industry.
6. **Ineffective Public-Private Collaboration:** Weak coordination with employers means sluggish curriculum updates and placement rates.
7. **Stigma Around Skills Education:** Social perception issues deter youth from vocational trades, affecting aspirations and enrollment.
8. **Digital & Tech Readiness Lag:** New-age, digital modular and green economy skills poorly represented; assessment and certification inconsistent.

Global Practices

Country/Model	Best Practice/Feature
Germany, Switzerland	Dual system integrates VET with apprenticeships, strong employer participation, and portable qualifications.
Singapore	VET seen as equivalent to tertiary education, driven by industries, offers vertical mobility to university.
Australia, Canada	Competency-based modules, regular market assessments, seamless transitions between VET and academia.
South Korea	ITIs and polytechnics have financial autonomy, frequent curriculum revamp, integration with tech sector.
European Union	Frameworks for mutually recognized certifications, cross-country skill mobility.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
National Skill Development Agency (NSDA)	Align NSQF (Skill Qualification Framework) with industry feedback and global standards.
NCERT, NITI Aayog, Economic Survey	Expand investment, remove barriers between vocational and academic, incentivize industry partners.
Parliamentary Committee on Human Resource Development	Update ITI curriculum, boost teacher training, foster state-industry partnerships.
Skill India Mission/NSDC	Scale up digital and new-age skills, use modular/short-term courses, encourage public-private models.
NEP 2020	Integrate vocational education from school onwards; promote flexibility and lateral entry.

Way Forward

- Boost Funding:** Raise VET spending to global levels (10%+ of education budget), modernize ITI/Polytechnic infrastructure.
- Promote Dual/Integrated Pathways:** Let students move flexibly between academic and vocational streams throughout their education.
- Grant ITIs Autonomy:** Allow financial and operational autonomy to customize courses and deepen industry partnerships.
- Strengthen Industry Linkages:** Regular market and capacity assessments, employer-led curriculum design, incentives for apprenticeships.
- Upgrade for Digital, Green & Modular Skills:** Emphasize tech readiness, green economy, and modular programs to fast-track learner employability.
- Promote Social Status of VET:** Launch campaigns to destigmatize skills track, enable certification/degree equivalence with other education streams.
- Seamless Certification and Placement:** Adopt outcome-based, mutually recognized certification frameworks and build centralized placement platforms.

Conclusion

India's skill ecosystem must break the academic-vocational divide, massively invest in demand-aligned VET, and integrate industry, tech, and learner aspirations. Reinventing VET is critical not just for jobs, but for India's economic future.

Mains Question:

Q1. "The employability crisis highlights the urgent need to reinvent India's vocational training system. Critically evaluate existing gaps and suggest reforms, drawing on global experience and committee recommendations"

Student Notes

Artist & the Machine – AI, Creative Labour, and Ownership

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

1. **GS Paper 3:** Science and Technology (AI, Ethics, Innovation, Regulation)
2. **GS Paper 2:** Governance (IPR, Labour, Digital Economy)
3. Essay (Ethics, Creativity, AI and Society)

Introduction

The release of an AI-generated Tamil film and news of a new movie, Chiranjeevi Hanuman, made using AI, has sharpened debate about AI's impact on creative industries in India. The editorial highlights unsettled questions about creative ownership, labour, money, and power—and insists that urgent, inclusive conversation is needed as AI blurs the lines between human and machine work in art.

Key Challenges

1. **Creative Ownership and Labour:** If AI can generate scripts, voices, or entire films, what legal and moral rights remain for original writers, actors, or creative teams?
2. **Job Security in Creative Sectors:** Widespread adoption of AI in film, writing, music, and design may displace or deskill professionals, threatening livelihoods.
3. **Attribution and Credit:** Difficulties in assigning credit, royalties, or copyright when the creative content is generated or heavily modified by AI algorithms.
4. **Quality, Authenticity, and Identity:** Concerns about the dilution of human originality, loss of cultural nuance, and 'fake' performances or voices.
5. **Lack of Legal & Ethical Frameworks:** India (and most countries) lack robust laws/policies regarding rights, ownership, and compensation for AI-generated art.
6. **Normalization of AI Tools:** Public acceptance is growing, yet artists and industry leaders remain uneasy about long-term effects.
7. **Threats to Collaboration:** The creative process in cinema and the arts is inherently collaborative and time-consuming—AI challenges this by automating tasks instantaneously.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
European Union (EU)	AI Act and ongoing consultations for copyright/IP protections specific to AI-generated content.
USA	US Copyright Office has ruled that works with no human authorship cannot be copyrighted; ongoing debate on fair use and compensation.
UK	Consultation on AI and copyright, focus on attribution and fair compensation frameworks.
WIPO (UN)	Works on global guidelines for copyright, artist compensation, and ethical AI in the arts.
South Korea	Specific statutes for music royalties and voice credits in AI-modified content.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
Ministry of Electronics & IT (MEITY)	Draft AI policy (2023) called for ethical AI, clear regulation of ownership, transparency in generative content.
NITI Aayog	Suggested consultative frameworks for creative AI, protection of artist rights, innovation safeguards.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on IT	Studying copyright/IP issues for AI-generated works—recommend codes for attribution, fair reward.
Copyright Office/Intellectual Property Board	Initiating sector consultations with industry stakeholders for AI-art law and remuneration norms.

Way Forward

1. **Open Public Consultation:** Convene government, industry, writers, artists/unions, and technologists to debate legal and ethical implications of AI in the arts.
2. **Strong Legal Framework:** Update copyright/IPR laws—for attribution, royalty sharing, and clear distinction between human and AI-authored works.
3. **Safeguard Creative Labour:** Mandate fair credit, minimum compensation, and retraining pathways for artists impacted by AI use.
4. **Transparent Use Disclosure:** Enforce “AI-generated” labels for modified content; empower consumers and reduce misattribution.
5. **AI Ethics Boards:** Set up regulatory bodies for monitoring AI art in cinema, music, publishing, and advertising.
6. **International Coordination:** Align Indian rules with emerging EU, WIPO, and global digital governance frameworks.

Conclusion

AI’s rise in the creative arts is unstoppable—but must be governed by robust, fair, and inclusive rules. India needs a national conversation and urgent policy action to safeguard jobs, originality, and rights, while embracing innovation in the digital age.

UPSC Practice Questions

Q1. Which reforms would best address the rise of AI in creative sectors in India?

1. Laws requiring attribution and compensation for authors of AI-generated or AI-assisted works.
2. Total ban on AI in the arts.
3. Disclosure labels for AI-generated content.
4. Special regulatory bodies for AI use in cinema and music industries.

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 3, and 4 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2, 3, and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 3, and 4 only

Mains Question:

Q1. "AI-generated art and cinema pose new challenges to creative ownership, labour rights, and cultural identity. Critically discuss these challenges and suggest robust legal and ethical reforms, citing Indian and global practice."

Student Notes

Targeting Research – The Threat to India's Academic Freedoms

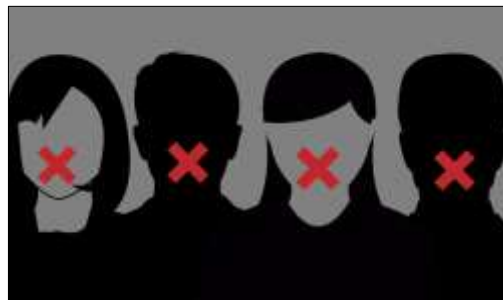
Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** Polity and Governance (Academic Freedom, Democratic Institutions, Civil Society)
- **GS Paper 4:** Ethics (Objectivity, Evidence-Based Policy)
- **Essay**

Introduction

Recent actions such as **FIRs against researchers (Lokniti, CSDS), funding crackdowns, and administrative pressures highlight a deepening erosion of academic freedom in India.** The editorial directly links these attacks with declining space for policy critique, open data, and evidence-based research—all vital for democratic accountability.



Key Challenges

1. **Misuse of Legal Process:** FIRs and notices against independent researchers (over honest errors or survey findings) deter open correction and encourage self-censorship.
2. **Funding and Tax Restrictions:** Withdrawal of financial support and tax exemptions stifle autonomy for policy research institutions and civil society.
3. **Administrative Obstruction:** Government discomfort with critique translates into punitive action rather than constructive engagement on policy flaws or survey results.
4. **Drop in Global Rankings:** India is now ranked in the bottom 20% globally for academic freedom (2024 Academic Freedom Index).
5. **Suppressed Data and Dialogue:** Delays in Census and official statistics, reluctance to engage with independent analysis, and a lack of transparency weaken evidence-based governance.
6. **Climate of Fear and Silencing:** Threats of legal action, funding curbs, and administrative bottlenecks discourage honest, rigorous research and expression.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
USA, UK, Germany	Legal protection for academic freedom and peer-reviewed, independent funding.
EU	Autonomous national research councils, regular audits, and legal rights to critique government policy.
Australia, Japan	Academic freedom embedded in law, operational independence for research organizations.
OECD, World Bank	Emphasis on open data, peer review, and civil society's involvement in research and policy.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
National Knowledge Commission	Recommended shielded, peer-reviewed funding and minimal interference.
Supreme Court (various judgments)	Affirmed speech/research rights as democratic bedrock.
UGC, ICSSR, CSIR Expert Panels	Stressed open data, transparent audits, and institutional autonomy.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on S&T	Advocated periodic review, transparency, and independent grants.
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Way Forward

1. **Protect Academic Autonomy:** Enact robust laws shielding researchers and research organizations from arbitrary legal and administrative suppression.
2. **Stable, Peer-Reviewed Funding:** Ensure grant and tax-exempt status decisions are made independently, on the basis of merit and peer review.
3. **Mandate Open Data and Transparency:** Require regular audit, clear publication of methodologies, and open engagement with policy critiques.
4. **Constructive Policy Engagement:** Replace punitive action with dialogue and review; governments should learn from—not silence—academic feedback.
5. **Monitor Academic Freedom Nationally:** Institute regular surveys and accountability measures to track and uphold academic freedom.

Conclusion

Without free and critical research, policy-making becomes opaque and less effective. Silencing independent academic voices harms democracy, governance, and evidence-based reform. Shielding academic freedom is essential for India's development and public accountability.

Mains Question:

- Q1. "Silencing independent research erodes India's academic freedom and evidence-based governance. Discuss causes and suggest a robust framework for legal, financial, and transparency shields, with reference to global and Indian committee experience

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A Productive Visit – India and China Seek Path Beyond Galwan

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** International Relations (India-China, Bilateral Engagement, SCO, Diplomacy)
- **GS Paper 3:** Internal Security (Border Management, Geopolitics)
- **Essay**

Introduction

The recent two-day visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to India was hailed as “**productive**,” opening the door to putting the bitterness of the Galwan clashes behind and resuming dialogue on security, trade, and normalization after the military standoff at the LAC.



Key Challenges

1. **Lingering Border Tensions:** Despite dialogue, the LAC standoff and troop deployments remain unsettled, with government warnings that “borders have not been quiet.”
2. **Trade Imbalances & Barriers:** Talks covered removal of trade restrictions (fertilizers, rare earths, pharmaceuticals) but not all obstacles are resolved.
3. **Trust Deficit:** Continued suspicion over Chinese investments (FDI) and tech in India; no clarity on more open screening.
4. **Strategic Rivalry:** China’s ties with Pakistan (CPEC, Taliban) and support for anti-India actors continue to cause security concern.
5. **Geopolitical Complexity:** Both sides tread carefully amid wider U.S.-China and China-South Asia contestations.
6. **Unresolved Issues:** While “practical progress” was stressed, chronic problems (border, trade, cybersecurity) remain intractable.
7. **Domestic and Multilateral Pressures:** Diplomatic moves must balance public perception, national security, and multilateral (SCO, Asia-Pacific) priorities.

Global Practices

Country/Region/Model	Best Practice/Feature
USA-China	Engagement through Strategic and Economic Dialogues despite major disagreements.
India-Bangladesh	Border and trade normalization via joint mechanisms and confidence-building measures.
EU-China	Annual summits, sectoral dialogues, economic cooperation despite disputes on other fronts.
ASEAN with China	Code of conduct for South China Sea; balancing assertiveness with engagement.
Russia-China	Managing bilateral ties while pursuing independent relations with third parties.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs	Prioritize diplomatic engagement, dialogue, and institutional mechanisms for border/ trade disputes.
National Security Advisory Board (NSAB)	Balance normalization with firm stance on territorial integrity; pursue multilateral coalitions (SCO, etc.).

Ministry of Commerce & Industry	Promote trade facilitation, remove non-tariff barriers, but enhance scrutiny of sensitive sectors.
Track-II Dialogues (Think Tanks, Academia)	Support people-to-people, cultural, academic and business exchanges for deeper ties.
Border Management Task Forces	Strengthen border infrastructure, surveillance, and local engagement in sensitive areas.

Way Forward

1. **Sustained Dialogue:** Continue regular SR-level boundary talks and aim for incremental CBMs (confidence-building measures) on LAC.
2. **Mutual Trade Facilitation:** Seek removal of non-tariff barriers, while maintaining due diligence on sensitive sectors.
3. **Strategic Communication:** Use high-level engagements (SCO, bilateral visits) to keep all channels open despite trust deficit.
4. **Parallel Progress:** Decouple practical cooperation (trade, travel, climate) from unresolved issues for incremental benefits.
5. **Border Management and Infrastructure:** Upgrade border logistics, local development and intelligence to reduce friction.
6. **Balanced Diplomacy:** Engage robustly with all regional actors—manage ties with **China, Pakistan, and the US** without letting one relationship dictate the other.

Conclusion

India-China ties remain complex, haunted by past standoffs and larger geopolitics, but the latest engagement marks a pragmatic step to keep disputes contained and dialogue ongoing. Only persistent, layered diplomacy can balance security challenges with stability and opportunity.

Mains Question:

Q1. "Despite recent diplomatic progress, India-China ties remain defined by intractable disputes and strategic caution. Critically examine the opportunities and constraints in normalizing bilateral relations, citing lessons from global practice and Indian committee recommendations."

Student Notes

The Wrong Answer – Why a Blanket Ban on Online Money Gaming is Counterproductive

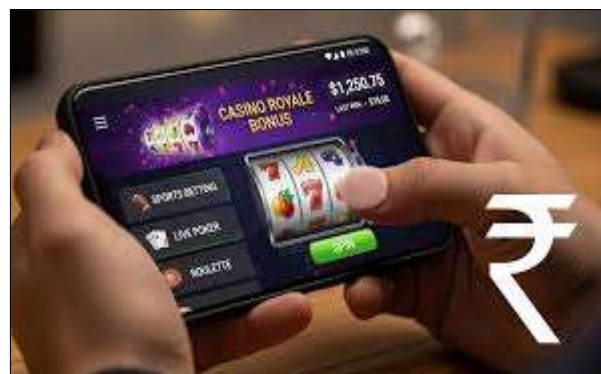
Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** Governance, Regulatory Policy, Social Issues
- **GS Paper 3:** Economy (Digital, Startup Sector, Taxation, Investment)
- **GS Paper 4:** Ethics (Risk Management, Rights vs. Social Harm)
- **Essay**

Introduction

With Parliament passing the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025, India's online gaming sector faces a total ban on money games—including skill and chance—which is justified mainly on grounds of addiction, fraud, mental health, and financial loss. The editorial argues that such a blunt approach is counterproductive, likely driving activity underground and harming jobs, innovation, and government revenue.



Key Challenges

1. **Unregulated Shift:** A complete ban is likely to drive online gaming to unregulated/offshore platforms, beyond Indian jurisdiction or oversight.
2. **Loss of Economic Value:** The online gaming industry generated Rs 16,500 crore in 2023; projected to reach Rs 26,500 crore by 2028—a major contributor to startup investment and job creation.
3. **Revenue Impact:** GST revenue spiked 412% in six months after the 28% tax; total industry investments (2019-23) reached Rs 22,931 crore.
4. **Users at Risk:** Ban fails to solve underlying mental health/addiction concerns and will complicate enforcement and grievance redressal.
5. **Enforcement Challenges:** Underground, transnational gaming will evade Indian laws—worsening fraud and money laundering.
6. **Lack of Consultation:** Policy rushed without adequate stakeholder engagement; NITI Aayog (2020) recommended "light touch" regulation instead.
7. **Job Loss and Innovation Stall:** Immediate closure and suspension by several platforms will mean loss of jobs, skill development, and sectoral expertise.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
UK, Australia	Regulation and licensing (not bans) for games of skill and chance, mandatory harm reduction protocols.
Singapore	Age/ID verification, spending caps, targeted advertising rules, and clear grievance platforms.
USA	State-level regulation, legal online gaming with federal/consumer protections.
EU	Robust consumer protection, tax frameworks, and transparent processes for both gaming and fantasy sports.
OECD/World Bank	Advocate risk-based regulation over blanket bans for tech sectors prone to user and investor risk.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
NITI Aayog (2020 Draft)	Light-touch regulatory framework, better grievance systems, harm reduction.
GST Council	Appropriate taxation; warns against over-regulation crippling sector's growth.
Ministry of Electronics & IT	Suggested graded regulatory oversight, user safeguards, and investment promotion.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on IT	Stakeholder dialogue, review of licensing and advertising, improved transparency and platform accountability.
NCERT/Ministry of Health	Mental health education, user counseling, and content moderation over blanket bans.

Way Forward

1. **Regulate, Don't Ban:** Shift to licensing, differentiated rules for games of skill vs. chance, strong consumer protection, and digital traceability.
2. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Ensure policy involves user groups, platforms, mental health experts, law enforcement, and investor community.
3. **Robust Grievance Redressal:** Create clear, fast channels for complaints and dispute resolution; monitor platforms for malpractices.
4. **User Safeguards:** Introduce age verification, spending caps, addiction education, and targeted support for at-risk users.
5. **Taxation and Investment:** Maintain reasonable, consistent taxes to promote sectoral growth and prevent migration of platforms overseas.
6. **Continuous Monitoring:** Update law in response to technological change, user needs, and international standards.

Conclusion

A blanket ban on online money gaming will likely worsen the very risks it aims to solve—by driving activity underground, stalling economic growth, and hurting jobs. India needs balanced regulation, transparent oversight, and strong safeguards to manage this rapidly evolving digital sector.

Mains Question:

Q1. "India's blanket ban on online money gaming is counterproductive for regulation and job growth. Critically analyze the risks and propose a more effective legal framework, citing global practice and Indian committee experience."

Student Notes

A Time to Decontrol – Why Fertiliser Policy Needs Reform

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

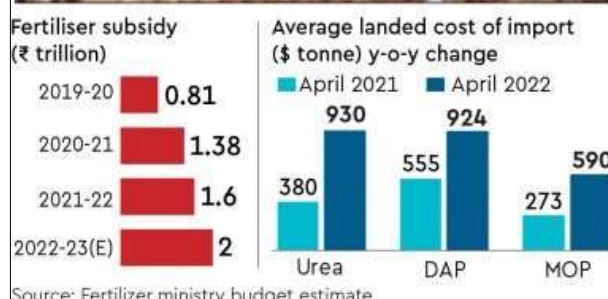
- **GS Paper 3:** Economy (Agriculture, Inputs, Subsidy, Reforms)
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Policy, Regulation, Market Liberalization)

Introduction

A bountiful monsoon has led Indian farmers to ramp up planting—especially of rice and maize—but fertiliser supply shortages, especially of urea and DAP, have emerged as a major hurdle. The editorial contends that excessive government controls are both hurting farmers and stifling the fertiliser industry, calling for decontrol and market-based reform.

Key Challenges

1. **Acute Supply Shortages:** Urea stocks (August 1) were 57% below previous year; DAP and other complex fertiliser shortages have led to widespread queues and distress in rural areas.
2. **Import Dependence:** China supplies ~25% of India's urea/DAP imports; drastic drop in shipments this year triggered acute depletion of fertilizer stocks.
3. **Government Complacency:** Poor anticipation of higher demand in urea, insufficient alternative sourcing from countries like Russia, Nigeria, Morocco or Egypt.
4. **Crop Patterns Intensify Demand:** Rice and maize areas rose by 9.8% and 11.8%—both crops require intensive fertiliser application.
5. **Rationing and Black Market:** Price controls and canalisation mean supplies are limited and diverted/hoarded, especially during shortages.
6. **Policy Rigidity:** Urea retail price unchanged since 2012, sold only through state traders; DAP capped at Rs 1,350/bag; firms stifled by inability to price to market.
7. **Delayed Reforms:** The government's focus on fixing supply but not structural incentives reduces industry responsiveness and resilience.



Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
USA, Brazil	Deregulated fertiliser pricing; import and private sector companies free to match market demand.
EU	Government focuses on minimum reserves, intervention only during acute shortages, transparent open markets.
China	Diversified import sources, flexible contracts, measures to incentivize domestic production.
Australia	Demand-based procurement, dynamic pricing, anti-hoarding strict enforcement.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
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Shanta Kumar Committee (2015)	Gradual decontrol of urea, direct benefit transfer of subsidies, market-led prices.
NITI Aayog (2016, ongoing)	Greater private sector participation, removal of price control distortions.
Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers	Encourage diversified imports, strategic reserves, and smarter forecasting.
Parliamentary Standing Committee	Review subsidy models, periodic pricing updates, real-time stock monitoring.

Way Forward

- Decontrol Pricing and Imports:** Allow free sale/import of urea & DAP; let firms set prices above a minimum reserve level to meet demand and disincentivize hoarding.
- Diversify Import Sources:** Proactively source fertilizer from a wider array of exporters to prevent single country risks.
- Incentivize Private Sector:** Encourage more domestic firms to innovate in supply and logistics; move to DBT subsidies that follow actual buyers.
- Dynamic Policy and Stock Monitoring:** Monitor market trends, crop patterns, and global opportunities in real-time and update procurement accordingly.
- Government Buffer Only for Emergencies:** Maintain minimum reserves for crisis intervention but leave routine supply to the market.
- Promote Balanced Use:** Parallel investment in farmer education for judicious fertiliser use to reduce long-term dependency.

Conclusion

Excessive controls and import rigidity have exposed India's farmers and fertiliser industry to repeated crises. Only timely decontrol, dynamic imports, and smart pricing reforms can ensure farmers have the inputs needed for productive, resilient agriculture.

Mains Question:

Q1. "Fertiliser shortages following a bumper monsoon highlight the downside of excessive controls. Critically discuss the causes and propose robust reforms, drawing on global and committee practices."

Student Notes

Let's Reimagine GST – Returning to the Vision of a Unified Indirect Tax Structure

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 3:** Economy (Taxation, GST Reform, Fiscal Federalism)
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Cooperative Federalism, Policy)

Introduction

The Prime Minister's recent announcement of GST reform seeks to revive the original promise of GST: a simple, unified indirect tax structure. The editorial notes that GST 2.0 could resolve complex multi-rate slabs, administrative burdens, and distorted rate structures, returning to a broad-based, transparent model conducive to both compliance and revenue growth.



Key Challenges

1. **Multiple Rate Structure:** Existing slabs of 5, 12, 18, 28 percent (+ sin/luxury rate proposals up to 40%); administrative complexity and compliance costs persist.
2. **Distorted Taxation:** Certain goods/services taxed at intermediate rates (e.g., 12%) are then moved to 5%—distorts value chains, complicates input credit, and encourages misclassification.
3. **Cascading Effects:** Multi-rate system leads to tax cascading, especially where inverted duty structures impact sector competitiveness.
4. **Revenue Management:** Rationalizing rates and reducing slabs may impact overall GST revenues—requires careful balancing.
5. **Negative Externalities:** Sin/luxury goods need clear, higher rate logic; pushing non-sin items into high tax slabs could hurt consumption and jobs.
6. **Complicated Exemptions:** Standardized GST structure hindered by numerous exemptions and sectoral tweaks.
7. **Treatment of Goods/Services:** How to classify ambiguous items/industries for fair and growth-oriented taxation remains debated.

Global Practices

Country/Model	Best Practice/Feature
Australia, Canada	Single/dual GST rate, broad-base tax, with minimal exemptions and cascading; federal consensus.
Singapore, NZ	Uniform value-added tax rate (VAT/GST) with straightforward input credit, high compliance.
EU	Multiple rate model, but harmonized at bloc level for transparency and trade integration.
OECD Recommendations	Simple, predictable, low-rate GST models encourage investment and reduce compliance barriers.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
15th Finance Commission; GST Council	Reduce GST rate dispersion, rationalize slabs to two/three rates for most goods/services.
National Institute of Public Finance & Policy (NIPFP)	Broaden GST base, lower standard rate for low/medium value items, rationalize input credit mechanisms.
Revenue Department, Ministry of Finance	Regular slab review, removal of unnecessary exemptions, and sector-wise compliance benchmarks.
Parliamentary Committees on Taxation	Formulate GST 2.0 for MSME-friendly rates, sustainable revenue, and policy clarity.

Way Forward

- Simplify Rate Structure:** Move most taxable items/services to standard and concessionary rates (e.g., 5% and 18%), maintain a clear logic for sin/luxury rates.
- Reduce Exemptions:** Minimize exemptions and ambiguous classifications; keep the GST base broad and input credit mechanism robust.
- Enhance Compliance:** Use digital tools and standardized reporting to lower admin costs and promote voluntary compliance, especially among MSMEs.
- Revenue-Neutral Design:** Restructure rates to protect long-term GST revenues, mitigate revenue loss due to rationalization.
- Federal Consensus:** Strengthen GST Council-driven reform, ensure states' revenue needs are balanced with national simplicity and equity.
- Continuous Review:** Set periodic benchmarks for slab adjustment and systemic feedback, informed by best practice and local experience.

Conclusion

A unified GST structure with fewer rates and minimum exemptions will empower both the taxpayer and the economy. Returning to the original promise of GST as a broad-based, simple, and growth-aligned tax can strengthen federal consensus and sustainable revenue.

Mains Question:

Q1. "Complex slabs and exemptions have undermined India's GST effectiveness. Critically assess the case for GST 2.0 in light of global models and committee recommendations. Suggest a balanced, reform-friendly framework."

Student Notes

India-Japan Ties—Old Partners, New Priorities

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** International Relations (Strategic Partnerships, Bilateralism, Indo-Pacific)
- **GS Paper 3:** Economy (Investment, Trade, Technology Transfer)
- **Essay**

Introduction

India and Japan's recent diplomatic engagement, highlighted by PM Modi's visit to Tokyo, affirms their relationship as a pillar of Asian cooperation, tech and investment partnership, and regional security. The editorial discusses how new priorities and geopolitical realities are shaping the future of the India-Japan alliance.



Key Challenges

1. **Geopolitical Uncertainty:** Ongoing strains with China and shifting roles of the U.S. underscore the need for India-Japan strategic balancing.
2. **Trade and Investment Implementation:** Japan's \$42 billion investment plan supports Indian infrastructure but faces on-ground slowdowns and ambitious targets.
3. **Technological & Security Challenges:** Rising demand for joint initiatives in tech, supply chain resilience, and security (e.g., cyber, maritime).
4. **QUAD's Evolving Agenda:** Though QUAD is seen as a platform for democracies, momentum has slowed, needing fresh cooperation in supply chains, critical tech, and climate.
5. **Short-term vs. Long-term Goals:** Risk that short-term signaling overshadows deeper structural work needed for comprehensive partnership.

Global Practices

Country/Region/Group	Best Practice/Feature
EU-Japan	Strategic Partnership Agreements for technology, trade, and security.
U.S.-Japan	Regular high-level summits, defense innovation, supply chain consortia.
Australia-Japan	Cooperation in Indo-Pacific maritime and climate domains.
South Korea-Japan	Bilateral coordination in semiconductors, cyber, and critical infrastructure.
ASEAN+Japan	Flexible project frameworks, trade agreements, and multilateral dialogue.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
NITI Aayog, Commerce Ministry	Streamline FDI, encourage Joint Ventures, expand tech cooperation.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs	Leverage Japanese investment for infrastructure; deepen security ties.
Indo-Pacific Task Forces (Think Tanks)	Prioritize supply chain, cybersecurity, and climate projects in Indo-Pacific.
India-Japan Business Forums	Track project implementation, enhance SME linkages, push for bilateral innovation.
Ministry of External Affairs	Reinforce partnership within QUAD, ASEAN, and G20 forums; focus on regional cooperation.

Way Forward

- **Accelerate Project Implementation:** Remove bottlenecks, align Indian and Japanese agencies for effective infrastructure delivery and investment.
- **Deepen Tech and Security Integration:** Expand joint cyber, critical tech, and maritime partnerships beyond formal diplomacy.
- **Leverage Multilateral Platforms:** Use QUAD, ASEAN, and G20 forums for joint climate action, regional supply chains, and democratic norm-building.
- **Strategic Communication:** Ensure continuous high-level dialogue adapts to geopolitical shifts and advances mutual long-term goals.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular assessment of investment, technology exchanges, and project outcomes for maximum impact.

Conclusion

India-Japan ties are evolving from old friends to modern, versatile allies. By focusing on technology, investment, strategic security, and regional leadership, both countries can preserve their relevance and resilience in a changing world.

Mains Question:

Q1. "India-Japan ties combine economic partnership with strategic priorities in the Indo-Pacific. Analyze recent trends and challenges, suggest reforms for revitalizing the alliance, and draw lessons from global partnership models and committee experience."

Student Notes

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Inclusion Is Empowerment – Jan Dhan Yojana’s Role in Direct Subsidy Delivery

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Financial Inclusion, DBT, Social Welfare)
- **GS Paper 3:** Economy (Financial Services, Poverty Alleviation, Social Justice)
- **Essay**

Introduction

Financial inclusion empowers people and the economy. India’s **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)**, launched in 2014, has revolutionized access to banking—especially for the marginalized—and enabled the *direct, corruption-free transfer of subsidies and benefits* to households across the nation.



Key Challenges

1. **Initial Exclusion:** At inception, 75 million households lacked bank accounts. Banking services often failed to reach the poor, rural, and marginalized groups.
2. **Linkage Gaps:** Aadhar and mobile integration took time; opening accounts was only a first step—using, servicing, and credibly linking them for DBT was another.
3. **Maintaining Dormancy Rates:** Early years saw a high number of zero-balance or inactive accounts. Making banking *usage* habitual required strengthening.
4. **Digital, Infrastructure Barriers:** Banking correspondents (“bank mitras”), connectivity, and financial literacy lagged in some pockets.
5. **Coverage of Social Security Benefits:** Further efforts needed to universally enroll the poor in linked schemes like PMJJBY, PMSBY, and PMSBY.

Achievements

1. **Universal Coverage:** Today, PMJDY is the world’s largest financial inclusion drive—over 53 crore accounts opened; almost 90% of households have at least one account.
2. **Women’s Empowerment:** Over 56% accounts are held by women.
3. **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT):** Substantial reduction in leakages and corruption; Rs 682 lakh crore transferred via DBT since 2015.
4. **Digital Penetration:** Over 16.2 lakh “bank mitras”; usage of RuPay cards, mobile banking up.
5. **International Recognition:** World Bank (Findex) notes a high jump in account ownership among adults aged 15+ after PMJDY’s launch.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
Kenya (M-Pesa)	Mobile money for financial inclusion and direct transfers; agent/correspondent model.
Brazil (Bolsa Familia)	Use of digital payment cards for conditional cash transfers to poor/intermediary-free.

China	Banking and digital wallets deeply integrated for rural/urban poor; broad agent networks.
United Kingdom	Universal bank accounts tied to welfare and tax credits; automatic enrollment for the poor.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
Nachiket Mor Committee	Promote universal account access, simplify KYC, strengthen last-mile agents.
Reserve Bank of India	Expand agent/bank mitra model, ensure interoperability, promote digital literacy.
NITI Aayog, Parliamentary Panel	Integrate insurance, pension, and DBT on one platform; ensure gender inclusion.
World Bank (Findex Reports)	Link accounts to mobile services, monitor inactivity rates, infuse digital tools.

Way Forward

- 1. Deepen Usage, Not Just Access:** Focus on activating dormant accounts, broadening microcredit, insurance, and pension penetration.
- 2. Integrate Digital Literacy:** Scale up efforts for financial education and user comfort with mobile/UPI.
- 3. Strengthen Agent Networks:** Invest in more “bank mitras” for rural/outreach coverage and reliable service.
- 4. Targeted DBT Expansion:** Ensure seamless linking of all welfare (food, pension, insurance) with accounts; continue removing intermediaries.
- 5. Gender, Rural Focus:** Narrow digital gender gap, tailor schemes to local realities, and promote women as agents and account holders.
- 6. Global Convergence:** Adopt successful features such as mobile-based microloans and automatic benefit enrollment for poor households.

Conclusion

PMJDY has empowered millions and set a global standard for inclusive finance and direct transfer of benefits. India must now focus on long-term account usage, digital enablement, and comprehensive coverage for all welfare schemes to realize the full promise of financial inclusion.

Mains Question:

Q.1 "Financial inclusion is a cornerstone of social and economic empowerment in India. Critically analyze the design, implementation, and impact of PM Jan Dhan Yojana, citing global practices and committee recommendations. Suggest reforms for deeper usage and synergy with welfare schemes.

Student Notes

The Gender Angle to India's Economic Vulnerabilities

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

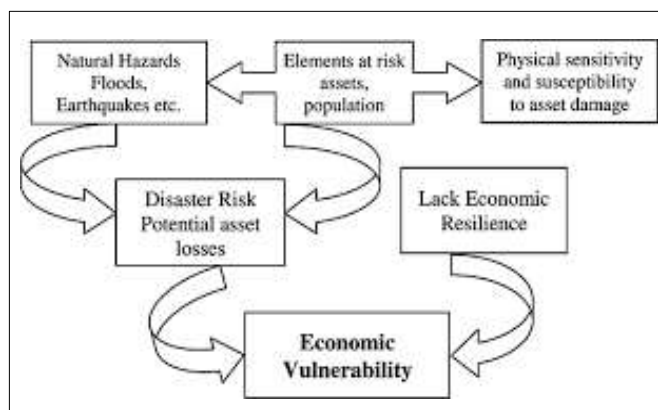
1. **GS Paper 1:** Society (Gender, Social Justice)
2. **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Women's Empowerment, Policy Design)
3. **GS Paper 3:** Economy (Labour, Inclusive Growth, Demography)
4. **Essay**

Introduction

India's economic rise is globally recognized, but persistent gender inequalities—especially in labour force participation and asset ownership—leave its growth vulnerable to shocks. The editorial links global economic headwinds, protectionist policies, and an aging population to the need for a women-centred, resilience-building approach in economic policymaking.

Key Challenges

1. **Low Female Labour Participation:** Despite demographic dividend, *India's female labour force participation rate is barely 20%* and is falling, limiting productivity growth and family prosperity gains.
2. **Asset/Gender Gaps:** Women's share in asset ownership, property, and entrepreneurship remains disproportionately low.
3. **Vulnerability to Shocks:** *Sectors facing global headwinds* (textiles, garments, agri-processing) employ many women, making them uniquely vulnerable to job/income shocks like US tariffs.
4. **Skill and Opportunity Gaps:** Female workforce often lacks advanced skills, digital/literary access, and is concentrated in informal or low-wage roles.
5. **Financial Inclusion Lags:** *Access to formal credit, business promotion, and digital finance are still lower for Indian women* compared to global peers.
6. **COVID and Global Slowdowns:** Past crises have shown that *recessions deepen gender gaps* unless policy action is undertaken.



Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
US/Europe (post-WWII)	War mobilization brought women into workforce, then retained via formal policy (childcare, skill training).
Nordic Countries	Systematic public investment in care economy, gender balance in public and private jobs.
China, Japan	Skills upgradation, targeted industrial policies, incentives for female entrepreneurship.
OECD/EU	Gender-responsive taxation, maternity leave, childcare subsidies, regular reporting of gender gaps.
South Korea	Digital literacy and financial incentives for female participation in new sectors.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
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Economic Survey (various, especially 2017-18)	Push for closing gender gaps in asset/land/credit, improved FLFP via care support and skilling.
NITI Aayog	Women's entrepreneurship, digital inclusion, rural financial access, gender-responsive budget.
Ministry of Labour & Employment	Encourage formal job contracts for women, enable skill transition to sunrise sectors.
Standing Committee on Social Justice	Expand maternity, childcare, and health coverage; monitor wage and employment parity.
RBI/NABARD/DFS (Finance)	Boost directed lending quotas for female entrepreneurs via MUDRA and similar schemes.

Way Forward

- 1. Boost Female Labour Participation:** National campaigns, educational and skill incentives, targeted placement drives in high-growth and digital sectors.
- 2. Asset and Credit Access:** Reform land, credit, and tax policies to promote *women's independent asset ownership and entrepreneurship*.
- 3. Social Safety and Care Infrastructure:** Scale up maternity, childcare subsidies, and affordable healthcare for working women.
- 4. Digital and Financial Literacy:** Mass digital inclusion programs and public-private partnerships for tech upskilling.
- 5. Gendered Shock Response:** Design *all macro resilience and anti-shock plans with specific women's inclusion targets*—especially in rural/agri and MSME industries.
- 6. Policy Monitoring and Data:** Regular gender gap audits on jobs, pay, credit access, and business participation for ongoing course correction.

Conclusion

India's long-term economic resilience depends on harnessing women's full economic potential. Without reducing gender gaps in jobs, skills, and property, growth will remain fragile and vulnerable to global shocks. Only a gender-lens policy can deliver sustainable, inclusive prosperity.

Mains Question:

Q.1 "India's economic resilience is undermined by gender gaps in labour participation, assets and opportunity. Critically discuss causes and impacts, suggesting a policy framework for gendered resilience, with lessons from global practice and Indian committees."

Student Notes

Mapping the Margins – Why PVTG Enumeration Matters

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 1:** Society (Tribal Groups, Marginalized Communities)
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Welfare, Census, Policy Reform)
- **GS Paper 3:** Inclusive Growth (Targeted Schemes, Data)
- **Essay**

Introduction

For the first time, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) is proposing that Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) be enumerated separately in the next Census. There are 75 PVTGs across 18 states and one UT—the most marginalized tribal communities in India. Counting them distinctly will help design better-targeted welfare interventions and rectify historical invisibility.



Key Challenges

1. **Historic Neglect:** PVTGs have long been subsumed within the broader Scheduled Tribes (STs) category, making their unique needs largely invisible in national data.
2. **Lowest Human Development Indicators:** PVTGs have among the *lowest literacy rates*, dire health indices, and precarious nutrition levels—recent research in Odisha (2000–2023) highlights persistent vulnerabilities.
3. **Static, Outdated Definitions:** The identification criteria (“pre-agricultural technology”, “stagnant/declining population”, etc.) are from the 1970s and do not reflect current realities—modernization has changed community practices.
4. **Under-Targeted Schemes:** Lack of dedicated enumeration makes it difficult to design, monitor, or deliver specific benefits meant for PVTGs (e.g., housing, nutrition, legal rights).
5. **Assimilation Pressure vs. Inclusion:** Schemes often aim at mainstreaming/ST parity rather than recognizing unique cultural and social needs—risking loss of identity.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
Australia (Aboriginal Peoples)	Separate enumeration and tailored tracking of indigenous groups for targeted policymaking.
Canada (First Nations, Inuit)	Distinct data collection and advisory councils to ensure group-specific social programs.
USA (Native American Tribes)	Tribal census and periodic surveys to inform federal and state resource allocation.
Brazil (Indigenous Peoples)	Statistical identification of sub-groups; participatory methods for socio-economic assessment.
UNDESA/FAO Guidelines	Recommend explicit recognition and disaggregated data collection for indigenous and tribal groups.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
Dhebar Commission (1960s)	Identified inequalities among STs; recommended specially targeted group recognition.
Ministry of Tribal Affairs, CAG Reports	Push for regular identification, monitoring, and outcome tracking of PVTGs.
NITI Aayog	Integrate Census data with social registry, restructure schemes based on updated realities.
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Tribal Affairs	Revised criteria for identification, regular surveys, independently verified outcome audits.

Way Forward

- Enumerate PVTGs Separately:** Ensure the next Census counts PVTG households and individuals distinctly, including demographic, health, and socio-economic variables.
- Update Definitions:** Modernize criteria for PVTG status reflecting technological, social, and economic changes, with tribal participation in the process.
- Sociological Mapping:** Supplement enumeration with in-depth surveys—capture realities of migration, technology adoption, and changing livelihoods.
- Targeted Schemes, Not Assimilation:** Move from “parity-focused” welfare to *inclusion-centric* development—address health, education, land rights, and cultural protection.
- Continuous Policy Feedback:** Set up institutional mechanisms for review, outcome assessment, and course correction on PVTG schemes.

Conclusion

Identifying and counting PVTGs separately marks a vital step toward inclusive policy, social justice, and effective program delivery. True progress, however, will depend both on improved data and a shift toward inclusion-driven, rather than assimilationist, development strategies.

Mains Question:

Q.1 "Why is separate enumeration of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) necessary? Discuss the evolution, challenges, and policy framework for their inclusion, referring to global and Indian committee experience."

Student Notes

Addiction, Not Play – The Case for a Ban on Online Real-Money Gaming

Source: Editorial (*The Indian Express*)

UPSC Reference:

1. **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Health Policy, Regulation, Youth Issues)
2. **GS Paper 3:** Economy (Digital Economy, Social Risks, Tech Regulation)
3. **GS Paper 4:** Ethics (Society, Risk Management)
4. **Essay**

Introduction

Online real-money gaming, especially for youth, poses major risks of addiction, financial distress, and mental health deterioration. The editorial argues that a ban—contrary to economic or regulatory objections—is justified and necessary to protect children and adolescents from severe psychological and social harms.



Key Challenges

1. **Rising Gaming Addiction:** Online real-money gaming leverages psychological principles (reward cycles, variable payouts) that make users vulnerable to compulsive play—particularly *children and adolescents*.
2. **Financial Losses & Debt:** Many youth are exposed to uncontrolled spending on games, credit “bets,” and opaque payment models—sometimes resorting to theft or deception to cover losses.
3. **Mental Health & Academic Decline:** Addiction is linked to worsening mental health: anxiety, depression, poor sleep, social withdrawal, declining grades, even self-harm.
4. **Social and Family Harm:** Financial repercussions and time lost to gaming strain *family relationships, social engagement, and learning*.
5. **Ineffectiveness of Age-Gates:** Existing digital barriers, age-verification and self-regulation are easily circumvented.
6. **Regulatory Lag:** Legal frameworks seldom match the rapidly evolving tactics of gaming platforms—leaving users, parents, and society exposed.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
China	Strict time limits for minors, real-name verification, government-mandated bans during certain hours.
UK, Australia	Comprehensive harm-reduction frameworks, age-gating, spending caps, strong advertisement regulation.
Germany, Norway	Blacklisting of unsafe platforms, coordinated social-psychological health campaigns for youth.
South Korea	“Shutdown Law” for youth gaming curfews, mandatory ID checks.
WHO, UNICEF	Recognize gaming addiction as a public health disorder; urge member states to regulate and intervene.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
Parliamentary Standing Committee on IT	Mandatory warning labels, limit access for minors, strict ad controls, regular impact reviews.

NIMHANS/Health Ministry	Gaming disorder recognized as a clinical mental health risk; promote counselling, monitor cases.
NCERT	Awareness programmes for parents, teachers, digital hygiene curriculum for schools.
Ministry of Electronics & IT	Stricter licensing and compliance, real-name verification, local grievance cells.
Law Commission	Legal liability for rogue platforms, compensation for affected families, continuous legal update.

Way Forward

- 1. Comprehensive Ban for Youth:** Enforce strict age-verification, time limits, outright bans for minors; ban advertising targeting young audiences.
- 2. Proactive Mental Health Screening:** Integrate early detection of gaming disorder into school and primary health services.
- 3. Parental and School Involvement:** Equip parents, educators, and counselors with resources to spot, prevent, and address gaming distress.
- 4. Platform Liability:** Hold companies criminally and financially responsible for harms to minors and misleading promotional tactics.
- 5. Counselling and Rehabilitation:** Expand mental health support, helplines, and recovery programmes for addicted youth and families.
- 6. Continuous Update of Law:** Regularly revise tech, social, and health policies to match the quickly changing digital gaming environment.

Conclusion

Protecting the mental health and future of India's youth must take priority over the interests of the gaming industry. Bold, preventive regulation—up to and including bans—is warranted for safeguarding children in a rapidly transforming digital world.

Mains Question:

Q.1 "Digital gaming addiction is emerging as a mental health crisis for Indian youth. Critically discuss the case for regulatory bans, with reference to global best practices and Indian health policy."

Student Notes

India's Demographic Dividend as a Time Bomb

Source: Editorial (*The Hindu*)

UPSC Reference:

- **GS Paper 1:** Society (Demography, Human Capital)
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Education, Skilling, Youth Policy)
- **GS Paper 3:** Economy (Employment, AI/Tech Disruption, Skilling)
- **Essay**

Introduction

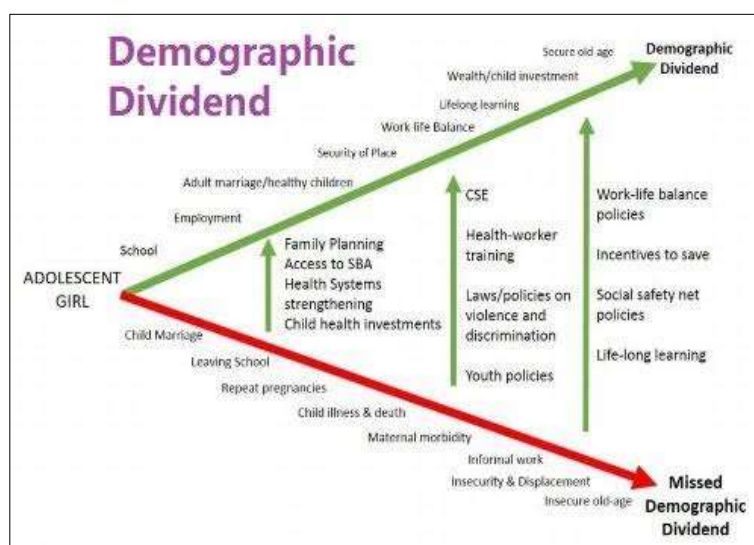
India's much-touted demographic dividend—over 800 million people under 35—risks becoming a “time bomb” due to a mismatch between outdated education and rapidly changing job markets, particularly from AI and tech disruption. Unless the system is overhauled for relevant skills, the “liability” of underemployment and mass disenfranchisement threatens to outweigh the potential of the largest youth cohort in world history.

Key Challenges

- **Outdated Education System:** Most Indian schools and colleges still prepare students for vanishing jobs and traditional roles, not for new-age or tech-driven fields.
- **Skills and Employment Mismatch:** 65% of high school graduates end up pursuing degrees without market or aptitude alignment; youth are largely unaware of the wide range of modern career paths.
- **AI and Tech Disruption:** Up to 70% of current jobs globally will be impacted by AI; up to 30% of present tasks may be automated soon, while more than half of new jobs will require new skills.
- **Digital Divide and Analog Mindsets:** While internet access and tech labs have grown, critical thinking, communication, personal growth, and real, adaptive skill training remain lacking—few schools and state boards have genuinely modernized their curriculum.
- **Rising Graduate Unemployment:** India is producing more graduates yearly, but also more unemployed or underemployed youth; mere degree accumulation is now a liability.
- **Fragmented Skilling Initiatives:** Numerous government skilling/programmes exist (Skill India Mission, SANKALP, PMKVY, etc.), but coordination and “career guidance” are weak, and these do not reach every student.

Global Practices

Country/Region	Best Practice/Feature
Germany, Switzerland	Dual education/apprenticeships, deep industry-education collaboration, continuous upskilling.
Singapore	National lifelong learning programmes, career guidance in schools, fast curricular revision.
US, Canada	Project-based, cross-disciplinary learning, partnership with private sector for skill mapping.
South Korea, Australia	Flexible re-skilling, national skill audits, child-to-career pathway focus.



EU (Erasmus/VET policies)	Early and repeated career counseling, internationally benchmarked assessments.
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Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)	Stronger industry linkage, adaptable curriculum, regional skilling hubs.
NEP 2020 (National Education Policy)	Emphasize skill, flexibility, integration of coding, AI, critical thinking across all education levels.
NITI Aayog, Economic Survey	Single ministry/portal for consolidated career options and guidance; outcome-driven funding.
Parliamentary Committee on Youth Affairs	Early career counseling, labor market alignment, internships/industry exposure from secondary school.
Various State and Central Reports	Promote digital, soft, and green skills alongside academic core.

Way Forward

- Education Curriculum Overhaul:** Align all curricula with future of work—include coding, AI, critical thinking, and career mapping from early years.
- Early and Continuous Career Guidance:** Institutionalize robust, data-driven career guidance/counseling in schools as a universal norm.
- Lifelong Learning Ecosystem:** Promote national re-skilling and upskilling, especially for jobs displaced by automation; foster public-private skilling partnerships.
- Focus on Employability, Not Degrees:** Incentivize institutions to track actual job outcomes, integrate internships/apprenticeships, and address the real economy.
- Digital and Soft Skills Push:** Make digital literacy, teamwork, communication, and adaptability as central as core academics.
- Coordinated National Policy:** Rationalize and monitor all skilling initiatives through a single, accountable authority for maximum reach and efficiency.

Conclusion

India's demographic dividend will only remain an 'asset' if youth are equipped with market-relevant skills and guidance—not just degrees. Without immediate, systemic education and skilling reforms, the risk of a demographic "time bomb" and wasted potential grows ever larger.

Mains Question:

Q.1 "India's demographic dividend risks turning into a time bomb without urgent education and skilling reform. Critically analyze causes and suggest a coordinated strategy, drawing from global and committee experience."

Student Notes

Failure of India Inc – Businesses Face a Crisis of Imagination and Reform

Source: Editorial (*The Indian Express*)

UPSC Reference:

1. **GS Paper 3:** Economy (Industry, Manufacturing, Innovation)
2. **GS Paper 2:** Governance (Policy, Ease of Doing Business)
3. **Essay**

Introduction

Indian business leaders and companies have long blamed the state—regulation, bureaucracy, poor infrastructure—for their inability to grow and innovate. Now, even as the state has liberalized, Indian businesses are showing an innate incapacity to build, adapt, or envision the future, risking stagnation in the face of global industrial transformation.

Key Challenges

1. **Entrenched Risk Aversion:** Indian firms remain risk-averse, focused on rent-seeking, protectionism, and government sops rather than innovation and R&D.
2. **Low Ambition & Investment in Building:** Unlike global peers (Samsung, Hyundai, TSMC), Indian firms rarely invest in building scale, modern plants, or visionary new sectors; most take a free-ride on state-led infrastructure and policy.
3. **Dependence on Cheap Labour:** Little attempt at building high-quality, dignified jobs—most firms have not upgraded workforce skills or invested in job quality.
4. **Culture & Vision Deficit:** Leadership often rewards short-term profitability and safe, inherited sectors over long-term, competitive value creation.
5. **Weak Research/Innovation Linkage:** Few Indian businesses establish research, skill building, or serious R&D partnerships with academia or globally.
6. **Missed Manufacturing Race:** India failed to capitalize on opportunities as peers—Korea, Taiwan, China—grew champions in electronics, cars, semiconductors.
7. **Persistent Cronyism:** Overlapping political-business ties, lobbying for concessions and regulatory protection instead of developing global competitiveness.

Global Practices

Country/Model	Best Practice/Feature
South Korea, Taiwan	Aggressive government-private sector partnerships in R&D, export focus, upskilled labour.
Germany	Strong Mittelstand (mid-sized firms), serious investment in vocational training, product quality.
US, Japan	High investment in corporate R&D, institutionalized entrepreneur/VC culture.
China	Heavy state support but clear focus on technology, manufacturing and continuous upskilling.
Singapore	Close state-industry links for innovation, rapid regulatory adjustment, global trade integration.

Indian Committee Suggestions

Committee/Body	Recommendations / Policy Actions
National Manufacturing Policy (DIPP)	Promote innovation clusters, ease of land/labour, skill upgradation.
NITI Aayog, Economic Survey	Support scale-up of MSMEs, incentivize R&D, reward quality over connections.

National Skill Development Corporation	Push forward-looking skilling, tie into industry needs; develop sector-specific champions.
Parliament Standing Committee on Industry	Rationalize incentives to favor productivity, quality, and long-term growth, not crony reliance.

Way Forward

- 1. Invest in Innovation:** Indian firms must build global R&D linkages, invest in emerging technology, adapt aggressively in sunrise sectors.
- 2. Reward Risk-Taking and Scale:** Foster ecosystem for venture capital, reward businesses that scale facilities and export disciplines.
- 3. Upgrade Skills and Worker Dignity:** Evolve training and upskilling across corporate value chains; aim for dignified, higher-skilled workforces.
- 4. Reform Business-Government Relations:** Move away from rent-seeking and protection, build a culture of healthy, transparent competition and accountability.
- 5. Leadership & Vision:** Encourage business leaders to adopt bold, long-term visions—commit to global benchmarks in product, process, and sustainable growth.

Conclusion

India's future as an industrial power depends on the strategic vision, ambition, and reform will of its business leaders—not just state action. Only through decisive innovation, skill upgrading, and culture change can India Inc meet future challenges.

Mains Question:

Q.1 "India's business sector blames the state for constraints, but now faces a crisis of vision and imagination. Critically assess the causes and reform pathway, referring to global examples and Indian committee suggestions."

Student Notes

Prelims Practice Question

Note: The numbering of the editorials and MCQs is the same; if you want to see the explanation, simply refer to the corresponding editorial number."

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:

1. NEP 2020 aims for universalization of ECCE for all children in the 3–8-year age group by 2030.
2. The migration of children from Anganwadis to formal government preschools may impact the delivery of nutritional and health services associated with Anganwadis.
3. The Kasturirangan Committee exclusively recommended ECCE for children above 6 years of age.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 2 only

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission:

1. NISAR is the world's first dual-frequency radar imaging satellite, carrying both L-band and S-band radars on a single platform.
2. NISAR data will be freely available to the global scientific community within days of collection.
3. Only NASA is responsible for providing and operating the launch vehicle for NISAR.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 2 only

Q3. Which of the following bodies has/have played a significant role in shaping India's ECCE policy under NEP 2020?

1. Kasturirangan Committee
2. Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE)
3. NITI Aayog
4. Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- b) 2 and 4 only
- c) 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: A) 1, 2 and 3 only

Q4. Which of the following was a direct outcome of the recent turbulence in India-US trade relations?

1. Withdrawal of GSP (Generalized System of Preferences) benefits to India by the US
2. Reciprocal tariffs imposed by India on selected US goods
3. Permanent suspension of all bilateral trade dialogue mechanisms

Select the correct answer:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 2 only

Q5. With reference to the "Right to Repair" movement, consider the following statements:

1. The European Union mandates that manufacturers provide spare parts and repair manuals to consumers.
2. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in many countries promotes product reuse, repairs, and sustainable recycling.

3. The Indian government has made the Right to Repair legally enforceable through the Constitution.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

Q6. With reference to the investigation and prosecution in terror-related cases, consider the following statements:

- 1. The Malimath Committee recommended the creation of an independent judiciary to oversee police investigations.
- 2. The Law Commission of India emphasized adoption of modern forensic techniques and robust evidence protocols.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: b) 2 only

Q7. Consider the following statements regarding India's strategic global engagement in the 21st century:

- 1. India advocates reform of international institutions to ensure equity, inclusivity, and a stronger voice for the Global South.
- 2. India follows an exclusive bloc-based foreign policy to maximize its influence in global decision-making.
- 3. India aims to reduce foreign dependency by investing in critical technologies and strengthening domestic R&D.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Q8. With reference to battery waste management in India, consider the following statements:

- 1. The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) mechanism requires producers to directly recycle batteries using in-house infrastructure.
- 2. Low floor prices under EPR discourage investment in battery recycling infrastructure in India.
- 3. Countries like the UK have much higher EPR floor prices compared to India, making their recycling ecosystem more financially viable.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only

Q9. Consider the following statements about India's Operation Sindoor:

- 1. It was launched in response to the terror attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir.
- 2. It involved India's first use of air power across the Line of Control since the Kargil War.
- 3. It led to direct condemnation of Pakistan by the United Nations Security Council.

Which of the above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

Q10. With reference to India's technology diplomacy and global trends, consider the following statements:

- 1. The European Union has adopted the Digital Services Act to regulate platform economy.
- 2. India's Semiconductor Mission was launched to promote indigenous smartphone manufacturing.

3. China follows a rights-based model of regulating AI.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

Q11. With reference to China's role in global supply chains and geo-economics, consider the following statements:

- 1. China holds a dominant position in global rare earth element production, vital for electronics and electric vehicles.
- 2. The recent exit of over 300 Apple engineers from India was aimed at enhancing India's domestic manufacturing capabilities.
- 3. Rare earth elements are primarily used in agriculture and textile production.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: a) 1 only

Q12. With reference to the recent monetary policy decisions by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), consider the following statements:

- 1. The RBI has recently increased the repo rate by 25 basis points.
- 2. The projected GDP growth for India in FY26, as per RBI, is 6.5%.
- 3. CPI inflation is projected to average 6% for FY26.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: b) 2 only

Q13. The repeated floods in Uttarakhand, including the 2013 Kedarnath disaster, primarily highlight:

- a) The success of urban planning in the region
- b) The fragile Himalayan ecology and risks of unplanned development
- c) The benefits of rapid industrialization in the mountains
- d) The absence of any human or economic losses

Answer: b) The fragile Himalayan ecology and risks of unplanned development

Q14. India's increasing import of Russian crude oil—over 40% of its total crude imports in 2023–24—has primarily helped the country in:

- a) Expanding its naval capabilities
- b) Containing domestic inflation and supporting economic stability
- c) Reducing dependence on renewable energy
- d) Strengthening ties with Western countries

Answer: b) Containing domestic inflation and supporting economic stability

Q15. Which of the following is a key recommendation of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in relation to industrial accident prevention?

- a) Privatization of all factory inspections
- b) Integration of disaster risk management into industrial policy and establishment of real-time incident tracking
- c) Replacement of labor laws with voluntary guidelines
- d) Complete automation without human oversight

Answer: B) Integration of disaster risk management into industrial policy and establishment of real-time incident tracking

Q16. Which body is primarily responsible for reviewing and negotiating India's free trade agreements and safeguarding domestic industry from unfair overseas competition?

- a) Reserve Bank of India
- b) Ministry of Commerce & Industry
- c) Securities and Exchange Board of India
- d) Ministry of External Affairs

Answer: B) Ministry of Commerce & Industry

Q17. Consider the following statements regarding India's approach to rural diagnostics:

- 1. The National Health Policy 2017 recommends free diagnostics at public healthcare facilities.
- 2. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has developed a National Essential Diagnostics List (EDL).
- 3. The Ayushman Bharat scheme's Health and Wellness Centres exclude diagnostic services from their mandate.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 2 only

Q18. Consider the following statements regarding India's language policy in education:

- 1. The NEP 2020 recommends mother tongue or home language as the medium of instruction at least till Grade 5.
- 2. The Kothari Commission exclusively recommended a two-language formula for all states.
- 3. UNESCO advises flexible, mother tongue-based multilingual education.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 3 only

Q19. Consider the following statements about disaster management in the Himalayan region:

- 1. Switzerland and Japan have implemented strict zoning and advanced warning systems for mountainous regions.
- 2. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has recommended integrated hazard mapping for Himalayan states.
- 3. Unregulated tourism and construction do not contribute to flash floods in the Himalaya.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 2 only

Q20. Consider the following statements regarding gender justice and criminal law in India:

- 1. Section 498A of the IPC is primarily aimed at protecting women from domestic violence and dowry-related abuse.
- 2. Justice J.S. Verma Committee recommended survivor-centric reforms and mandatory police training.
- 3. The Law Commission of India has recommended blanket suspension of arrest in all gender violence cases.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 2 only

Q21. Consider the following statements regarding assessment reforms in Indian education:

- 1. Open-book exams shift focus from memory-based to analytical and application-based learning.
- 2. The NEP 2020 and recent National Curriculum Frameworks promote competency-based education.

3. OECD and IB education systems avoid open-resource or open-book assessments.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 2 only

Q22. Consider the following statements regarding stray dog management in India:

- 1. The Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules prescribe humane sterilization and vaccination, not culling, as the main policy approach.
- 2. The Supreme Court of India has ruled that mass culling of stray dogs is permissible without restriction.
- 3. Urban waste management is a key factor in effective stray animal control.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 3 only

Q23. Consider the following statements regarding recent trends in India's economy:

- 1. The recent dip in retail inflation in July 2024 was primarily due to contraction in food prices and favorable monsoon.
- 2. India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) in 2024 reached a five-year high.
- 3. The RBI's comfort band for inflation is 2-6%, as set by its Monetary Policy Committee.

Which of the above are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 3 only

Q24. Consider the following statements:

- 1. India's per-million cadaveric organ donation rate is lower than that of Spain and the United States.
- 2. The Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act (THOTA) provides the legal framework for brain death certification in India.
- 3. The National Organ & Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO) is primarily responsible for organ transplant policy and awareness in India.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: D) 1, 2, and 3

Q25. Consider the following statements about civic freedoms in India:

- 1. The Supreme Court of India has held that dissent is a core constitutional value.
- 2. The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution recommended protection of public reason and protest rights.
- 3. Legal restrictions on protests and free speech in India can be challenged under constitutional morality.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: D) 1, 2, and 3

Q26. With reference to immigration control in India, consider the following statements:

- 1. The Supreme Court has upheld the importance of due process and natural justice for all, including suspected migrants.

2. India's NRC and immigration drives currently provide universal legal aid and independent appeal mechanisms.
3. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has called for avoiding arbitrary profiling in anti-immigrant operations.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 3 only

Q27. Consider the following statements regarding Left Wing Extremism (Naxalism) in India:

1. The Ministry of Home Affairs coordinates counter-insurgency operations against Naxalites.
2. The National Policy and Action Plan for LWE (2015) includes infrastructure and development as key strategies.
3. The Naxal movement originated in the Bastar region.

Which of the above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 2 only (*the movement originated in Naxalbari, West Bengal*)

Q28. Consider the following statements about national policy and independence day addresses in India:

1. NITI Aayog recommends balancing national security rhetoric with inclusive development and social harmony.
2. The National Integration Council cautions against divisive language in national messaging.
3. OECD member countries regularly address ethnic minorities with exclusionary rhetoric in official speeches.

Which of the above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only

- c) 1 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 2 only

Q29. Which of the following measures can best ensure transparency and justice in electoral roll management?

1. Mandating public notice and appeal windows before deleting voter names.
2. Integrating Aadhaar/other official IDs as optional (not sole) proof of identity.
3. Permitting summary exclusion of names with no notification.
4. Gender-wise analysis of all deletions and corrections.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1, 2, and 4 only
- c) 2, 3, and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: B) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q30. Which of the following will strengthen monument conservation in India?

1. Drafting site manuals with inputs from local citizen groups and users.
2. Uniform, centrally mandated buffer zoning for all heritage sites.
3. Continuous "citizen audits" and participatory mapping of monuments.
4. Integration of archaeological, sociological, and community knowledge in planning.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 1, 3, and 4 only
- c) 2 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: B) 1, 3, and 4 only

Q31. With reference to India's progress in food security, consider the following:

1. National Food Security Act gives a legal right to subsidized staples for more than 800 million people.
2. Over 60% of Indians cannot currently afford a healthy diet.

3. India's PM-POSHAN scheme is aimed exclusively at pregnant women.

Which are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 2 only

Q32. Which of the following measures align with global best practice for tackling plastic pollution?

- 1. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and recycled content mandates.
- 2. Blanket bans on all plastic without alternatives or support.
- 3. Mandatory global plastic waste audits and reporting.
- 4. Investment in circular economy approaches.

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 3, and 4 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1, 2, and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 3, and 4 only

Q33. Which of the following are recommended for ensuring electoral roll integrity in India?

- 1. Open publication and citizen audit periods for changes before finalization.
- 2. Advance written notice and hearing rights before deletion.
- 3. Mandatory use of Aadhaar with no alternative for voter ID.
- 4. Social audit and Supreme Court review in major revisions.

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 2, and 4 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2, 3, and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q34. With reference to early warning systems in India, consider the following:

- 1. IMD is the nodal agency for weather-related disaster alerts.
- 2. Officially, a cloudburst is defined as rainfall of over 100mm per hour over an area of less than 30 sq km.
- 3. Dense meteorological networks and real-time public communication are necessary for effective cloudburst warnings.

Which of the above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: D) 1, 2, and 3

Q35. Which of the following principles are upheld by global and Indian best practice on ministerial disqualification?

- 1. Presumption of innocence until proven guilty.
- 2. Fast-track convictions for public representatives before disqualification.
- 3. Disqualification upon mere filing of a criminal case.

Select the correct code:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 2 only

Q36. Which measures would best help internal migrants exercise their citizenship rights?

- 1. Universal digital portable ID
- 2. One Nation, One Ration Card (ONORC) with national portability
- 3. Compulsory local re-registration for all entitlements
- 4. Proxy, postal, or digital migrant voting

Select the correct answer:

- a) 1, 2, and 4 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q37. Which reforms would best strengthen India's VET system?

1. Dual/demand-linked vocational-apprenticeship programs.
2. Financial and operational autonomy to ITIs.
3. Elimination of all public-private partnerships in skill training.
4. Integration of digital and green skills into ITI curriculum.

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 2, and 4 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q38. Which reforms best protect academic freedom and policy research in India?

1. Legal safeguards against arbitrary criminal action for researchers
2. Peer-reviewed, stable funding for independent research institutions
3. Mandatory prior approval from government for all survey publication
4. Regular transparency audits of research methods and outputs

Select the correct answer:

- a) 1, 2, and 4 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q39. Recent high-level India-China talks have focused on:

1. Lifting trade barriers for Indian pharma products in China.
2. Progress on LAC boundary dispute resolution.
3. New agreements for military alliances.
4. Removal of non-tariff restrictions on rare earths and fertilizers.

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 2, and 4 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q40. Which reforms would most improve online gaming regulation in India?

1. Age and ID verification, user spending caps
2. Blanket ban on money gaming and fantasy sports
3. Light-touch regulatory framework with stakeholder engagement
4. Mandatory licensing and grievance redressal for all platforms

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 3, and 4 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 3, and 4 only

Q41. Which reforms would best ease fertiliser shortages in India?

1. Decontrol of urea and DAP pricing and imports
2. Maintenance of a minimum government buffer stock
3. Rigidly fixed input prices for all fertilisers
4. Diversified sourcing from multiple countries

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 2, and 4 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 1, 2, and 3 only
- d) 2 and 4 only

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q42. Which reforms would best realize the original vision of GST in India?

1. Reducing multiple GST rate slabs to two or three standard rates
2. Minimizing exemptions and ambiguous classifications
3. Raising GST rates uniformly for all products
4. Broadening the tax base and improving input credit rules

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 2, and 4 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q43. Which features best characterize India-Japan strategic partnership as described above?

1. Long-term infrastructure investment and technology cooperation
2. Joint Indo-Pacific maritime initiatives and supply chain resilience
3. Participation in QUAD, G20, and regional multilateral groups
4. Exclusive focus on short-term signaling and crisis management

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 2, and 3 only
- b) 2 and 4 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 3 only

Q44. Which of the following contribute to financial inclusion through PMJDY?

1. Removal of intermediaries in DBT transfers
2. Widespread bank mitras and agent network
3. Universal requirements for collateral credit only
4. Integration with insurance and pension schemes

Select the correct answer:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| a) 1, 2, and 4 only | b) 2, 3, and 4 |
| c) 2 and 3 | d) 3 and 4 |

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q45. Which reforms would most help close gender gaps in India's economy?

1. Incentives for women entrepreneurs in credit/schemes
2. Universal access to digital and financial literacy
3. Restricting women's work to the informal sector only
4. Public investment in care and family support systems

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 2, and 4 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1, 2, 3, and 4
- d) 1 and 3 only

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q46. Which reforms would best strengthen welfare for PVTGs in India?

1. Separate enumeration of PVTGs in the national Census
2. Updating identification criteria to reflect social and technological realities
3. Assimilation-focused parity with mainstream STs
4. Targeted, inclusion-centric schemes based on disaggregated data

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 2, and 4 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q47. Which measures would most directly address online gaming addiction among youth?

1. Mandatory age and identity verification
2. Parental and school awareness campaigns
3. Unregulated, self-policing by game companies
4. Government-imposed play-time and spending limits

Select the correct answer:

- a) 1, 2, and 4 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q48. Which reforms would best safeguard India's demographic dividend from becoming a "liability"?

1. Early and continuous career counseling in schools
2. Flexible, updated curricula aligned to market needs and tech futures
3. Focusing solely on increasing the number of graduates irrespective of job outcomes
4. Lifelong learning and public-private skilling partnerships

Select the correct code:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| a) 1, 2, and 4 only | b) 1 and 3 only |
| c) 2 and 3 only | d) 1, 2, 3, and 4 |

Answer: A) 1, 2, and 4 only

Q49. Which reforms would most help build a globally competitive Indian private sector?

1. Promotion of industry-academia R&D ties
2. Emphasis on rent-seeking and political connections
3. Large-scale, firm-led worker upskilling
4. Encouragement of entrepreneurship and risk-taking

Select the correct code:

- a) 1, 3, and 4 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2, 3, and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: A) 1, 3, and 4 only

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Your First Step Towards Becoming A Civil Servant

- Pre + Mains Syllabus Coverage
- Current Affairs Preparation
- Regular Tests & Assessments
- One-to-One Mentorship Sessions

Duration: 1 year

Language: Hinglish (Hindi + English)

Mode of Learning: Residential | Online | Classroom

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- Pre + Mains Syllabus Coverage
- Current Affairs Preparation
- Regular Tests & Assessments
- One-to-One Mentorship Sessions

Duration: 6 Months

Language: Gujarati

Mode of Learning: Residential | Online | Classroom

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Language: Hindi + English

Mode of Learning: Online

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Ethics, Morality & Humanity

Quote	Famous personalities
"You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty."	Mahatma Gandhi
"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."	
"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in a harmony."	
"Be truthful, gentle and fearless."	
"We must become the change we want to see."	
"The mind is everything. What you think, you become."	Buddha
"Gratitude is a flower that blooms in noble souls."	Pope Francis
"May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears."	Nelson Mandela
"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."	Abraham Lincoln

Leadership & Courage

Quote	Famous personalities
"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."	Franklin D. Roosevelt
"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat."	Winston Churchill
"Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will."	Mahatma Gandhi
"Peace is its own reward."	

Governance & Social Justice

Quote	Famous personalities
"The best test of a good society is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped."	Hubert H. Humphrey
"Good governance depends on ability to take responsibility by both administration as well as people."	Narendra Modi
"Progress is more plausibly judged by the reduction of deprivation than by the further enrichment of the opulent."	Amartya Sen
"The test of progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; It is whether we provide enough for those who have little."	Franklin D. Roosevelt
"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."	Martin Luther King Jr.
"We are unnecessarily wasting our precious resources in wars... if we must wage war, we have to do it on unemployment, disease, poverty, and backwardness."	Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Gender Equality & Women Empowerment

Quote	Famous personalities
"I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved."	B. R. Ambedkar
"There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing."	Swami Vivekananda

"We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back."	Malala Yousafzai
"The measure of any society is how it treats its women and girls."	Michelle Obama
"When women do better, economies do better."	Christine Lagarde
"You educate a man, you educate a man. You educate a woman, you educate a generation."	Brigham Young

Poverty & Inclusive Development

Quote	Famous personalities
"Poverty is like a punishment for a crime you didn't commit."	Eli Khamarov
"You cannot have peace without security, and you cannot have security without inclusive development."	Kofi Annan
"Any society that does not succeed in tapping into the energy and creativity of its youth will be left behind."	Kofi Annan

Environment, Climate Change & Sustainability

Quote	Famous personalities
"The Earth does not belong to us: we belong to the Earth."	Marlee Matlin
"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."	Native American Proverb
"Nature provides a free lunch, but only if we control our appetites."	William Ruckelshaus
"The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it."	Robert Swan
"What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and one another."	Mahatma Gandhi
"Sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all."	Ban Ki-Moon
"Climate change is simply, the greatest collective challenge we face as a human family."	Ban Ki-Moon

Education & Youth

Quote	Famous personalities
"Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope."	Kofi Annan
"One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world."	Malala Yousafzai
"We want the education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet."	Swami Vivekananda
"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."	Aristotle
"Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation."	Kofi Annan

Science, Technology & Media

Quote	Famous personalities
"I fear the day when technology will suppress human interaction and the world will have a generation of idiots."	Albert Einstein
"The Internet is becoming the town square for the Global village of tomorrow."	Bill Gates
"It is dangerously destabilizing to have half the world on the cutting edge of technology while the other half struggles on the bare edge of survival."	Bill Clinton

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