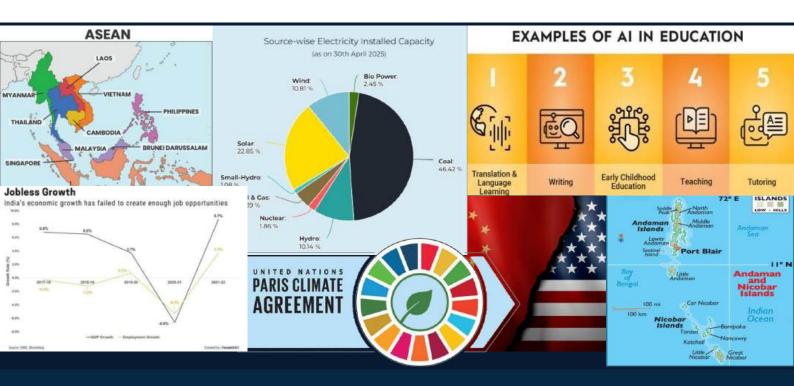


## **OCTOBER - 2025**

4th Edition







Practice Questions (Prelims+Mains)



## **Preface**

PRAMUKH SAMEEKSHA MAGAZINE 4<sup>nd</sup> Edition compilation attempts to encapsulate crucial editorial analysis published in The Hindu and The Indian Express from October 1 to October 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 — servantleaders 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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## Student Notes 🐔



## Ram to the Mahatma

**Source:** Indian express

UPSC relevance: GS paper 4 Ethics and Essay, Morality

## Introduction

Gandhi Jayanti and Vijayadashami coincide this year, inviting reflection not only on public celebrations but also on estrangement from the original spirit of Gandhi and Ram's moral endurance. Historian accounts highlight that every year, ritualistic remembrances risk turning into detached spectacles, obscuring the ethical inquiry and quiet endurance that marked both Ramayana's epic hero and Mahatma Gandhi's life, especially in times of crisis and moral ambiguity.

### **Key Issues**

## 1. Quiet Endurance Over Spectacle

➤ Both Gandhi and Ram exemplify endurance, not triumphant celebration: Gandhi's retreats during times of violence and Ram's withdrawal during exile are marked by reflection and moral resolve, not outward displays.

## 2. Loneliness as the Path to Truth

In Ramayana and Gandhi's life, loneliness becomes both ordeal and purification; neither relied on constant public approval or celebration but turned silence into a source of strength and higher ethical inquiry.

## 3. Justice through Suffering, Not Revenge

Ram's justice was never mere retribution, and Gandhi insisted truth and ahimsa called for restraint even against grave injustice. Both critiqued the easy slide to vengeance, showing that true order involves sacrifice and restraint.

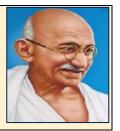
## 4. The Risks of Public Spectacle

Public commemorations—be it political rallies on Vijayadashami or parade-like celebrations on Gandhi Jayanti—often detach from the introspective, transformative ethos these figures embodied, risking hollow ritualization.

## 5. Political and Social Relevance

Their lessons urge patience, resistance without force, and the embracing of ethical solitude during times of crisis—values crucial for leaders, citizens, and political communities navigating contemporary polarization.

Mahatma Gandhi (born on 2 October 1869) was the foremost leader of India's independence movement, known worldwide for his philosophy of nonviolent resistance (Satyagraha). Trained as a lawyer in London, he first fought against racial injustice in South Africa. After returning to India in 1915, he led major movements like Champaran, Non-Cooperation, the Salt March, and Quit India. His ideals of ahimsa (nonviolence), truth, self-reliance, and communal harmony shaped India's freedom struggle. Though





Fact: Gandhi and Ram, celebrated broadly as symbols of justice and moral truth, both faced their loneliest battles after setbacks—Ram after exile, Gandhi after political betrayals and violence—finding strength in self-scrutiny, silence, and the pursuit of difficult, enduring values.





nominated several times, he never received the Nobel Peace Prize. Gandhi remains a global icon of peace, justice, and moral leadership.

## **Global Practices**

Ethical Reflection in	Many societies (e.g., Martin Luther King Day in the US, or Mandela
Commemoration	Remembrance in South Africa) stress introspection, public service, and
	nonviolent action, not empty spectacle.
Silent Processions/Days Japan, Europe, and Latin America increasingly mark historic days with silence	
of Peace	dialogue, or voluntary community service to honor deeper values.

## **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

National Gandhi Museum	Advocate commemorative programs centered on social work, ethical debate,
and Trusts	and personal reflection, suggesting voluntary service as a tribute.
Culture, Ethics and	Recommend promoting solitude, public dialogue, and silence as part of moral
Heritage Committees	education on historic occasions.
Ministry of Culture	Proposes digital and on-ground awareness campaigns reorienting public
	events toward ethical inquiry and social harmony.

## **Way Forward**

## 1. Reframe Public Celebrations as Quiet Ethical Engagement

Merge ritual and service: use anniversaries to inspire community action, meditation, and reflection rather than only mass celebrations.

## 2. Promote Silence and Contemplation

Encourage civic silence as a means of renewal—schools, communities, and events to observe moments of ethical pause.

## 3. Integrate Moral Education in Civic Life

Design curricula and media campaigns featuring stories of Ram and Gandhi's endurance, emphasizing nonviolent resistance and ethical choices.

## 4. Discourage Spectacle-Focused Ritualization

Use leadership platforms to shift attention from parades toward inclusive debates, storytelling, and community service.

## 5. Expand Community and Introspective Programs

Foster collaborative platforms for reflection, creative dialogue, and personal improvement during social and political anniversaries.

## **Conclusion**

The enduring message of Gandhi and Ram lies not in noisy celebration but in the transformative power of solitude, suffering, and moral inquiry. India's public memory must honor this legacy by championing quiet endurance and self-scrutiny—making moral order a lived reality, not just a ritual.

## **Prelims MCQ**

## Q1. What is the shared ethical trait between Gandhi and Ram emphasized in the editorial?

- a) Political triumph
- b) Public spectacle
- c) Quiet endurance and ethical solitude







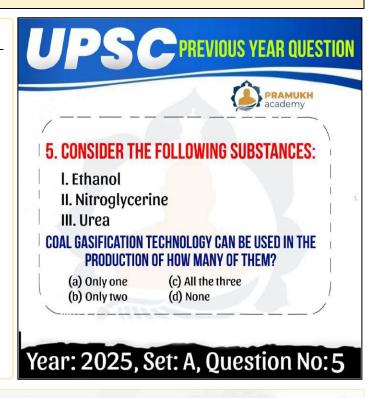
d) Military victory

Answer: C) Quiet endurance and ethical solitude

**Mains Question** 

Q1. "Both Ram and Gandhi teach that true moral order is shaped in solitude and suffering, not celebration." Examine the relevance of their legacy in contemporary India's political and social life. (250 words)

Student Notes 🐔



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## Prevent the Atrocity - Violence against Scheduled Tribes in India

**Source:** The Indian Express

UPSC Exam Relevance: GS Paper II: Vulnerable sections, welfare schemes, social justice.

## Introduction

The NCRB (2023) report highlights a worrying 28.8% rise in crimes against Scheduled Tribes (STs) compared to the previous year. States like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Odisha reported some of the highest cases of atrocities. For instance, Madhya Pradesh recorded 3,399 cases in 2022, the highest in the country. Despite multiple legal frameworks such as the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, the persistence of targeted violence underscores systemic weaknesses in enforcement and governance.

## **Key Issues**

- 1. Rising Atrocities: Crimes against STs increased by 28.8% in 2023, with incidents like mob lynching, land disputes, and sexual violence.
- 2. Geographical Concentration: Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha lead in ST atrocities, reflecting deeprooted social and land-related conflicts.
- 3. Implementation Gaps: Poor enforcement of the PoA Act, delays in investigations, and low conviction rates weaken deterrence.
- 4. Political and Social Factors: Dominant groups' control over land, forest, and resources fuels violence against ST communities.
- 5. Limited Outreach of Welfare Schemes: Initiatives like PM-JANMAN (Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan) and Van Dhan Vikas Kendras exist but are poorly implemented in conflict-prone regions.

## **Global Practices**

Brazil (Afro-descendant & Tribal Rights)	Constitutional protection with special prosecutors for racial/ethnic violence cases.
Australia (Aboriginals)	Strong <b>independent commissions</b> and <b>truth-telling processes</b> to address systemic violence.
South Africa	Post-apartheid legal framework with <b>community policing models</b> and <b>restorative justice</b> for marginalised groups.

## **Indian Committee Recommendations**

Kaka Kalelkar Commission & Lokur Committee	Strengthened focus on tribal land rights and protection from exploitation.
Xaxa Committee (2014)	Urged fast-track courts for tribal atrocities, enhanced accountability of state agencies, and protection of tribal land/forest rights.
Parliamentary Standing	Called for better implementation of <b>PoA Act</b> , proper rehabilitation of
Committees	victims, and more tribal-sensitive policing.

## **Way Forward**

- 1. Strict Enforcement: Ensure time-bound investigation and trial of cases under the SC/ST PoA Act.
- 2. Community Policing & Awareness: Train local police in tribal-sensitive law enforcement.
- 3. Land & Resource Rights: Implement Forest Rights Act (2006) effectively to reduce conflicts.







- 4. Education & Awareness: Conduct grassroots-level awareness campaigns on ST rights.
- **5. Strengthen Welfare Schemes**: Ensure schemes like **PM-JANMAN** are linked with livelihood, healthcare, and education outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

The rise in atrocities against STs highlights the **gap between law and practice**. While constitutional protections exist, real justice for tribal communities requires **strong political will, grassroots governance reforms, and socio-economic empowerment**. Only by addressing structural discrimination can India fulfil its vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Nyay."

## **Prelims Practice Questions**

- Q1. Which of the following are correct regarding the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989?
  - 1. It provides for establishment of special courts to try offences.
  - 2. It mandates relief and rehabilitation for victims.
  - 3. It allows anticipatory bail for accused in atrocity cases.

## **Options:**

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

## Answer: A

## **Mains Practice Questions**

Q1. Despite constitutional safeguards and welfare initiatives, crimes against Scheduled Tribes continue to rise in India. Analyse the reasons and suggest measures to strengthen legal and institutional mechanisms.

)



## **Swim to Safety – Marine Conservation with Community Engagement**

Source: The Hindu

#### **UPSC Exam Relevance**

- GS Paper III (Environment, Conservation, Biodiversity)
- Marine conservation, coastal ecosystem management, Blue Economy

## Introduction

The **Dugong (Dugong dugon)**, also known as the sea cow, once thrived in the **Gulf of Mannar**, **Palk Bay**, **Gulf of Kutch**, **and Andaman & Nicobar Islands**, but now its population in India has shrunk to **barely a few hundred** due to habitat loss, hunting, and pollution. Recognising the urgency, the government notified the **Dugong Conservation Reserve in Palk Bay (Tamil Nadu) in 2022** under the Wildlife Protection Act, covering **500 sq. km and 12,000 hectares of seagrass meadows**. This marks



India's **first marine conservation reserve** dedicated to Dugongs, setting an example for community-driven marine protection.

## **Key Issues**

- 1. **Population Decline**: Dugong numbers have dropped drastically, with only **200–250 individuals** estimated to survive in Indian waters.
- 2. **Habitat Loss**: Seagrass meadows, their primary food source, are being degraded by **trawling**, **mechanised fishing**, **dredging**, **and coastal construction**.
- **3. Pollution & Climate Change**: Agricultural runoff, rising sea temperatures, acidification, and storms threaten marine ecosystems.
- 4. By-catch Mortality: Incidental entanglement in fishing nets continues to be a major killer.
- **5. Conservation Gaps**: Despite legal measures, enforcement remains weak, especially in areas like **Andamans and Gujarat**, where Dugongs are more vulnerable.

## **Global Practices**

Australia's Great Barrier Reef	Seagrass ecosystem restoration combined with strict coastal regulation has helped sustain Dugong populations.
Philippines	Community-based marine protected areas (MPAs) with fisherfolk participation have improved coral and seagrass health.
Thailand	Use of <b>acoustic monitoring and drones</b> for mapping Dugong habitats ensures evidence-based policy.
IUCN Guidelines	Stress on integrating <b>traditional ecological knowledge</b> with modern technologies for effective marine biodiversity protection.

## **Indian Committees & Policy Recommendations**

National Biodiversity	Advocates participatory marine biodiversity management involving local
Authority (NBA)	communities.







Wildlife Institute of India (WII)	Suggests large-scale mapping and restoration of <b>seagrass meadows</b> to sustain Dugong populations.
National Marine Fisheries Policy (2017)	Recommends balance between livelihood security of fishers and marine ecosystem protection.
Parliamentary Standing Committees	Highlighted the need for better implementation of the Wildlife Protection Act for marine fauna.

## **Way Forward**

- 1. Community Engagement: Involve local fishers in conservation by incentivising sustainable practices.
- **2. Seagrass Restoration**: Expand programmes to restore degraded seagrass meadows (similar to mangrove restoration drives).
- 3. Technological Monitoring: Use drones, underwater sensors, and acoustic devices for real-time monitoring.
- 4. Awareness Campaigns: Spread awareness about Dugongs as a flagship species for marine conservation.
- 5. Integrated Marine Policy: Align Dugong protection with Blue Economy initiatives for balancing ecology and livelihoods.

## **Conclusion**

The Dugong's survival is a **litmus test for India's marine conservation efforts**. Protecting this gentle species through **science-backed**, **community-driven**, **and ecosystem-based approaches** will not only save the Dugongs but also secure the health of India's **seagrass meadows**, **coral reefs**, **and overall marine biodiversity**. As India strengthens its role in global biodiversity commitments, Dugong protection can become a **model for participatory marine conservation**.

## **Prelims Practice Questions**

- Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Dugongs:
  - 1. Dugong is listed as *Vulnerable* on the IUCN Red List.
  - 2. Its primary diet consists of seagrass meadows.
  - 3. India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve is located in the Andaman Islands.

## Which of the above statements 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)

## **Mains Practice Questions**

Q1. Dugongs are considered a flagship species for marine conservation in India. Discuss the challenges in their protection and suggest measures to balance conservation with fisher community livelihoods.







## WAIT & WATCH - For now, RBI keeps interest rates unchanged.

**Source:** Indian Express

**UPSC Relevance:** GS paper 3 Indian economy, monetary policy

## Introduction

The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee, after its October meeting, decided to keep interest rates steady amid subdued inflation (repo rate unchanged at 6.5%) and stable, healthy growth, with first-quarter GDP growth at 7.8%. Despite recent tariff shocks and global risks, inflation remains below the central bank's comfort zone and the consumer recovery continues. Policy signals indicate that the RBI is closely tracking future growth and inflation before acting.

Fact: While repo rate stands at 6.5%, retail inflation for August 2025 averaged just 5.5%, and core inflation is expected to ease further, allowing the RBI space for future monetary action if needed.

## Reserve Bank of India (RBI) summary in pointwise 100-word format with key points in bold:

- 1. **Establishment:** Set up on **1** April **1935** under the **RBI Act, 1934**; initially based in **Calcutta**, shifted to **Mumbai in 1937**.
- 2. Ownership: Originally privately owned, it was nationalized in 1949 and is now fully owned by the Government of India.
- 3. Objective: To regulate currency, ensure monetary stability, and manage credit and currency systems in India.
- 4. Main Functions:
  - > Acts as Monetary Authority.
  - > Regulates and supervises banks.
  - Manages foreign exchange.
  - > Issues currency notes.
  - Promotes financial inclusion and development.
- 5. Monetary Policy Committee (2016): Decides policy interest rates to control inflation.
- **6. Autonomy:** Though government can direct under **Section 7**, RBI enjoys **functional independence**.

## **Key Issues**

## 1. Stable Policy Amid Global Headwinds

India's monetary policy remains cautious due to tariff shocks (US and global), while GDP growth outperformed forecasts in the first quarter. Continued uncertainty about exports and external sectors prompts a wait-and-see approach.

## 2. Inflation Trajectory and Policy Flexibility

Retail inflation, though pronounced in July, steadied at 5.5% in August and is projected to fall further; future action will depend on whether inflation stays under control, with the RBI ready for multiple moves.

## 3. Growth and Private Investment

While government capex has supported recent growth, private investment recovery is still uneven. The RBI wants clarity on future domestic consumption and export demand before rate adjustments.





#### 4. External and Fiscal Considerations

Export shocks, GST rationalization, and fiscal consolidation impact the broader economic outlook. The RBI is monitoring these factors in real time, signaling data-driven, agile policy decisions.

## 5. Expectations Management and Signaling

Current communication from RBI and economic surveys emphasizes contingency planning. Forward guidance remains non-committal, keeping market expectations flexible and aligned with new evidence.

## **Global Practices**

Data-Driven Monetary Central banks in US, EU, and Australia issue "wait and watch" signals, holding	
<b>Policy</b> or adjusting rates only on clear shifts in growth or inflation trends.	
Flexible Policy Stances  Japan and UK employ incremental, data-dependent rate moves to previous overreaction to temporary shocks or volatility.	
Transparency and	Advanced economies rely on forward guidance and conditionality in policy
Market Signaling	statements to avoid market disruption.

## **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

RBI Monetary Policy Advocates caution, transparency, and alignment with actual inflation data and		
Committee	sectoral growth signals.	
NITI Aayog	Recommends a flexible fiscal-monetary mix, database-driven forecasting, and continued adaptation based on macroeconomic volatility.	
Finance Ministry	Stresses gradual rate changes, GST reforms, and supply-side support for export	
(Economic Surveys)	competitiveness.	

## **Way Forward**

## 1. Maintain Adaptive, Data-Driven Rate Policy

RBI should continue monitoring inflation, GDP growth, and export trends—acting only after sufficient evidence of change.

## 2. Prepare for External Shocks and Scenario Planning

Build policy buffers for sudden trade, commodity, or fiscal risks through regular scenario analysis and forward guidance.

## 3. Align with Fiscal and Export Reforms

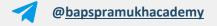
> Support fiscal rationalization (GST, revenue, deficit) and incentivize private investment to stabilize growth.

## 4. Practice Transparent Public Communication

Issue regular, conditional guidance to markets and investors, preparing for both rate cuts and hikes as data evolves.

## 5. Continue Sectoral Surveys and Real-Time Monitoring

Expand surveys on consumption, investment, and inflation to enable more precise, targeted policy moves.







## **Conclusion**

In the current economic climate, RBI's "wait & watch" policy is prudent—balancing stable inflation, growth, and ongoing external risks. Flexibility, transparency, and continued data-driven adaptation will be critical to maintaining economic resilience and investor confidence.

## **Prelims MCQ**

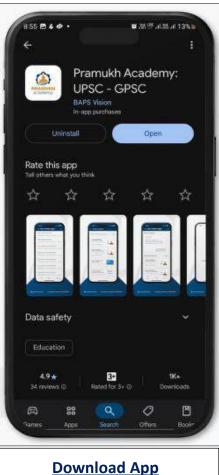
- Q1. As of October 2025, what is the repo rate set by RBI after the Monetary Policy Committee's meeting?
  - a) 4.0%
  - b) 5.0%
  - c) 6.5%
  - d) 8.0%

**Answer:** C) 6.5%

## **Mains Question**

Q1. "A cautious monetary policy keeps India flexible amid external shocks and variable growth." Comment on the RBI's current stance, highlighting the role of data-driven decisions and the challenges ahead. (250 words)





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## A startup revolution, the goal of 'innovation capital'

Source: the hindu

**UPSC Relavance:** GS paper 3 Economy

## Introduction

Tamil Nadu recently crossed 12,000 registered startups—six times the 2018 figures—making it one of India's fastest-growing innovation hubs. Government-backed programs, targeted inclusivity for SC/ST and women founders, and robust incubator networks have positioned the state as a national leader. Half of the startups have at least one female founder, and the state was named "Best Performer" in India's Startup Ecosystem Ranking 2022.

Fact: In 2025, Tamil Nadu's investment memoranda and innovation policies led to ₹1000 crore in new startup funding—an unprecedented partnership between the government and entrepreneurs, fueling the goal of becoming India's 'innovation capital'.

Core Features of Startup India

Funding

Support

of Funds supports early-stage funding

> Sector-Specific Policies

Ease of Doing Business

## **Key Issues**

## 1. Government Support and Ecosystem Building

- State-backed incubation, mentoring, and micro-seed funding help startups transition from petitioners for support to government collaborators.
- Programs like the TN Startup Seed Grant Scheme, TANSIM, and city-based innovation hubs support early growth and market entry.

## 2. Inclusive Growth, Gender and Social Equity

Dedicated SC/ST Startup Fund, targeted support for women founders (funding, training, and incubation), and inclusion of physically challenged/transgender entrepreneurs.

Gramam Thondu Pulikal scheme enables startups even in remote villages, with equityfree funding and mentorship.

## 3. Sectoral Depth and Technology Leadership

- Startup activity spans pharma, agri-tech, aerospace, digital health, and Al-driven geospatial applications.
- Downstream innovations—from digital health services to space satellites—anchor Tamil Nadu in national and global supply chains.

#### 9 states account for **STARTUP POLICY 2.0** What's Done? What Next? > Tax benefits given Tax benefits for angel 66 in last 2 budgets investors > Stock options for Easier norms for independent directors, labour law compliance mentors & advisors ➤ Nearly 2.500 ESOPs to be taxed at startups get ₹650cr the time of share sale funding, plan to scale instead of allotment it up to around Remove cap on deposits ₹1.850cr from shareholders Recognised **705** 146

Tax Benefits

## 4. Hub-and-Network Model

- Regional metros such as Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore, and Trichy linked by technology parks, mentorship corridors, and startup networks.
- > State-wide programs roll out Pre-Incubation Centers, digital trade platforms, and rural outreach.

16

## 5. Global Vision and Collaboration

International partnerships, patents, co-working spaces, and overseas mentorship have grown; Tamil Nadu leads in startup patents per lakh of population, and ranked among Asia's top tech hubs for affordability and impact.





## **Global Practices**

Inclusive Startup	Countries like Israel, Singapore, and the US focus on seed grants, diversity	
Policies mandates, and government-academia-industry platforms to scale new vo		
Decentralized	Nation-wide tech corridors and city-region innovation networks drive regional	
Innovation Hubs	Hubs entrepreneurship—from Silicon Valley to Shenzhen.	
Targeted Scale and	Global leaders accelerate market access for high-impact sectors—digital health,	
<b>Export Pipelines</b>	Al, and climate tech—through government sponsorship and export support.	

## **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

Department for Promotion of	Encourages state-level best practices for funding, mentoring, and legal
Industry and Internal Trade	ease-of-business for startups; monitors recognition of women, SC/ST,
(DPIIT)	and rural innovation.
Ministry of MSME	Advocates expansion of rural business incubators, credit access, and
	tech transfer for non-metro founders.
NITI Aayog	Recommends benchmarking state innovation indices, promoting cross-
	sector collaboration, and scaling startup-facilitated job growth.

## **Way Forward**

- 1. **Expand State Support for Early-Stage Startups:** Increase micro-seed funds, mentorship, and incubator outreach, with focus on marginalized and rural founders.
- 2. **Promote Inclusive Gender and Social Equity Funding:** Continue Special Funds and tailored training for SC/ST, women, and physically challenged entrepreneurs; implement impact audits.
- **3. Develop Sector-Specific Innovation Clusters:** Foster specialized hubs for health, space, AI, climate tech, and export-heavy sectors.
- **4. Enhance Global Linkages and Market Access:** Strengthen international collaborations, patent support, and overseas market programs for Tamil Nadu startups.
- **5. Measure, Monitor, and Incentivize Impact:** Use data-driven indices to track scale, job creation, export growth; incentivize social innovation and sustainable models.

## **Conclusion**

Tamil Nadu's startup revolution epitomizes India's shift from manufacturing to **innovation-led growth, driven by inclusive policies, public-private collaboration, and targeted sectoral support.** By deepening equity, expanding outreach, and fostering high-impact technologies, it sets a benchmark for national innovation capital.

## **Prelims MCQ**

Q1. Which region in India was named 'Best Performer' in the Startup Ecosystem Ranking 2022?

a) Maharashtra

b) Karnataka

c) Tamil Nadu

d) Gujarat

Answer: C) Tamil Nadu

## **Mains Question**

Q1. "Tamil Nadu's experience shows that inclusive, government-backed startup ecosystems can drive innovation and economic transformation." Discuss the strategies and impact underlying this model. (250 words)





# Fraught franchise: A nationwide SIR will replicate the risks revealed in Bihar

Source: The Hindu

**UPSC Relavance:** GS PAPER 2: Polity Governance

## **Introduction**

The Election Commission's recent Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar led to the deletion of 65 lakh names, dropping the total from 7.18 crore to 7.42 crore electors—a significant revision. While intended to clean rolls, this exercise has raised new concerns about arbitrary deletions, lack of transparency, and the disproportionate exclusion of poor, rural, and marginalized voters, risking trust in the franchise.

Fact: Many deletions in Bihar reportedly impacted women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and poorer voters without prior notice, and no detailed breakdown or public list was provided—contrary to Supreme Court recommendations.

## **Key Issues**

## 1. Opaque Deletion Processes and Loss of Trust

The reasons for deletion included death, migration, duplication, and lack of information, but the process was opaque—a consolidated public list of exclusions was not provided.

## 2. Disproportionate Impact on Marginalized Groups

Reports suggest women, SC/STs, backward castes, the poor, and the illiterate are removed in greater numbers, raising fears of systemic bias and disenfranchisement.

## 3. Insufficient Notice and Remedy

No meaningful prior notice or hearing opportunity was provided to those affected, even though Supreme Court directions mandate such safeguards in voter list management.

## 4. Vague Document and Identity Demands

The EC increasingly relies on 'hard' digital proofs, but rural voters often lack documentation such as caste and domicile papers, causing exclusion.

## 5. National Replication Risks

If this SIR model is expanded countrywide, similar exclusionary risks would arise, repeating the Bihar experience and potentially affecting millions.

## **Global Practices**

Voter List Transparency	Democracies such as Canada, the UK, and Germany publish clear, accessible lists of deletions and additions, including reason codes and remedies.
Proactive Inclusion Mechanisms	Countries use automatic registration, community verification, and real-time correction opportunities to minimize exclusion—particularly for minorities and the poor.





<b>Advance Public Notice</b>	Regular pre-election communications and multi-lingual helplines enable voters	
and Redress	to check and correct their status promptly.	

## **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

Election Commission	Stipulate prior notice, public display, and objections before deletion, but
Guidelines	enforcement and communication remain weak at ground level.
International Institute for	Recommends best practices like door-to-door verification, community
Democracy and Electoral	audits, and digital+physical notice for all list changes.
Assistance (IDEA)	
Standing Committee on Law	Urges robust grievance mechanisms, time-bound appeals, and balance
and Justice	between roll integrity and right to vote.

## **Way Forward**

- 1. Mandate Transparent Deletion Protocols: Require public, consolidated lists of deleted names with reasons, regular ground audits, and advance warning for all individuals affected.
- 2. Institute Robust Grievance Redressal: Ensure all deletions come with notice and provide easy and timely recourse for genuine voters to restore their names.
- 3. Simplify and Localize Documentation Requirements: Accept a wider range of pragmatic proofs—local witness, village-level checks, and offline systems where digital exclusion risk is high.
- 4. Proactive Focus on Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups: Specially monitor and support inclusion of women, SC/ST, and low-income rural voters through community volunteers and awareness drives.
- 5. Independent Audit and Oversight: Regular court or third-party review, especially before elections, to ensure due process has been followed and correct systemic issues.

## **Conclusion**

A robust democracy depends on an inclusive, trusted electoral roll. The recent Bihar SIR experience signals that nationwide replication without addressing exclusion risks, opaque procedures, and lack of redress could endanger the franchise for India's most vulnerable. Reforms must prioritize transparency, inclusivity, and accessibility at the heart of election management.

## **Prelims MCQ**

- Q1. What was a major concern with the recent SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar?
  - a) Increase of urban registration
  - b) Arbitrary deletions affecting the poor and marginalized without transparent process
  - c) Excess foreign voters
  - d) Rise in online hacking incidents

Answer: B) Arbitrary deletions affecting the poor and marginalized without transparent process

## **Mains Question**

Q1. "Transparent and inclusive electoral rolls are critical for democracy." Analyse the risks of current voter list revision practices in India and suggest reforms to ensure no eligible voter is excluded. (250 words)







## Unreasonable Hike: Indian farmers need income, not price support.

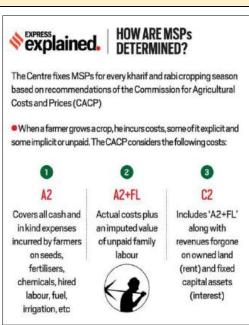
**Source:** Indian express

#### **UPSC** Relevance

- **1. GS Paper 3:** Agriculture Minimum Support Price (MSP), agricultural procurement, farm subsidies, direct benefit transfers, food security, fiscal management, and market reforms.
- 2. **GS Paper 2:** Governance Policy effectiveness, welfare targeting, pricing vs. income support, and state capacity in rural development

## Introduction

The government hiked the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for 2025-26 wheat by ₹160 to ₹2,585 per quintal—more than previous hikes—even as official wheat stocks and market prices do not justify such a large increase. As of September 1, public wheat stocks were at their highest for four years, and projections suggest a bumper harvest ahead. The MSP now stands at 109% above estimated cultivation costs, far higher than for most other crops, raising fresh questions about fairness and economic logic. Fact: The 2025-26 wheat MSP (₹2,585/quintal) is nearly double the all-India average cost (A2+FL) of ₹1,239, and much higher than the mandated 50% margin. By contrast, other rabi crops get lower margins (mustard 93%, lentil 89%, chickpea 84%, safflower 50%).



## **Key Issues**

## 1. MSP Disproportionately Favours Wheat

Wheat MSP is 109% above A2+FL, while other rabi and oilseed crops see much smaller mark-ups—entrenching monoculture, procurement bias, and regional imbalances.

## 2. Misalignment With Market Signals and Stocks

Wheat stocks at 33.3 mt were ample; most procurement goes to wheat and paddy, not to other crops, and market prices are now below year-ago levels. Surplus procurement does not align with real shortage or price risks.

## 3. Discriminatory and Costly Procurement

➤ Government buys wheat and paddy at high declared MSPs, while soy, chana, millets get less support. Procurement price is usually much higher than global and domestic market rates, causing distortions and fiscal burdens.

## **Global Practices**

Income Support	Developed countries and emerging economies (e.g., EU, US, China) have shifted to
Over Price Support direct income support, decoupled from market prices and linked to landhold	
	family size.
Market Price	Countries like Australia and Brazil rely on open markets and direct transfer models
Discovery	to avoid procurement glut and monoculture.

**Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations** 





Commission for Agricultural	Calculates MSP based on "A2+FL" cost, recommends rational MSP setting,
Costs and Prices (CACP)	and advocates market-based mechanisms.
NITI Aayog & Finance Ministry	Advocate phasing out blanket MSP/procurement and expanding direct benefit transfers (PM-Kisan-style), particularly for non-cereal growers.
Standing Committee on Agriculture	Calls for universal, non-exclusionary support to smallholders, simplification of subsidies, and integrating technology for targeted transfers.

## **Way Forward**

### 1. Rationalize MSP Structure

Index MSPs realistically to cost and supply factors, reduce extreme mark-ups for select crops, and align policy with storage, consumption, and market realities.

## 2. Scale Up Direct Income Transfers

Expand coverage and quantum of DBTs like PM-Kisan, with a per-hectare top-up for smaller farmers and those excluded from procurement.

## 3. Diversify Support Beyond Wheat/Paddy

Enhance coverage for oilseeds, pulses, and horticulture crops, linking financial support to diversified production and reducing monoculture dependency.

## 4. Reform Procurement and Storage Policies

Only procure for genuine buffer requirements at fair prices, improve storage/inventory management, and target public purchases to areas of need.

## 5. Empower Farmer Choice and Market Signals

Allow market prices for most crops; let farmers respond to local and export demand, using MSP as a fallback, not a universal price guarantee.

## **Conclusion**

India's current MSP-driven support system for wheat is excessive, costly, and distorts production incentives. Direct per-hectare transfers offer a more effective, equitable, and fiscally sustainable path to rural income security, helping all farmers rather than a privileged few, and supporting a more diversified, resilient farm economy.

## **Prelims MCQ**

Q1. For 2025-26, by how much does the MSP for wheat exceed the average A2+FL production cost as per CACP estimates?

- a) 25%
- b) 50%
- c) 75%
- d) 109%

Answer: D) 109%

## **Mains Question**

Q1. "MSP-centric policy distorts Indian agriculture, favouring a few crops and regions." Analyse the limitations and suggest reforms to support equitable, sustainable farm incomes. (250 words)







# Domestic vitality: Domestic firms show more faith in India than foreign investors

## **UPSC Relevance**

- **GS Paper 3:** Indian Economy Investment trends, domestic vs. foreign investment, private sector, ease of doing business, and fiscal impact.
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance Role of government policy in influencing business confidence and reforms for private investment.

## **Introduction**

New project announcements by Indian private firms touched a 15-month high at nearly ₹9 lakh crore in just the first half of the current fiscal year, with domestic firms responsible for 77% of all new projects. Despite global uncertainty and sluggish foreign direct investment (FDI) flows, Indian businesses are showing robust confidence, especially in manufacturing, offering a rare positive signal amid mixed economic news.

Fact: While domestic project announcements hit ₹9 lakh crore, foreign company proposals fell to ₹0.65 lakh crore—the third straight year of decline—highlighting domestic firms' rising optimism and FDI's cautious stance.

## **Key Issues**

## 1. Domestic Surge in New Investments

Indian private companies now account for over 77% of project announcements, up from 54% five years ago. Real fiscal investments will depend on execution, but sentiment is clearly improving.

## 2. Foreign Investment Stall

Foreign project announcements fell sharply for a third year, affected by global headwinds, delayed reforms, and sectoral shifts such as post-COVID supply chain restructurings.

## 3. Manufacturing-Driven Expansion

The majority of new projects are in manufacturing, signaling greater confidence in India's policy environment, GST reforms, and a push for "Make in India"-led self-reliance.

## 4. Execution Gap and Fiscal Policy

Not all announced projects go live; effective reform and execution remain crucial to turning sentiment into jobs and output. Higher domestic investment eases fiscal pressure as government can spend less on direct stimulus.

## 5. Policy Signals for Future Investment

> Stable interest rates, future production-linked incentives, ease of doing business, and timely GST/land reforms will continue to shape both domestic and foreign investor attitudes.

## **Global Practices**

Balanced FDI and	Countries like China, Vietnam, and South Korea actively balance home-grown
Domestic Investment	industrial investment with targeted FDI attraction, enhancing resilience and
	scale.
Incentives Linked to	Leading economies tie policy incentives to actual investment execution and local
Realization	linkages, not just announcements.
Early Warning Metrics	Advanced economies use "sunk cost" and "completion rates" as leading
	indicators, not just value of fresh announcements.







## **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

NITI Aayog	Recommends focusing on closing the execution gap, especially in manufacturing and infrastructure.
Department for Promotion of	Endorses reducing red tape, simplifying land/labour rules, fast-
Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)	tracking clearances to sustain domestic/private investment surges.
Finance Ministry (Economic Survey)	Points to the strategic role of domestic investment in cushioning
	against global FDI and capital market volatility.

## **Way Forward**

## 1. Close the Project Execution Gap

Ensure that new investment commitments quickly turn into on-ground assets through streamlined clearances, stable policy, and monitoring mechanisms.

## 2. Catalyze Manufacturing and Exports

Use targeted incentives, infra upgrades, and skill programs to maintain momentum in manufacturingled growth.

## 3. Revive FDI Confidence

Prioritize fast dispute resolution, consistent tax/GST policies, and easier market-entry rules to attract and retain foreign investors.

## 4. Expand Policy Certainty and Ease of Doing Business

Commit to regulatory simplicity, predictable reforms, and clear communication to both Indian and foreign investors.

## 5. Monitor and Adjust Fiscal Policy Responsively

Leverage higher domestic investment to create space for fiscal consolidation and developmental spending.

## Conclusion

India's current investment landscape reflects strong optimism among domestic firms contrasted with caution among foreign investors. To turn this sentiment into sustainable growth, policy must focus equally on execution, continued reform, and restoring global confidence—making India a stable destination for both homegrown and international capital.

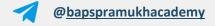
## **Prelims MCQ**

- Q1. What proportion of all new private sector project announcements in the first half of 2025 was accounted for by Indian firms?
  - a) 20%
  - b) 54%
  - c) 77%
  - d) 95%

Answer: C) 77%

## **Mains Question**

Q1. "Robust domestic investment can insulate India from global slowdown, but only if project execution keeps pace." Analyse current investment trends and suggest policy measures to maximize domestic and foreign business confidence. (250 words)







## Treat employment as a national priority

## **UPSC Relevance**

- GS Paper 3: Indian Economy Employment, labour reforms, demographic dividend, MSMEs, skill gaps, sectoral job creation.
- GS Paper 2: Social Justice and Governance Equity in employment, regional disparity, welfare and inclusion policies.
- Essay/Interview: Job creation challenges, future of work, role of skilling, policy frameworks for employment-led growth.

## Introduction

India is set to add approximately 133 million people to its working-age population (15-64 years) in the next 25 years, making up 18% of the global workforce increment. Employment generation at scale is vital for poverty reduction, balanced regional growth, and social stability,

especially as India's demographic dividend will peak around 2043.

skilling and sectoral support, India still lacks a unified National Employment Policy, critical for bridging the gap between job demand and supply.

Fact: Despite near-universal initiatives for

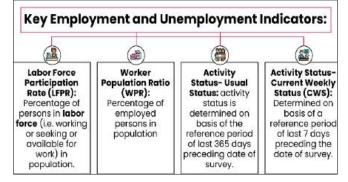
## **Key Issues**

## 1. Employment as National Priority

Long-term, consistent investment and policy focus on jobs, not temporary or fragmented measures, is needed. Employment should drive broader economic/social policies and be monitored regularly.

## 2. Skill Gaps and Graduate Employability

Quality curricula, core industry linkages, and skilling programs especially for women and youth—are vital. Current mismatch leads to underemployment and limited productivity.





## **Global Practices**

National Employment Policies	Countries like Germany, South Korea, and China employ dense job creation ecosystems, annual monitoring of job-market outcomes, and sectoral skill strategies.
Registry, Mobility, and Social Protection	Singapore and EU nations use centralized labour registries, worker mobility programs, and affordable social housing for balanced employment.
Skill-Based Industrial Growth	UK, Australia, and Japan deploy linking education with sectoral skill demands and apprenticeships; public-private job creation schemes.



## **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

Confederation of Indian Industry	Proposes high-priority employment policy, skill mapping, and
(CII)	regular job-market analytics.
National Skill Development	Suggests sectoral skilling, aligned training, and innovation in job
Corporation (NSDC)	creation initiatives.
Labour Ministry (National	Emphasizes decentralized, time-bound job creation targets, sectoral
Employment Policy Roadmap)	investment, and four-labour code implementation.
State Skill Development Missions	Calls for district-level planning, local innovation, and targeted
	interventions in backward districts and groups.

## **Way Forward**

## 1. Formulate and Implement a Unified National Employment Policy

Center long-term job creation with coordinated sectoral targets, universal skilling, and clear monitoring frameworks.

## 2. Expand Skilling and Formalization

➤ Build sector-based skills, link education with employability, and formalize entry-level jobs for security and growth.

## 3. Improve Regional and Social Equity in Jobs

Promote targeted programs for women, youth, rural regions, and marginalized groups—inclusive social security and affordable housing.

## 4. Institutionalize Workforce Registries and Grievance Redress

➤ Centralized registry for labour, migration, contracts, and complaints; support fair mobility and protection against job losses.

## 5. Monitor and Measure Job Outcomes

Continuous policy adjustment using high-quality job creation analytics, periodic labour-market audits, and impact assessments.

## Conclusion

India's demographic dividend and growth aspirations will be realized only through robust job creation, inclusion, and sectoral innovation. Making employment a national priority—backed by comprehensive reform, skill development, and policy coordination—is key to achieving a resilient, inclusive, and dynamic economy.

## **Prelims MCQ**

## Q1. By when is India's working-age population expected to peak, according to CII estimates?

- a) 2025
- b) 2030
- c) 2043
- d) 2050

**Answer:** C) 2043

## **Mains Question**

Q1. "Job creation is the bedrock of economic and social stability in India." Critically examine the key challenges and policy priorities for employment-led growth in the decade ahead. (250 words)







## India's direction for disaster resilience

## **UPSC Relevance**

- 1. **GS Paper 3:** Disaster Management National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), climate resilience, technology in disaster mitigation, public finance for disasters, and international coordination.
- 2. **GS Paper 2:** Governance Inter-ministerial coordination, fiscal policy, decentralized planning, and community-led disaster resilience.

## Introduction

India's vast geography and multi-hazard risk profile require a multifaceted disaster management strategy. The Home Ministry (MHA) and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) now focus on both post-disaster relief and pre-disaster planning, guided by the Prime Minister's Ten Point Agenda on Disaster Risk Reduction (2016). The approach integrates technology, public finance, community-driven planning, and global best practices.

Fact: In the last five years, the central government has allocated ₹2.2 lakh crore (about \$30 billion) for disaster risk reduction projects; 40% went to pre-disaster resilience, not just relief.

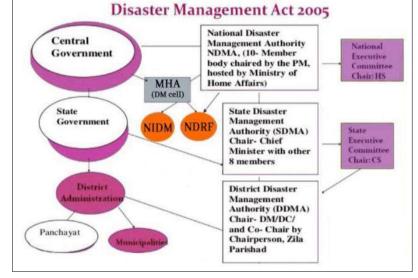
#### **Key Issues**

### 1. From Relief to Risk Reduction

The 15th Finance Commission in 2021 broadened disaster policy focus from just ex-post spending (relief/rehab) to active pre-disaster and risk reduction efforts—aligning fiscal, technology, and resilient infrastructure.

## 2. Decentralized and Inclusive Planning

Local governments, empowered by funds, now build climateresilient roads, green spaces,



resilient roads, green spaces, early warning systems, shelters, and water bodies, especially in vulnerable areas (Assam, Himachal, J&K, etc.).

## 3. Integration of Technology and Science

Leveraging advances in digital mapping, Al-driven hazard prediction, multi-model weather forecasting, and geospatial databases (National Database for Emergency Management – NDEM). Cyclone and flood resilience interventions now use live scenario modeling and rapid response tech.

## 4. Community Participation and Social Inclusion

▶ Building inclusive early warning systems, climate-smart social housing, and district-level emergency response funds. Emphasis on gender, child, and marginalized community resilience.

## 5. International Partnerships and Knowledge Exchange

India shapes global dialogue in forums such as G20 and Sendai Framework, leading with South-South knowledge exchange and supporting climate adaptation in small island states.





## **Global Practices**

Integrated, All-Hazard	Japan, US, and Australia combine inter-agency coordination, public-private	
Planning	partnership, and continuous infrastructure investment for multi-hazard	
	management.	
Community-Based	Bangladesh and Mexico promote local risk mapping, training, and routine	
Resilience	participatory planning for disaster-prone populations.	
Technology-Forward	EU, Singapore, and New Zealand invest in real-time data analytics and Al-driven	
Risk Monitoring	emergency dashboards for response coordination.	

## **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

NDMA (National Disaster	Leads DRR standards, early warning protocols, and platform for
Management Authority)	cooperation across ministries/states.
15th Finance Commission	Advocates for decentralized resilience funding, risk transfer schemes, and urban climate-smart planning.
NITI Aayog	Recommends geospatial integration, climate tech adoption, and
	Blueprint for National Disaster Database.
National Disaster Response Fund	Proposes expansion of contingency funds, disaster insurance, and
(NDRF)	district-level permanent relief assets.

## **Way Forward**

## 1. Expand Pre-Disaster Risk Reduction Investments

Allocate more funds to early warning, climate-proof infrastructure, and community preparedness.

## 2. Leverage Digital and AI Technologies

Advance data-driven, real-time monitoring and scenario planning for all hazard-prone regions.

## 3. Decentralize Governance and Local Resilience Building

Empower district/municipal authorities with direct access to funds, tech, and capacity-building partnerships.

## 4. Advance Inclusive and Participatory Frameworks

Mainstream gender, youth, and marginalized group inclusion in resilience planning and implementation.

## 5. Strengthen International Coordination

> Shape and share best practices globally; reinforce South-South cooperation for climate and disaster adaptation.

## **Conclusion**

India's progress in disaster resilience relies on the shift from reactive relief to proactive risk reduction, combining fiscal, technological, and social strategies. By embedding community and scientific innovations in disaster management, India offers a model for both national safety and global cooperation in a risky future.

## **Prelims MCQ**

Q1. How much central government allocation for disaster risk reduction was directed to pre-disaster resilience efforts in the last five years?

- a) 10%
- b) 25%







- c) 40%
- d) 60%

**Answer:** C) 40%

## **Mains Question**

Q1. "India must evolve from post-disaster response to pre-disaster resilience." Critically assess the policy shift and suggest how technology and inclusive planning can further strengthen disaster risk reduction. (250 words)

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## Calling out the criticism of the Indian judiciary

Source: The Hindu

## **UPSC Relevance**

- **GS Paper 2:** Polity & Governance Judiciary's role, accountability, legal reforms, judicial independence, and coordination with executive/legislature.
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance Public policy, quality of laws, and systemic challenges facing administration of justice.

## Introduction

Criticism of the Indian judiciary as an obstacle to economic progress has become popular among policy advisors and public commentators, blaming it for everything from contract bottlenecks to stalling reforms. Yet, much of this critique is rooted in broader weaknesses of lawmaking, governance, and administrative delays—issues that reflect other systemic shortcomings, not just judicial failure

Fact: Data cited in the article shows that the judiciary's major burden stems from poorly drafted, vague, and frequent changes in laws—which generate high rates of government litigation and appeals, especially in tax and service matters.

#### **Key Issues**

## 1. Judicial Criticism Often Misses the Root Causes

Popular claims that courts "block progress" overlook the reality that courts interpret and enforce the laws given much of which are ambiguous, outdated, or designed for optics over clarity.

## 2. Government Itself is the Largest Litigant

The single biggest "litigant" in India remains government ministries, departments, and public bodies, who routinely appeal decisions—especially over taxes, contracts, and regulation—clogging the system.

## 3. Structural Causes of Delay Beyond Courts

Issues include incomplete law reforms, procedural complexity, lack of staff and infrastructure, excessive regulation, and colonial-era statutes. The judiciary's slowness mirrors the wider inertia in state institutions.

## **Global Practices**

- 1. Executive Discipline in Litigation: The UK, Australia, and Singapore curb excessive government appeals, use alternative dispute resolution, and limit state litigation.
- Regular Law and Procedure Updates: US, Germany, and the Nordics revisit statutes and procedural law for clarity and efficiency—minimizing backlog sources.
- **3. Judicial Workload Lightening**: Supreme Courts in advanced democracies focus on select constitutional/precedent-setting questions, not every administrative appeal.







## **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

Law Commission of India	Recommends regular statutory review, simplification of procedure, and amending or repealing obsolete laws.
National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)/Judicial Reforms Panels	Propose more judges/staff, e-courts, better infrastructure, and expanded lower judiciary to address pendency.
NITI Aayog	Advocates a "whole-of-system" approach, policy discipline for state as litigant, and clarity in law drafting.

## **Way Forward**

## 1. Reform Government Litigation Practices

Institute strict guidelines for departments/ministers on appeals; encourage alternative dispute resolution and mediation first.

## 2. Prioritize Legal and Procedural Clarity

Routinely review and update outdated laws; simplify and codify procedures, reducing routine matters before higher courts.

## 3. Expand Judicial Capacity and Infrastructure

Increase the number of judges, better support staff, digital case management, and modern facilities for faster justice delivery.

## 4. Foster Institutional Discipline and Accountability

Empower committees to audit government litigation, press for internal review before state appeals and regular performance evaluation.

## 5. Develop Benchmarks for Quality and Timeliness

Adopt measurable standards for judicial efficiency, fiscal discipline in litigation, and annual reporting on legal reforms.

## **Conclusion**

Critiquing the judiciary for India's legal and economic challenges misses deeper flaws in governance, lawmaking, and administration. True progress requires systemic reforms, disciplined government litigation, and continuous investment in judicial capacity—not scapegoating courts for failures elsewhere.

## **Prelims MCQ**

## Q1. According to the article, what is a major reason for judicial backlog and delays in India?

- a) Excessive judge salaries
- b) Poorly drafted and frequently changing laws
- c) Fixed number of court holidays
- d) No cases against the government

Answer: B) Poorly drafted and frequently changing laws

## **Mains Question**

Q1. "The burden carried by the judiciary reflects broader governance and legislative weaknesses, not just court inefficiency." Critically examine the causes of delay in India's legal system and suggest comprehensive reforms. (250 words)







## Ensure compliance: Firms that make poor quality drugs must face consequences

Source: the Hindu

### **UPSC Relevance**

- GS Paper 2: Governance/Health Regulatory mechanisms, public health policy, compliance and accountability, role of the Union Health Ministry and Drug Control organizations.
- GS Paper 3: Science & Technology/Indian Industry Pharmaceuticals, quality standards, Make in India, safety protocols, and global benchmarking.

## Introduction

India aims to be a global pharmaceutical leader under 'Make in India', but repeated lapses in drug quality—especially cough syrup contamination cases—have exposed weak compliance frameworks. Recent deaths in children (due to ethylene glycol and diethylene glycol contaminated syrup) triggered immediate action by the Union Health Ministry for stricter regulation, aligning with revised Schedule M norms for manufacturers.

**Fact:** The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) recommended cancellation of a manufacturer's license after contamination, while drug safety failures in Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh led to criminal investigations.

## **Key Issues**

## 1. Systemic Drug Quality Failures

Cough syrup tragedies (ethylene glycol poisoning) reveal repeated regulatory lapses across states; India's sector ambitions are undermined by weak compliance in Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and laboratory standards.

## 2. Regulatory Response and Oversight

➤ Health Ministry, C**DSCO, and state drug departments have** begun routine compliance sweeps, license cancellation, and enforcement of new rules (Schedule M). Reports cite nonpharmaceutical grade excipients as contamination risks.

Recommendations for "zero tolerance" and robust surveillance, emphasizing need for a national threshold for poor-quality drugs. Current measures are still uneven and lack real-time monitoring.

# THE HEALTH, GOVERNMENT OF 3. Poor Compliance Endangers Public Health

## **Global Practices**

Stringent Real-Time Recall	US FDA, EU EMA mandate immediate recalls, real-time adverse event
and Reporting	tracking, and swift sanctions for non-compliance.
Unified National Drug	China, UK, Japan maintain centralized registers for licensed products, with
<b>Registers</b> public access and automatic suspension for faulty batches.	
Zero Tolerance	Singapore, South Korea, and WHO prequalify drugs worldwide; routine
Surveillance	global audits and surprise checks ensure continuous compliance.

## **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

Central Drugs Standard Control	Recommends zero tolerance, license cancellations, national drug
Organisation (CDSCO)	tracking, and digitization for real-time adverse event reporting.







Health	Ministry	Expert	Advocate alignment with WHO, mandatory third-party audits, and
Committee	s		criminal penalties for repeated violations.
Standing C	ommittee on	Health &	Stresses robust post-market surveillance, public lab reporting, and
Family Wel	fare		industry-wide GMP/GLP training.
Pharmaceu	itical Export P	romotion	Urges high standards for export batches to protect India's global
Council			reputation.

## **Way Forward**

## 1. Implement Zero-Tolerance Drug Quality Enforcement

Mandate real-time recalls, strict batch surveillance, rapid license revocation, and robust criminal penalties for violation.

## 2. Digitize and Centralize Drug Reporting Systems

> Create a national register for all licensed products, with automatic alerts/suspension for safety breaches.

## 3. Upgrade Nationwide GMP/GLP Compliance

Enforce unified, globally benchmarked standards for manufacturers, including third-party audits and regular inspections.

## 4. Harmonize State and Central Regulatory Action

Strengthen coordination and monitoring; train officials for surprise audits and rigorous documentation.

## 5. Expand Consumer, Export, and Global Safeguards

Ensure public reporting, export compliance, and automatic international alerts for adverse events.

## **Conclusion**

'Make in India' pharmaceuticals can only succeed if drug quality meets the highest standards. Zero tolerance, rapid action, and global benchmarking are needed to protect health and reputation—making compliance, not just ambition, the foundation of India's pharma future.

## **Prelims MCQ**

- Q1. Which chemical was found responsible for recent cough syrup-related deaths in India, triggering a compliance crackdown?
  - a) Sucrose
  - b) Propylene Glycol
  - c) Diethylene Glycol
  - d) Sodium Chloride

Answer: C) Diethylene Glycol

## **Mains Question**

Q1. "India's pharmaceutical ambitions depend on uncompromising quality compliance." Examine recent regulatory lapses and suggest a robust framework for drug safety in India. (250 words)

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Student Notes 💪







## It's time for Maoists to lay down arms

#### **UPSC** Relevance

- 1. **GS Paper 3:** Internal Security Left Wing Extremism (LWE), Naxalism, counter-insurgency, security forces, and government rehabilitation policies.
- 2. **GS Paper 2:** Governance State capacity, rehabilitation programs, tribal inclusion, and Centre-State coordination.

## Introduction

Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently reiterated that Maoists must lay down arms and accept the government's surrender and rehabilitation offer. Across the last two decades, the proscribed CPI(Maoist) organization has witnessed a drastic fall in numbers, territory, and influence—its Central Committee now has only 13 members (down from 42 in 2004), most over 60 and in poor health. Estimates place its active cadre at fewer than 2,000, signaling a movement at its historical weakest.

Fact: Security forces have killed over 400 Maoists in the last 18 months, including high-ranking leaders, with more than 1,450 surrenders during the same period, and control over key 'liberated zones' in states like Chhattisgarh severely eroded.

## **Key Issues**

## 1. Decline in Maoist Strength and Leadership

Central Committee and Politburo shrunk in both size and influence; movement aging, intellectually weakened, and riven by ill health. New leadership drawn from Andhra, Telangana, and Chhattisgarh is scattered and lacks unifying authority.

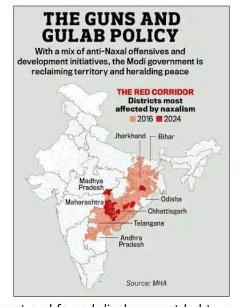
## 2. Loss of Territorial, Operational Control

Security forces' focus on "district reserve guards," better intelligence, and localized tribal-police partnerships (e.g., Salwa Judum) fractured Maoist hold on 'Jantana Sarkar' regions; key strongholds lost, especially in Bastar, Sukma, Dantewada.

#### 3. Erosion of Tribal Support Base

drop in support for Maoists.

State responses increasingly blend military and development strategies, winning over tribal communities with roads, welfare, and employment opportunities. Gradual disenchantment and forced displacement led to a



## **Global Practices**

Rehabilitation-Centric	Colombia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka combined surrender/amnesty with	
<b>Counter-Insurgency</b> reintegration and livelihood support for ex-combatants.		
Community Policing and	Latin America and Southeast Asia prioritize empowering local police,	
Economic Inclusion	building trust, and ensuring inclusive development to undermine insurgency.	
Decentralized Intelligence	US, UK, and African counter-insurgency success stories stress inter-agency	
Networks	cooperation and intelligence-driven targeting over brute force alone.	





## **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

Union Ministry/State	Regular assessment of surrendered cadres' rehabilitation; continued	
Police Reforms	engagement in affected districts via skill-building, entrepreneurship, and	
	welfare schemes.	
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	Calls for tribal inclusion in governance, accelerated delivery of land/forest	
	rights, and locally led welfare programs in ex-Maoist districts.	
Standing Committee on	Proposes integrated policy (security, development, justice) and regular	
Home Affairs	monitoring of LWE-affected district progress.	

## **Way Forward**

## 1. Broaden Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs

Scale up skill-building, education, and employment for surrendered Maoists and vulnerable tribal youth.

## 2. Enhance Intelligence, Tech-led Policing

Expand real-time intelligence networks, drones, and local police recruitment from affected areas.

## 3. Deepen Tribal Welfare and Governance

Ensure land, forest rights, and welfare reach all vulnerable sections; sustain community participation in local institutions.

## 4. Foster Development with Justice

Combine road/infrastructure building, health, school access, and dispute redressal for lasting peace in erstwhile conflict zones.

## 5. Institutionalize an All-of-Government Approach

Regular Centre-State taskforce reviews, data-driven monitoring, and flexible, locally tailored interventions.

## **Conclusion**

Maoism in India stands at a historic low. A holistic approach—security, rehab, tribal inclusion, and justice—will consolidate these gains and ensure that remaining cadres lay down arms, bringing enduring peace and integration for India's most vulnerable regions.

## **Prelims MCQ**

Q1. How many active Central Committee members does the CPI(Maoist) reportedly have as of 2025?

- a) 3
- b) 7-8
- c) 13
- d) 42

Answer: C) 13

## **Mains Question**

Q1. "Decline of Maoism in India is the outcome of both security success and development outreach."

Critically evaluate the current situation and outline strategies for final resolution of Left Wing Extremism. (250 words)







# Two years on, a flicker: Peace that has eluded Gaza for 75 years can only come through accommodation, statesmanship

Source: Indian express

**UPSC Relevance:** GS PAPER 2 International relations

## Introduction

Two years after the 2023 Hamas-led attack that **led to unprecedented Israeli military action in Gaza, the enclave remains devastated. Over 67,000 Palestinians have been killed—half of them women and children**. About 60% of homes and most civil infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, have been destroyed or damaged, making large parts of Gaza uninhabitable and triggering an immense humanitarian crisis.

Fact: Almost all of Gaza's 2.3 million people are displaced, with 82% of its land now inside Israeli militarized zones, leaving only 18% for 90% of the population to survive, and essential supply routes under near-complete siege.

## **Key Issues**

## 1. Catastrophic Humanitarian Toll

Widespread bombings have razed most of Gaza's infrastructure, with hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties and displacement—making basic survival nearly impossible for most of the population.

## 2. Unprecedented Displacement and Siege

2.3 million Gazans are now internally displaced, their homes destroyed, with only a shrinking fraction of the territory available for civilian life and nearly total breakdown of public health.

## 3. Failed Peace, Escalating Retaliation

Repeated cycles of violence involving Hamas, Israeli forces, and outside actors (notably Iran-backed Hezbollah and regional states) have thwarted all previous efforts at negotiated settlement or ceasefire.



## 4. Erosion of Regional Security

Expansion of Israeli control and weakening of Palestinian governing structure (Hamas and others) has led to further radicalization, the rise of new militant groups, and broader regional instability, undermining the prospects for both Israeli and Palestinian security.

## 5. Necessity for Statesmanship and Accommodation

> The editorial contends that only bold political accommodation, with statesmanship on all sides, can end Gaza's cycle of violence and suffering—a principle that has eluded all parties in 75 years but remains the only way out.

## **Global Practices**

Peace Processes and International Mediation

The Oslo Accords, Camp David summit (Egypt-Israel), and Good Friday Agreement (Northern Ireland) were possible through third-party mediation, guarantees, and phased accommodation of core grievances.







<b>Humanitarian Corridors</b>	In recent conflicts (Syria, Yemen), UN-backed routes for civilian evacuation and
and Safe Zones	essential supply have helped, though unevenly, to limit harm.
Track-II Diplomacy and	Many peace efforts harness non-government channels—community, diaspora,
Civil Society Bridges	and academic forums—for dialogue, confidence-building, and long-term
	reconciliation.

#### **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

Ministry of External	Urges international humanitarian support, calls for ceasefire, adherence to	
Affairs (India)	two-state vision, and prioritization of civilian safety and international law.	
Parliamentary Committee	Calls for active role in regional peace diplomacy and multi-level engagement,	
on External Affairs	while maintaining neutrality and endorsing global rule of law.	
Strategic Affairs Experts	c Affairs Experts Advise deeper humanitarian engagement, supporting UN, Red Crescent, and	
	credible NGOs while advocating for sustained political dialogue and	
	engagement with all key stakeholders.	

#### **Way Forward**

#### 1. Immediate Ceasefire and Humanitarian Relief

> International community must secure civilian protection, open humanitarian corridors, and restore basic services in Gaza.

#### 2. Initiate Unconditional Mediation

P Reinvigorate peace talks, involving neutral mediators, UN, regional players, and both Israeli and Palestinian leadership.

#### 3. Address Core Grievances for Lasting Solution

Focus on phased accommodation: territorial guarantees, security, rights, reparations, and mutual recognition as guiding principles.

#### 4. Support Palestinian Reconciliation and Governance

Back institutions and leaders willing to negotiate, foster unity between factions, and promote legitimate Palestinian self-governance.

#### 5. Engage Regional Powers and Build Civil Bridges

Mobilize regional alliances and grassroots organizations to address root causes and demilitarize the conflict environment.

#### **Conclusion**

Gaza's prolonged agony can only be ended by breaking the endless cycle of violence, blockade, and collective punishment. Statesmanship, genuine accommodation, and international solidarity—not revenge or siege offer the only realistic hope for peace and human dignity.

#### **Prelims MCQ**

Q1. According to the editorial, what proportion of Gaza's homes have been destroyed or damaged in the current conflict?

- a) 10%
- b) 30%
- c) 60%
- d) 90%



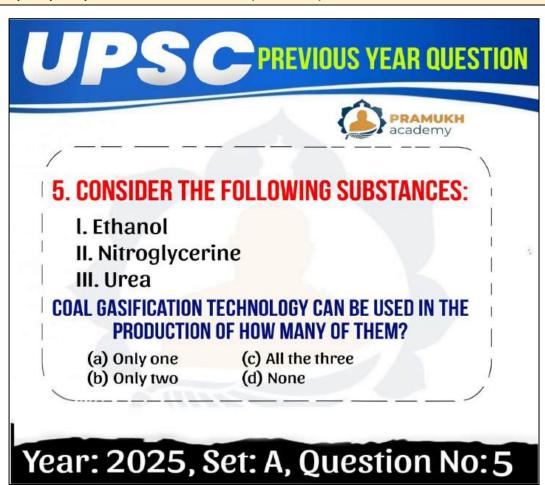




Answer: C) 60%

#### **Mains Question**

Q1. "Lasting peace in Gaza demands not only ceasefire but also mutual accommodation and statesmanship." Examine humanitarian, strategic, and diplomatic dimensions of the ongoing crisis, and propose principles for conflict resolution. (250 words)



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## Strategic Autonomy: Minister Jaishankar underlines its objective—To use relations with all major powers to accelerate India's rise

#### **UPSC** Relevance

- GS Paper 2: International Relations Strategic autonomy, multi-alignment, foreign policy doctrine, external balancing, India and major powers (US, Russia, China, Europe), Indo-Pacific.
- **GS Paper 2:** Governance Policy adaptability, institutional resilience, strategic decision-making.
- Essay/Interview: Evolution of Indian foreign policy, pragmatic diplomacy, maintaining independence in global affairs.

#### Introduction

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has recently emphasized India's commitment to "strategic autonomy" not as a static stance but as an ongoing, adaptive process. In shifting global dynamics, India aims to leverage ties with all major powers (US, Russia, Europe, China) to ensure its rise and avoid being boxed into any one camp or alliance, especially as multipolarity intensifies and the Western or Chinese frameworks assert new pressures.

#### AUTONOMY AUTONOMY FOR THROUGH -Sustainable -Political action stability -Military capacity -Regional leadership -Industrial capacity AUTONOMY FROM External contrains

#### **Key Issues**

#### 1. Strategic Autonomy as Dynamic, Not Static

Jaishankar cautions that "handling change continuously" means adapting, refreshing, and reassessing India's position with evolving global developments, rather than anchoring permanent alignments.

Fact: India has repeatedly avoided hard alignments—not joining US military blocs during the Cold War or more recently, not siding wholesale with either the US or Russia in the Ukraine conflict. Instead, India keeps a flexible, interest-driven approach in the Indo-Pacific and global multilateral platforms.

#### 2. Strength Lies in Multi-Alignment

India's diplomatic doctrine emphasizes engaging all powers, advancing bilateral relations with the US, Russia, EU, and simultaneously expanding ties with China, fostering greater leverage and flexibility for India's rise.

#### 3. Avoiding the "Hyphenation Trap"

Recent Western interest in "de-hyphenation"—not treating India and Pakistan as a pair—has reenergized New Delhi's foreign policy. India's policy is to pursue autonomous relations with all, avoiding being bracketed or defined by its ties with any singular nation.

#### 4. Strategic Decisions as Situational

Instead of 'sitting on the fence', Jaishankar argues India must actively assess and act where its interests require, refusing both rigid alignment and aimless neutrality.

#### 5. Managing Anxiety Over Great Power Competition

While US, China, and others jockey for influence, India maintains pragmatic, criteria-based diplomacy—balancing positive engagement with independent decision-making, as seen in energy, security, and multilateral trade.

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#### **Global Practices**







Middle Power	Countries like France, Brazil, and Indonesia adopt flexible external strategies,	
Autonomy	partner with multiple blocs, and lead niche global initiatives without hard	
	alignments.	
ASEAN's "Centrality"	Southeast Asian states use open, overlapping partnerships to maximize collective	
Principle	and national gains while avoiding entangling alliances.	
EU's Strategic	EU maneuvers between US, China, and Russia based on issue-by-issue analysis,	
Equidistance	safeguarding its autonomy in trade, climate, and digital regulation.	

#### **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

Ministry of External Affairs (Policy Planning)	Advocates adaptable, scenario-driven foreign policy, leveraging diversified partnerships, and calibrated stances on global issues.
National Security Council (NSC)	Recommends cross-domain scenario modeling and rapid adjustment protocols to handle fast-evolving security situations.
Standing Committee on External Affairs	Stresses continued investment in bilateral initiatives, strategic sectoral diplomacy, and resilience against global power polarization.

#### **Way Forward**

- 1. Institutionalize Adaptive Foreign Policy Frameworks: Regularly review key relationships, scenario-plan for big-power shifts, and maintain flexibility in security and economic agreements.
- 2. **Deepen Linkages across Strategic Sectors:** Expand strategic, tech, and commercial partnerships across traditional and emerging powers, safeguarding Indian interests.
- **3.** Leverage Multi-Alignment for Global Leadership: Use India's unique network to mediate, propose, and shape key multilateral fora (G20, BRICS, Indo-Pacific dialogues) as a bridge power.
- **4. Enhance Policy Resilience to External Shocks:** Build rapid response units within foreign policy and security institutions to address global crises with agility.
- 5. Communicate Policy Clarity to Domestic and Global Audiences: Use public diplomacy, think-tank engagement, and strategic communications to reinforce India's independent global position.

#### **Conclusion**

India's strategic autonomy depends on its ability to continuously evaluate and adapt to the flux in global power politics. Rather than choosing sides, India's rise will be best served by purposeful, interest-driven use of all available partnerships—making autonomy a path to strength, not a slogan.

#### **Prelims MCQ**

- Q1. What is the current objective of India's strategic autonomy doctrine as outlined by Minister Jaishankar?
  - a) Refuse all alliances
  - b) Only align with the US
  - c) Engage all major powers to accelerate India's rise
  - d) Rely solely on traditional partners

**Answer:** C) Engage all major powers to accelerate India's rise

#### **Mains Question**

Q1. "In a multipolar world, India's strategic autonomy must be continuously recalibrated rather than rigidly asserted." Analyse this statement with recent examples and suggest a framework for effective strategic autonomy in Indian foreign policy. (250 words)





## An anchor for India-U.K. ties, economic partnership

Source: The hindu

**UPSC Relevance**: International relations (GS PAPER 2)

#### Introduction

India and the United Kingdom signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) in July 2025—a milestone for their bilateral relationship. Prime Minister Keir Starmer's visit highlights the strategic foundation set by CETA, aiming to expand trade, investment, technology exchange, and professional mobility, especially in an era of global economic realignment and deepening talent flows.

Fact: The UK is India's sixth-largest FDI source, with nearly 5% of India's foreign direct investment, and ongoing negotiations seek to boost this further through regulatory reforms and easier market access on both sides.

#### **Key Issues**

#### 1. CETA as Game-Changer for Bilateral Ties

CETA goes beyond trade by promising cooperative frameworks for technology, security, talent mobility, and investment. Both countries already have strong pharmaceutical, digital, and financial links, which CETA solidifies further.

#### 2. Expanded **Professional** Mobility and **Regulatory Ease**

> The Double Contributions Convention (DCC) allows Indian professionals to work in the UK without dual social contribution payments for up to 3 years, reducing cost barriers and facilitating skilled migration.

#### The growing convergence between India-UK Relations India-UK Bilateral trade Trade in Billion pounds India-UK relations has been 131 elevated to 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' in 2021 Defence cooperations: Both signed Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP) in 2015; 30 9.2 20 10 FY 2021/22 FY 2022/23 Military exercises: Ajeya -10 Warrior Karkan Cobra Warrior etc Health: AstraZeneca-Serum Institute COVID-19 vaccine Trade and Investments Cooperations (3) collaboration exemplifies India-UK partnership in addressing global challenges India was the UK's 12th UK is the 6th India retains the position of second-largest source of for FDI after the US argest investo largest trading partner in this in India Indian diaspara: Only 1.8 % (2000-2023) of the population, contribute 6 % of Britain's GDP. period 2.1% of UK's total trade.

#### 3. Economic Diversification and Investment Growth

> The UK-India bilateral investment treaty and regulatory reforms attract more FDI, diversify sectoral ties (digital, pharma, financial services), and encourage UK innovation hubs in Indian markets.

#### 4. Strategic Alignment and Co-production

> Collaboration on defense, technology, AI, semiconductor research, and critical minerals shows recognition that security and economic domains are now deeply interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

#### 5. Vision for the Future—Vision 2035 and Sectoral Partnerships

Both governments are mapping long-term cooperation via Vision 2035: shared infrastructure, energy, education, advanced manufacturing, and climate action. The Strategic Technology Security Initiative and regular defense dialogues further this future orientation.

#### **Global Practices**

Next-Gen Economi	US-Mexico-Canada, Australia-UK FTA, and EU-Japan agreements expand trade
Partnerships	into joint innovation, research, and supply chain security.







<b>Talent Mobility Pacts</b>	Singapore, Germany, and Canada facilitate movement of professionals and	
	students, with mutual recognition of qualifications.	
Strategic Sector	South Korea-US, France-Japan focus new agreements on tech, green energy, and	
Bilateralism	sector-specific innovation/mobility.	

#### **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

Federation of Indian Chambers	Recommends further easing regulations for fintech, pharma, and tech
of Commerce and Industry	startups; calls for joint working groups in AI, critical minerals, and
(FICCI)	advanced manufacturing.
Ministry of Commerce and	Supports full ratification and future-oriented agreements, especially for
Industry	innovation-led sectors and technology co-creation.
NITI Aayog	Advises regular tracking of investment flows and coordination on
	sustainable infrastructure and climate-related initiatives.

#### **Way Forward**

#### 1. Accelerate Ratification and Implementation of CETA

Prioritize regulatory harmonization, ease financial services integration, and track joint investment in innovation clusters.

#### 2. Expand Professional Mobility and Talent Partnerships

➤ Broaden schemes like DCC, mutual recognition for tech qualifications, and streamlined migration for high-demand skills.

#### 3. Build Joint Innovation Hubs

Co-create digital, AI, and green tech centers in India and UK, fostering startups and bilateral intellectual property.

#### 4. Strengthen Security-Economy Nexus

Deepen cooperation in critical minerals, semiconductor supply chains, and joint cyber/defense initiatives.

#### 5. Promote Sustainability and Climate Leadership

Invest in shared climate action goals, resilient infrastructure, and co-funded renewable technologies.

#### **Conclusion**

India-U.K. CETA marks a new anchor for economic partnership: deepening trade links, enabling mobility, and turning both countries into strategic co-creators of next-generation markets and global standards. Stability and innovation in the partnership offer a model for the evolving world order.

#### **Prelims MCQ**

Q1. What major agreement was signed between India and the UK in July 2025 to anchor bilateral economic partnership?

a) FTA

b) CETA

c) TEPA

d) GATT

Answer: B) CETA

#### **Mains Question**

Q1. "The recent India-U.K. CETA signals a shift from traditional trade to co-creation in technology and talent." Analyse its strategic and economic implications for both countries. (250 words)





## India's mental health crisis, the cries and scars

Source: The Hindu

**UPSC Relevance:** GS PAPER 3 Health

#### Introduction

India faces a grave mental health crisis: the National Crime Records Bureau reported 1,71,418 suicides in 2023, with many tragedies unfolding quietly in homes, schools, and workplaces. Nearly 230 million Indians live with mental health or substanceuse disorders, but access to care remains critically low, with just 0.75 psychiatrists per 100,000 people—far below global averages.

**Fact:** Lifetime prevalence of mental illness is 10.6%, with treatment gaps between 70–92%. Four in ten affected individuals never see a healthcare professional, and distress is highest in rural, marginalized, and adolescent groups.

#### **Key Issues**

#### 1. Staggering Scale and Deepening Crisis

India's suicide rates reveal persistent social stress, economic hardship, and isolation; men make up 72.8% of suicide victims, with highest rates in rural, tribal states (Andaman, Sikkim, Kerala).

#### 2. Underfunded and Fragmented Infrastructure

The country has just 10,786 registered mental health professionals; most districts lack public counseling, crisis intervention, or affordable therapies. The Mental Healthcare Act (2017) is progressive but poorly implemented.

#### 3. Widespread Stigma and Policy Gaps

- Mental illness remains heavily stigmatized, discouraging help-seeking and government action. Poor awareness, fragmented care networks, and absence of social insurance worsen outcomes.
- 4. Technology as Substitute, Not Solution
  - With few professionals, many rely on online support, Al-driven chatbots, and informal peer networks. These can help but are no substitute for real, qualified care and human engagement.

#### National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) -

Establishment: 1986

Based on: Recommendations of Tandon Committee, National Police Commission (1977-81), and MHA Task Force

**Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

Headquarters: New Delhi

#### **Main Functions**

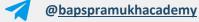
- 1. Acts as a central repository of crime and criminal information in India.
- 2. Collects, analyses, and disseminates crime data to assist investigation and policy-making.
- 3. Implements and monitors the Crime and **Criminal Tracking Network & Systems** (CCTNS) project.
- 4. Operates the National Digital Police Portal for citizen services like online FIRs and suspect searches.

#### 5. Impact on Vulnerable Groups

Adolescents, farmers, homemakers, and the elderly bear a disproportionate burden, with rural/school-based outreach almost missing, and low government spending on tailored support.

#### **Global Practices**

**Emergency** Mental UK, Australia, South Korea allocate dedicated crisis funds and mandate trauma **Health Funds** counseling in schools, workplaces, and healthcare systems.







Integrated	Brazil and US deploy local support networks, mobile outreach, and mandatory	
<b>Community Networks</b>	insurance coverage for therapy and medication.	
Cross-Ministerial Task	France, Japan, Canada link health, education, child welfare, and social protection	
Forces	ministries—making mental health a priority, not an afterthought.	

#### **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

National Mental Health Task	Advocates a cross-ministerial team, independent funding, and annual
Force	audits of prevalence, outreach, and suicide prevention outcomes.
Mental Health Policy Experts (NIMHANS/ICMR)	Recommend mandatory mental health services in schools/colleges, community-based trauma teams, and regulation of digital/AI platforms for quality and ethics.
Standing Committee on Health & Family Welfare	Urges expansion of social insurance, stricter data confidentiality, and campaign-based destigmatization.

#### **Way Forward**

#### 1. Recognize Mental Health as National Emergency

Center mental health in all policy, health, education, and welfare reforms; establish a crisis fund and cross-sectoral monitoring team.

#### 2. Expand Human and Institutional Capacity

Train more therapists, counselors, and social workers; scale scholarships, internships, and regulatory incentives.

#### 3. Implement Universal Outreach and Support

Mandate counseling in all schools, workplaces, and public health centers; fund suicide prevention campaigns and post-crisis support.

#### 4. Regulate and Integrate Digital Support Ethically

Supervise online and AI therapy platforms for standards, privacy, safety, and efficacy.

#### 5. Target Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups

Prioritize children, rural/tribal populations, farmers, and survivors/families with tailored, community-based programs.

#### **Conclusion**

India's mental health challenge is urgent and underestimated. Progress depends on recognizing mental health as a systemic emergency, prioritizing professional capacity, community care, and ethical innovation—and refusing to leave anyone's suffering in silence.

#### **Prelims MCQ**

Q1. As per NCRB data, what was the approximate number of suicides reported in India during 2023?

a) 75,000 b) 1,00,000 c) 1,71,000 d) 2,50,000

**Answer:** C) 1,71,000

#### **Mains Question**

Q1. "Mental health in India remains neglected despite the rising burden of suicide and psychological distress." Critically analyse the causes and recommend an integrated approach to address India's mental health crisis. (250 words)







## About Control, Not Culture: Women on stage, shining, choosing, speaking

Source: Indian express

**UPSC Relevance:** GS Paper 1 Indian society

#### Introduction

A beauty pageant in Rishikesh was disrupted by men citing "Indian culture" as a pretext to evict women participants. This event is emblematic of a wider pattern in India: public and private space is often contested by self-appointed gatekeepers seeking to police women's visibility, clothing, ambition, or voice. From Valentine's Day patrols to dress codes and workplace stereotypes, gender policing persists under a veneer of moral or cultural concern.

Fact: Incidents like Rishikesh's are not isolated; they reflect the wide reach of control — Miss cultural India contestants, TV celebrities, and students face routine dress codes, moral judgment, and public scrutiny based on gender.

#### **Key Issues**

#### 1. Cultural Policing as Power, Not Protection

> Calls to "protect culture" mask the true intent: control and diminish women's right to public visibility, ambition, or self-expression. Restrictions are less about tradition and more about maintaining compliance and silence.

#### 2. Hypocrisy and Double Standards

Western clothes, beauty pageants, and ambitious women are celebrated nationally, yet condemned in local settings when women step out of prescribed roles. The line between "moral" and "cultural" often becomes a tool of exclusion.

#### 3. The True Threat: Women's Agency

What unsettles bullies is not clothes or speech, but women's presence, autonomy, and willingness to shine and choose. The backlash to beauty pageants echoes the discomfort with women in politics, workplaces, or public life.

#### 4. Stigma, Shaming, and Social Silence

Many women, knowing the risks, self-censor or withdraw — the threat of vilification or violence is real. Yet, as the editorial notes, when women speak up, challenge bullies, and refuse silent compliance, the effect is transformative.

#### 5. Change through Solidarity, Not Shame

The refusal to comply, the solidarity shown among contestants who confronted hecklers in Rishikesh, signals hope: change begins when women support each other and claim public space together.

#### **Global Practices**

<b>Gender-Positive Public</b>	Countries like Iceland, Sweden, and Canada counter cultural policing with public	
Policies	education on gender equality, anti-harassment laws, and funding women's social	
	participation.	
Safe Spaces and	#MeToo, Women's Marches, and community networks globally foster collective	
Solidarity Movements	action, protecting and empowering women in contested spaces.	
Bystander Intervention	US, UK, and Australia use formal programs to train communities and responders	
Training	to interrupt harassment, support victims, and defuse gender policing.	







#### **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

National Commission for	Calls for robust enforcement of anti-harassment laws, awareness drives,
Women (NCW)	and monitoring of events likely to trigger gender bullying.
Ministry of Women and Child	Recommends expansion of safe public spaces, support for women's clubs,
Development	and annual campaigns against moral policing.
Standing Committee on	Proposes education reforms on gender rights, and legal support for
Social Justice	women facing social or workplace shaming.

#### **Way Forward**

#### 1. Enforce Anti-Harassment Laws

Rigorously implement legal protections, with local police and event organizers made accountable for bullying and gender violence.

#### 2. Expand Gender Equity Education

> Integrate gender equality, respect, and rights into every school curriculum and civic training initiative.

#### 3. Support Public Visibility and Shared Solidarity

Fund more women's clubs, public events, stage contests, and leadership programs in small and large towns.

#### 4. Promote Bystander and Peer Support Programs

Train communities to intervene, support victims, and challenge harassment or cultural policing in everyday spaces.

#### 5. Listen, Celebrate, and Elevate Women's Voices

Use media, arts, and storytelling to normalize women's visibility, agency, and ambition.

#### **Conclusion**

Women's struggle is not against 'culture' but coercive control. Empowerment grows when women are visible, speak up, and refuse shame—supported by solidarity and systemic change against bullies and gender policing.

#### **Prelims MCQ**

- Q1. According to the editorial, what is the deeper motive behind policing women's actions in public spaces?
  - a) Cultural protection
  - b) Moral uplift
  - c) Social control and power
  - d) Education reform

Answer: C) Social control and power

#### **Mains Question**

Q1. "Policing women's agency in India reflects deeper contestations over power, not just culture." Analyse patterns of gender policing and suggest how solidarity and systemic reforms can expand women's public space. (250 words)







## India's Demographic Mission: A Call for Holistic and Inclusive Planning

Source: the hindu

#### **UPSC** Relevance

- GS Paper II (Governance, Social Justice): Population Policy, Migration, and Welfare Schemes
- GS Paper III (Economy & Development): Human Resource Development, Inclusive Growth

#### Introduction

On August 15, 2025, India announced a Demographic Mission, highlighting concerns over undocumented migration from Bangladesh and demographic changes in border regions. However, India's demographic debate must transcend narrow population monitoring and evolve into a comprehensive national demographic strategy that aligns with human development, social security, and global transformations.

India, now the world's most populous nation (1.43 billion, UN 2024), stands at a demographic crossroads — with opportunities from a youthful population and challenges of ageing, migration, and uneven development.

#### **Key Issues and Challenges**

- 1. Narrow Policy Scope: The current demographic mission risks being confined to population monitoring and migration control, rather than addressing fertility, ageing, and human capital.
- Uneven Regional Demographics: Fertility rates and population growth vary widely — from belowreplacement fertility in southern states to higher growth in northern and border regions, creating developmental imbalances.
- Ageing Population & Social Security Stress: The share of elderly (60+) in India is expected to rise to 20% by 2050, demanding reforms in pensions, healthcare, and social security systems.

#### **India at a Demographic Crossroads**

- With a population of 1.44 billion in 2024, India is the world's most populous country and stands at a crucial demographic turning point, marked by a youth-heavy population.
- 2. Its median age in 2025 is 29 years (UNFPA), reflecting a young demographic profile.
- 3. The total fertility rate is 2.0 (NFHS-5), which is below the replacement level, indicating a slowing population growth.
- **4. Urbanisation stands at 36%** (UN World Urbanisation Prospects 2024), showing gradual migration toward cities.
- The old-age dependency ratio is projected to increase from 14% in 2020 to 20% by 2035, signaling an impending rise in the elderly population.
- 6. The working-age population is expected to peak at 68% by 2040, offering a potential demographic dividend if effectively leveraged.
- 7. India's demographic diversity can be a source of sustained growth if channeled through inclusive and strategic policies.
- 8. A holistic demographic approach must extend beyond population control, addressing fertility, mortality, migration patterns, and regional disparities.
- **4. Migration and Labour Challenges**: Lack of accurate migration data hampers planning for **urban infrastructure**, labour markets, and social protection for internal migrants.
- 5. **Gender and Fertility Transition**: Declining fertility and a skewed sex ratio affect the workforce and long-term demographic stability.

#### **Global Practices**

Japan& SouthAdopted comprehensive ageing strategies combining lifelong learning, healthcare,Koreaand pension reforms.







Germany	Introduced migrant integration programs to offset workforce decline.	
China	Shifted from the one-child policy to pro-natalist measures and family welfare incentives.	
Nordic Countries	Implemented gender-balanced policies (childcare, parental leave) to sustain population replacement levels.	

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

National Commission on Population	Advocated for linking population policy with education, skill		
(NCP)	development, and employment.		
Economic Survey 2023–24	Stressed the need for a "demographic dividend mission" integrating health, gender, and youth skilling.		
NITI Aayog Report (2022)	Suggested building state-wise demographic resilience and ageing preparedness frameworks.		
Standing Committee on Labour & Employment (2021)	Recommended data-driven migration management and social protection for informal workers.		

#### **Way Forward**

- 1. Integrated Demographic Framework: Establish a National Demographic and Human Capital Commission to align fertility, ageing, and migration policies with developmental planning.
- 2. Leverage Technology for Data Integration: Create a unified demographic data platform linking Census, NFHS, and labour databases.
- 3. **Social Security Reform**: Develop contributory and universal pension models to address the ageing challenge.
- **4. Skill and Health Investment**: Prioritize investments in health, education, and digital skill-building to harness the youth dividend.
- **5. Migration Management**: Formulate inclusive urban policies recognizing migrant contributions and ensuring social entitlements portability.

#### **Conclusion**

A holistic demographic mission must move beyond population control to embrace human capital development, migration governance, and ageing adaptation. Demography should be seen not as a threat but as a transformative force — shaping India's sustainable and inclusive growth in the 21st century.

#### **UPSC Practice Questions**

- Q1. Which of the following statements regarding India's demographic trends is correct?
  - 1. The share of elderly (60+) in India is projected to reach 20% by 2050.
  - 2. The National Commission on Population functions under the Ministry of Labour.
  - 3. India's fertility rate is currently below replacement level.

#### Select the correct answer using the code below:

a) 1 only

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

Ans: B

#### Mains (10 Marks):

Q1. "India's demographic diversity is both an opportunity and a challenge. Discuss the need for a holistic demographic policy framework in light of emerging trends."







# Crime patterns: The 2023 NCRB report shows rise in cybercrime and crimes against tribals

#### **UPSC Utility**

- **GS2/GS3**: Crime data interpretation, law & order challenges, vulnerable sections, technology in governance.
- Essay/Interview: "India's crime patterns: Old wounds, new risks."

#### **Enhanced Introduction**

The 2023 NCRB report provides critical insight into evolving crime trends in India. While comparative interstate crime statistics require caution due to reporting differences, the national picture reveals significant policy challenges: a notable rise in cybercrime, crimes against Scheduled Tribes (STs), and persistent difficulties in law enforcement, particularly in tribal and frontier regions. These patterns reflect India's digital transition, demographic vulnerabilities, and supply-demand gaps in policing and justice.

Fact: Cybercrime saw a 31.2% increase while crimes against STs surged 28.8%. In contrast, murder rates decreased by 2.8%, with sharp variances driven by regional law enforcement effectiveness and socio-political factors.

#### **Key Issues and Deeper Analysis**

#### 1. Cybercrime Surge & Policing Gaps

- ➤ **Drivers of Growth**: Expanding internet penetration, digital adoption, and the rise of remote services have outpaced the capacity of policing agencies, especially in detection and technical skills.
- Emerging Patterns: The growth in cybercrime includes financial fraud, identity theft, and online extortion, often targeting digitally vulnerable populations. The lack of specialized cyber units and slow prosecution means most cases remain unresolved.
- Quality Response: Advanced countries (US, UK, Estonia) invest in digital forensics, Aldriven monitoring, and real-time cyber hotlines, training officers and teaming up with fintech firms—a model India must emulate.

## 2. Crimes Against Tribals: Vulnerabilities and Failures

Geographical and Social Factors: Tribals in Manipur, MP, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and northeast states face higher rates of crime rooted in ethnic violence, isolation, and under-resourced judicial mechanisms.

#### National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB):

#### 1. Establishment:

The NCRB was established in 1986 based on recommendations from the Tandon Committee, the National Police Commission (1977–1981), and the Ministry of Home Affairs Taskforce (1985).

#### 2. Purpose:

It functions as a central repository of information on crime and criminals, aiding investigators in connecting crimes with perpetrators.

#### 3. Organizational Details:

NCRB operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and is headquartered in New Delhi.

#### 4. Key Functions:

- Maintains a "national warehouse" of fingerprint records for Indian and foreign criminals.
- Assists in tracking interstate criminals through fingerprint searches.





- Law Enforcement Shortfalls: The surge reflects gaps in police outreach, difficult terrain, and ongoing insurgencies as well as slow implementation of protective legal frameworks (e.g., SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act).
- Integrated Approach: Brazil, Australia, and Kenya deploy tribal liaison officers, mobile courts, and community policing to address similar vulnerabilities, bridging trust gaps and improving reporting.

#### 3. Systemic Challenges: Data, Process, Trust

- ➤ Underreporting and Mixed Indicators: The NCRB's year-to-year variances (e.g., sudden drops and surges) highlight the dependency on registration/reporting accuracy. Many crimes—especially domestic violence, sexual offenses, and cyber offenses—remain hidden.
- ➤ **Demand for Smart Policing**: India needs improved digital complaint mechanisms, cross-jurisdictional data sharing, faster action under POCSO for child crimes, and training to sensitize police about tribal and digital crimes.

#### 4. Legal and Policy Recommendations

- Fast-Track Tribes & Cybercrime Justice: Set up special fast-track courts for tribal crimes and Alenabled digital courts for cybercrime, with integrated support services (psychological, tech, legal).
- **Community Awareness and Inclusion**: Conduct educational drives on digital safety, tribal rights, and the ways to access support or report crimes, particularly in schools, rural areas, and local media.
- Regular Audit and Policy Feedback: Adopt quarterly crime audits and citizen feedback tools to monitor legal outcomes and guide resource allocation.

#### **Conclusion**

The new NCRB data reveals India's crime landscape in flux—with traditional offenses declining and new, technology-driven or socially marginal crimes surging. To protect the most vulnerable—tribals, children, and digital citizens—India must modernize policing, enact fast justice, and prioritize inclusion in legal protections, ensuring no crime remains hidden or unaddressed.

#### **Prelims MCQ**

- Q1. The highest percent increase in crime categories for 2023 as per the NCRB report was seen in:
  - a) Dowry deaths
  - b) Cybercrime
  - c) Crimes against STs
  - d) Murder

Answer: B) Cybercrime

#### **Mains Question**

Q1. "Crime patterns in India now reflect digital risks and persistent social vulnerabilities." Examine the rise of cybercrime and tribal offenses in light of recent NCRB data; suggest reforms for tech-led and inclusive policing. (250 words)

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## Student Notes 💪







## **Power of Green: Strengthening the Global Renewable Energy Transition**

**Source: Indian Express** 

#### **UPSC** Relevance

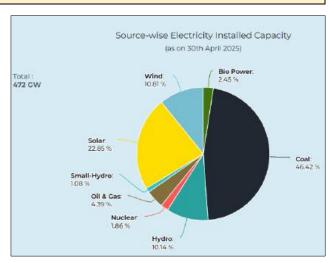
GS Paper 3: Environment, Energy, Climate Change, Sustainable Development

GS Paper 2: International Relations – Energy Diplomacy

#### Introduction

In recent years, renewable energy has emerged as the fastest-growing source of electricity globally. The *Ember Report 2025* reveals that renewable energy sources now account for over 30% of global electricity generation, up by 7% since 2015.

While this signifies a monumental shift toward sustainability, the world still grapples with energy inequality, policy delays, and the high capital cost of green transitions — especially for developing nations. India, with its ambitious renewable targets and leadership in the International Solar Alliance (ISA),



has become a symbol of the developing world's energy aspirations.

#### **Key Issues and Challenges**

#### 1. Uneven Growth of Renewable Energy:

- While global renewable capacity has grown steadily, Europe and North America dominate, whereas Asia and Africa face financial and infrastructural constraints.
- In India, renewables account for ~43% of installed capacity, yet fossil fuels still provide ~70% of electricity generation.

#### 2. Dependence on Fossil Fuels:

- Despite the rise of clean energy, the fossil fuel share in total energy supply remains high globally (≈80%).
- Coal-based energy is still expanding in many developing countries due to affordability.

#### 3. Financial and Technological Barriers:

- ➤ High initial investment, lack of grid stability, and storage limitations hinder adoption.
- > Developing nations face restricted access to green finance and technology transfer.

#### 4. Climate Vulnerabilities:

Extreme weather conditions—droughts, heatwaves, and changing rainfall patterns—affect renewable infrastructure performance.

#### 5. Policy and Political Will:

Inconsistent climate policies in developed economies (e.g., U.S. withdrawal from Paris Accord under Trump) undermine collective global progress.

#### **Global Practices**

European Union (EU) Enforces strict renewable mandates under the **Green Deal**, targeting **net-zero by 2050** and banning new fossil fuel plants.







China	Leads global solar manufacturing and installation, adding >50% of world solar capacity	
Cillia	in 2024. Heavy state investment in battery and grid innovation.	
United States	Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), 2022 provides over \$370 billion in green energy incentives	
	driving private sector participation.	
Nordic Model	Denmark and Norway integrate <b>wind-solar hybrids</b> with strong public-private	
Noral Nodel	cooperation and universal grid connectivity.	

#### **Indian Policy Framework and Initiatives**

National Solar Mission (2010)	Target of <b>280 GW by 2030</b> , part of National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).	
National Hydrogen Mission (2021)	To position India as a global hub for green hydrogen production.	
International Solar Alliance (ISA)	A multilateral initiative with <b>116 member nations</b> promoting affordable solar access.	
Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022	Introduces carbon credit trading and strengthens efficiency norms.	
PM-KUSUM Scheme	Promotes solar irrigation and decentralized energy generation for farmers.	

#### **Way Forward**

- 1. Green Financing & Technology Transfer: Expand Green Climate Fund (GCF) access and encourage concessional lending for clean energy projects.
- 2. Grid Modernization & Energy Storage: Invest in battery innovation, smart grids, and pumped hydro storage to stabilize renewable supply.
- 3. Balanced Transition: Gradually phase out fossil subsidies while ensuring energy access for low-income households.
- 4. Regional Cooperation: Promote South-South collaboration through ISA, BIMSTEC, and BRICS Green Energy Forum.
- 5. Skill and Industry Development: Encourage renewable energy entrepreneurship, R&D, and vocational training in solar and wind technologies.

#### **UPSC Practice Questions**

#### Q1. Which of the following are correctly matched?

- 1. International Solar Alliance Headquartered in Gurugram, India
- 2. National Hydrogen Mission Ministry of Power
- 3. PM-KUSUM Solar pumps for farmers

#### Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

Ans: C

## Mains (GS Paper 3 – 10 Marks)

Q1. "Discuss the role of renewable energy in achieving sustainable economic growth in India. How can India balance its energy security with climate commitments?"







## Focus on Rabi: Strengthening Climate-Smart Agriculture and Irrigation Infrastructure

**Source: Indian Express** 

#### **UPSC Relevance**

GS Paper 3: Agriculture – Irrigation, Cropping Patterns, Subsidies, Climate Adaptation

GS Paper 2: Government Policies and Schemes related to Rural Development

#### Introduction

India's agriculture continues to remain highly dependent on the southwest monsoon, making it vulnerable to erratic rainfall and climate variability.

The 2025 monsoon season recorded 7.9% abovenormal rainfall, leading to a bumper harvest of kharif crops but also raising concerns of flooding and crop damage in certain areas.

However, this surplus rainfall has recharged reservoirs to 91.4% of capacity, setting a strong foundation for the rabi cropping season, which relies more on irrigation and stored water rather than direct monsoon rains.

This highlights the need for climate-smart agricultural strategies — focusing on rabi

#### Difference between Rabi and Kharif Crops

### Rabi Crops

- are cultivated during the winter se
- ese are convention of a at is from September to April. e Rabi seeds are sown during slightly urmer months, which are September-O

## Kharif Crops

- In Arabic Kharif means "autumn season".
   Kharif crops are also known as monsoon
- Kharif crops are also known as Kharif harvest
- or autumn crops.

   These are cultivated in the rainy or monsoon
- season that is from April to October.

  The Kharif seeds are sown in the beginning of the monsoon that is during April-May
- The growth of crops requires hot and humid
- . The flowering of Kharif Crops requires longer
- The harvest is done at the end of the monsoon or at the starting of the winter season that is September-October. • Kharif crops require rain water and depend on
- the rain pattern for growth.

  Examples of Kharif Crops are rice, bajra, maize, cotton, jowar, sorghum, soybean, jute, groundnut, etc.

productivity, irrigation infrastructure, and sustainable input use rather than untargeted farm subsidies.

#### **Key Challenges in Indian Agriculture**

- 1. Monsoon Dependence: Around 52% of India's net sown area remains rain-fed, making agriculture vulnerable to rainfall fluctuations.
- 2. Kharif Instability: Unpredictable monsoon onset, long dry spells, and intense rainfall events have reduced kharif reliability.
- 3. Irrigation Inefficiency: Groundwater depletion and canal water losses hinder rabi potential despite reservoir recharge.
- 4. Overdependence on Subsidies: Untargeted fertilizer, electricity, and water subsidies encourage overuse, leading to soil degradation and fiscal stress.
- 5. Post-Harvest Challenges: Inadequate cold storage, procurement delays, and weak agri-logistics limit returns on rabi crops such as pulses and oilseeds.

#### **Data and Trends**

- 1. Reservoir Levels (Oct 2025): 91.4% of aggregate storage capacity favorable for irrigation.
- 2. Rabi Foodgrain Output (2024-25): 185.9 million tonnes (MT), higher than kharif output of 184.9 MT.
- Key Rabi Crops: Wheat, pulses, oilseeds, mustard, potato, tomato, and garlic.
- Water-use Efficiency: Micro-irrigation can save up to 30–40% water and improve yields by 20–25%.

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#### **Global Practices**







Israel's Drip Irrigation Model	Achieved 90% irrigation efficiency through smart water management and crop zoning.	
China's Diversified Crop	Integrates digital weather mapping with seasonal crop rotation for	
Planning	water optimization.	
Australia's Water Trading	Allows flexible use of irrigation water between farmers, improving	
System	equity and efficiency.	
FAO's Climate-Smart	Promotes resource-efficient farming through integrated soil-water-	
Agriculture (CSA)	crop management.	

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

NITI Aayog (Water Management	Advocates scaling up micro-irrigation coverage beyond 20	
Report)	million hectares by 2030.	
Dalwai Committee on Doubling	Emphasized crop diversification and irrigation-led productivity	
Farmers' Income (2017)	over subsidies.	
Economic Survey 2023–24	Suggested a shift from subsidy-driven to investment-driven	
	agricultural support.	
National Water Policy Draft (2021)	Recommends "more crop per drop" and decentralized water	
	harvesting through tanks and ponds.	

#### **Way Forward**

- 1. **Invest in Irrigation Infrastructure:** Expand micro-irrigation, drip, and sprinkler systems, especially in eastern and central India.
- 2. **Promote Crop Diversification:** Encourage pulses, oilseeds, and horticulture under rabi through market-linked incentives.
- 3. Rationalize Subsidies: Replace blanket subsidies with targeted direct benefit transfers (DBT) and climate-linked incentives.
- **4. Leverage Digital Agriculture:** Use satellite mapping, soil moisture sensors, and AI-based advisories for irrigation scheduling.
- **5. Enhance Water Harvesting:** Encourage community ponds, watershed management, and canal modernization for sustained rabi productivity.

#### **Conclusion**

India's agricultural sustainability lies in **reducing monsoon dependence** and **strengthening the rabi backbone**. Instead of expanding untargeted subsidies, investment should be directed toward **climate-resilient irrigation**, **agricultural innovation**, and **efficient water governance**.

A shift to **climate-smart rabi planning** will not only stabilize farmer incomes but also make Indian agriculture future-ready.

#### **UPSC Practice Questions**

- Q1. Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding Rabi crops in India?
  - 1. They are sown during the southwest monsoon and harvested in winter.
  - 2. They require irrigation rather than direct rainfall.
  - 3. Pulses and oilseeds are major rabi crops.

Select the correct answer using the code below:





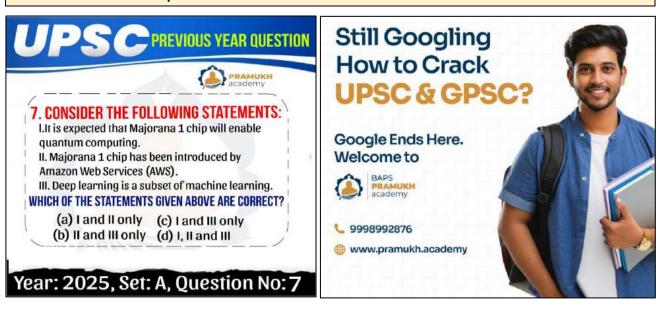


- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Ans: B

#### Mains (GS Paper 3 – 10 Marks):

Q1. "Discuss how the promotion of climate-smart irrigation infrastructure can enhance rabi productivity and reduce India's dependence on monsoon rainfall."









## **Estimating India's Potential Growth Rate**

#### **UPSC Relevance**

- GS Paper 3: Indian Economy Growth & Development, Investment, Capital Formation
- GS Paper 2: Economic Policy, Government Interventions
- **Prelims:** Terms ICOR, GFCF, Potential Growth Rate

#### **Introduction**

India's economic growth has been resilient in the post-pandemic years, with average real GDP growth of 9.9% between FY 2022–23 and FY 2024–25.

However, the **first quarter of FY 2025–26** recorded a **GDP growth of 7.8%**, leading economists to reassess India's *potential growth rate* — the long-term sustainable growth achievable without triggering inflationary pressures.

Most estimates, including those by **C. Rangarajan** and **D.K. Srivastava**, suggest that **India's potential growth currently stands around 6.5%**, with the scope to rise further through improved investment and productivity dynamics.

#### **Gross Domestic Product (GDP): Overview**

- 1. **Definition:** Total monetary value of all final goods and services produced within a country in a specific period (usually a year).
- 2. Significance: Indicates the overall economic performance, growth, and development of a nation.

#### Types of GDP

#### 1. Nominal GDP

- Measured at **current market prices**, without adjusting for inflation.
- Useful for same-year comparisons, but not across years.
- > Generally higher than real GDP due to inflation.

### 2. Real GDP

- ➤ **Adjusted for inflation** using the GDP deflator.
- > Reflects actual growth in output by holding prices constant.
- Formula:
- ➤ Real GDP=Nominal GDPPrice Deflator\text{Real GDP} = \frac{\text{Nominal GDP}}{\text{Price Deflator}}Real GDP=Price DeflatorNominal GDP

#### 3. GDP Per Capita

- Measures average income or output per person.
- Indicates living standards and productivity.
- > Can be calculated in **nominal**, **real**, or **PPP terms**.
- > Formula:
- ➤ GDP Per Capita=Total GDPPopulation\text{GDP Per Capita} = \frac{\text{Total GDP}}{\text{Population}}GDP Per Capita=PopulationTotal GDP

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#### 4. GDP Growth Rate

- Measures **percentage change in GDP** over time (quarterly or annually).
- ➤ **High growth:** May cause inflation → Central banks raise interest rates.
- ➤ **Negative growth:** Signals recession → May lead to monetary stimulus.
- 5. GDP (Purchasing Power Parity PPP)
  - Adjusts GDP for differences in price levels and living costs across countries.







#### **Key Data and Observations**

Indicator	FY 2022–23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	Q1 2025–26
Real GDP Growth	7.6%	9.2%	6.5%	7.8%
Real GVA Growth	7.6%	8.5%	6.9%	7.6%
Real Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)	34.5%	34.6%	34.6%	33.6%
ICOR (Incremental Capital Output Ratio)	4.8 (avg.)	5.2	_	_

#### **Interpretation:**

Despite robust growth, the **capital efficiency (ICOR)** has worsened slightly, and **private investment remains subdued**, indicating structural constraints in achieving a higher potential growth trajectory.

#### **Key Issues & Challenges**

- 1. Slowing Investment Growth:
  - > The Gross Fixed Capital Formation rate stagnated around 34.5% for three years.
  - Private corporate investment share fell from 37% to 34.4% (FY 2021–22 to FY 2023–24).
- 2. High ICOR (5.2):
  - ➤ Higher ICOR implies **lower efficiency of capital** more investment is needed for each unit of growth.
- 3. **Global Uncertainties:** Trade slowdown, tariff barriers, and weak global demand affect export-led growth potential.
- 4. Low Productivity Gains: Capital-deepening industries are not translating into proportional output growth.
- **5. Consumption Saturation:** Rising per-capita income is shifting demand from goods to services, moderating manufacturing-led growth.
- 6. **Fiscal Constraints:** Capital expenditure by the Centre fell from **28.9% (FY 2023–24)** to **10.8% (FY 2024–25)**, limiting public investment push.

#### **Global Practices**

China's Investment-Driven	Maintained a GFCF rate above 40%, enabling consistent 8–9% growth	
Growth Model	for two decades.	
South Korea's Productivity	Focused on technology upgradation and export diversification to	
Strategy	sustain high growth.	
U.S. Supply-Side Innovation	Stimulates private investment through R&D incentives, tax credits, and	
Model	capital market deepening.	
EU's Green Transition Model	Investing in sustainable infrastructure to combine growth with	
	environmental goals.	

#### **Committee Insights & Institutional Recommendations**

Economic Survey (2023–24)	Advocates pushing <b>GFCF to 36–38% of GDP</b> to sustain 7%+ growth.	
Rangarajan Committee on	Emphasized capital formation and labour productivity as twin pillars	
Growth (NITI Aayog, 2021)	of potential growth.	
Finance Commission Reports	Highlighted the need for balanced fiscal consolidation while	
	protecting capital expenditure.	
RBI Study (2024)	Suggested that India's potential growth could reach 7% by 2030 if	
	private investment and export competitiveness improve.	





#### **Way Forward**

- 1. Revive Private Investment: Improve business confidence via predictable taxation and faster project clearances.
- 2. Increase Public Capex Efficiency: Prioritize infrastructure projects with high employment and multiplier effects.
- 3. Boost Productivity: Invest in AI, digital skilling, and R&D to enhance total factor productivity.
- **4. Diversify Exports:** Strengthen integration into **global value chains** and expand FTAs.
- **5. Lower ICOR through Reforms:** Rationalize energy, logistics, and credit costs to improve investment efficiency.

#### **Conclusion**

India's economic outlook remains promising, but raising potential growth from 6.5% to 7%+ will require a stronger investment cycle, both public and private.

Policymakers must focus on **enhancing capital productivity, technology absorption**, and **labour market reforms** to achieve inclusive and sustainable long-term growth.

Sustained structural reforms — not cyclical booms — will determine India's future as a global growth leader.

#### **UPSC Practice Questions**

- Q1. Which of the following statements best describes the Incremental Capital Output Ratio (ICOR)?
  - 1. It measures the additional capital required to produce an additional unit of output.
  - 2. A higher ICOR implies greater efficiency in investment.
  - 3. India's ICOR has averaged around 5 in recent years.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

Ans: A

#### Mains (GS Paper 3 – 10 Marks):

Q1. "Discuss the key determinants of India's potential growth rate and analyse how investment and productivity reforms can help raise it beyond 6.5%."

Student	Notes	4
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## A Green Transition Accelerating at Express Speed

#### **UPSC** Relevance

GS Paper 3: Infrastructure – Energy, Railways, Environment, Sustainable Development

**GS Paper 2:** Government Policies, Public Sector Modernisation

Prelims: Hydrogen Fuel Coach, NTPC Green Energy, IRFC Green Bond

#### Introduction

India's first hydrogen-powered coach, successfully tested at the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai, in July 2025, marks a technological and environmental milestone in the Indian Railways' green transition journey. This initiative underlines India's commitment to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 for the Railways, four decades ahead of its national target (2070).

With **24 million passengers** and **3 million tonnes of freight** moved daily, the decarbonisation of Indian Railways represents a major pillar of India's **climate leadership and sustainable infrastructure vision**.

#### **Key Initiatives and Data**

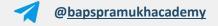
Sector	Achievements / Targets	
Electrification	45,000 km electrified (98% of broad-gauge network)	
Renewable Energy	553 MW solar, 103 MW wind, 100 MW hybrid commissioned	
Energy Efficiency	2,000+ stations & 500 buildings powered by solar; "Shunya" net-zero initiative	
Hydrogen Train	"Hydrogen for Heritage" plan to deploy 35 hydrogen-powered trains	
Freight Green Shift	Aim to move 45% freight from road to rail by 2030	
Finance Mobilisation	IRFC's \$500 million green bond + NTPC Green Energy partnership	
<b>Emission Reduction Target</b>	Avoid 60 million tonnes of CO₂ by 2030	

#### **Policy and Institutional Measures**

- 1. Green Financing Expansion:
  - Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) issued \$500 million green bond in FY 2023-24.
  - > NTPC Green Energy MoU to supply renewable power for traction.
- 2. Hydrogen & Biofuel Integration:
  - > Hydrogen fuel cell and biodiesel adoption underway for non-electrified routes.
- 3. Multimodal Green Hubs:
  - Railway stations to evolve into "multi-modal green transport hubs" integrating buses, EVs, and bicycle sharing.
- 4. Technological Upgradation:
  - > Focus on lightweight materials, AI-based energy optimisation, and aerodynamic locomotives.
- 5. Behavioural Change & Certification:
  - Green certification for trains and carbon labelling for passenger services to drive awareness.

#### **Climate Finance Takes the Main Line**

- 1. Under Union Budget 2024–25, the transport sector received major climate allocations —
- 2. ~₹7,500 crore for renewable energy and ₹2,450 crore for the Railway Logistics Project.
- 3. The **Ministry of Finance** included Indian Railways in its core **green financing objectives**, expanding climate-linked bonds and public-private partnerships.







#### **Global Parallels**

Country	Initiative	Lesson for India
Germany	Coradia iLint hydrogen trains	Early adoption of green hydrogen mobility
Japan	JR East's hybrid locomotives	Emphasis on efficiency and reliability
France	SNCF Green Freight Plan	Integration of low-carbon logistics
China	100% electrification on key routes	Infrastructure scale-up as climate strategy

#### **Challenges**

- 1. High upfront cost of hydrogen technology and storage.
- 2. Coordination gaps between Ministry of Railways, NTPC, and DISCOMs.
- 3. Slow progress in last-mile electrification and freight green corridors.
- **4.** Requirement for **sustained behavioural change** among commuters and logistics users.

#### **Way Forward**

- 1. **Green Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage innovation-led financing for renewable traction and EV integration.
- 2. Hydrogen Ecosystem Development: Accelerate production hubs and storage infrastructure.
- 3. Skill & R&D Collaboration: Promote industry-academia partnerships for low-emission transport research.
- 4. Behavioural Transformation: Integrate green mobility awareness in railway campaigns.
- 5. Holistic Climate Planning: Link railway transition with National Hydrogen Mission and Gati Shakti framework.

#### **Conclusion**

The Indian Railways' transformation is not just an environmental move but a **strategic leap towards sustainable mobility and energy independence**.

If executed effectively, India can set a **global benchmark for green public transport**, proving that **large staterun systems can decarbonise without fiscal strain**.

By 2030, Indian Railways' **net-zero target** could prevent emissions equivalent to **13 million cars**, positioning India as a **global leader in climate-smart infrastructure**.

#### **UPSC Practice Questions**

- Q1. Which of the following are part of Indian Railways' green transition initiatives?
  - 1. Hydrogen for Heritage Plan
  - 2. IRFC Green Bonds
  - 3. NTPC Green Energy MoU
  - 4. Biofuel blending in freight trains

#### Select the correct answer:

a) 1, 2, and 3 onlyb) 2 and 3 onlyc) 1, 3, and 4 onlyd) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Ans: D

#### Mains (GS Paper 3 - 10 Marks):

Q1. "Indian Railways' decarbonisation plan could become a global benchmark for sustainable mobility." Examine the progress, challenges, and opportunities in India's green railway transformation.







## The evolving political dynamics in volatile Bangladesh

Source: The hindu

#### **UPSC Utility**

- GS2 (International Relations, Polity): South Asia politics, democracy, civil-military relations, electoral systems
- Essay/Interview: "Volatility and reform in neighborhood politics: The Bangladesh case.

#### Introduction

As Bangladesh heads toward its February 2026 general election, student activism, Islamist resurgence, and discontent with established parties are reshaping the political landscape. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Islamist-backed Jamat-e-Islami (JEI) are positioning themselves for influence, capitalizing on political uncertainty and popular frustrations after years of Awami League-led technocratic governance.



#### India-Bangladesh Relations - Key Facts

- 1. Defence Cooperation:
  - Joint exercises: Exercise Sampriti (Army), Exercise Bongosagar (Navy), Coordinated Patrol (Navy).
- 2. Economic & Trade:
  - Bangladesh = India's largest trade partner in South Asia; India = Bangladesh's second-largest trade partner in Asia.
  - ➤ Bilateral trade (FY 2023-24): USD 12.9 billion
    - ✓ India → Bangladesh: USD 11.06 billion
    - ✓ Bangladesh → India: USD 1.8 billion
  - Key exports to Bangladesh: cotton, petroleum products, engineering goods, chemicals
  - **Key imports from Bangladesh:** apparel, textiles, jute goods, aerospace parts
- 3. Energy & Connectivity:
  - India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline: first cross-border energy pipeline, capacity 1 MMTPA HSD.
  - > Major connectivity projects: Akhaura-Agartala rail link, Khulna-Mongla port rail line, Maitri Setu.
  - ➤ **Maitree Super Thermal Power Project:** operational, supplies power to Bangladesh grid; joint venture (BIFPCL) between NTPC and Bangladesh Power Development Board.
- **4. Multilateral Cooperation:** Active collaboration in **SAARC, BIMSTEC, Indian Ocean Rim Association** for economic and strategic ties.
- 5. Recent Development: PM Modi met Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus at BIMSTEC Summit 2025, first interaction since Sheikh Hasina's ouster.

#### **Key Issues and Analytical Depth**

- 1. Rise of Non-Traditional Political Forces
  - Student Activism and New Parties:

Fact: The interim government's reliance on non-partisan advisers and the high visibility of student- and Islamist-linked figures at global forums (e.g., UNGA 2025) signal increased contestation, with two-party system assumptions being

actively challenged.





- Youth-driven platforms like the National Citizen Party (NCP) have gained visibility, energizing antiincumbency sentiment and introducing new leaders to challenge the Awami League and BNP's duopoly.
- Islamist Influence:
- The Jamat-e-Islami actively supports the interim administration, seeking to leverage the absence of exiled BNP/Jamat leaders and ties with global Islamism to expand its base.

#### 2. Contestation & Popular Frustration

- Leadership Crisis in BNP:
- Aging, exiled leadership (Khaleda Zia, T. Rahman) has left the BNP rudderless. Internal divisions about whether to engage with or boycott the election fuel instability.
- Public Discontent:
- Price inflation, scandals, and perceived disconnect between real governance and elite politics have amplified calls for reform and inclusiveness—especially among youth.

#### 3. Army's Strategic Posture

- Muted but Decisive Role:
- Bangladesh's military remains in the background, but retains the capacity to arbitrate in moments of crisis. Unlike previous coups, current leadership under Gen. Zaman is cautious, preferring civilian solutions while keeping options open if security deteriorates.
- Legal and Constitutional Uncertainties:
- Debates on the 1975 coup, indemnity statutes, and demands for review highlight unresolved fissures, as the army quietly scrutinizes developments.

#### 4. Coalition-Building and Electoral Reforms

- Search for PR System:
- New groups push for a proportional representation (PR) system, hoping to "level the playing field" for minority and Islamist parties.
- International Dimension:
- The 2025 interim government's foreign and diaspora engagement aims to boost legitimacy—but also draws sharp critique from nationalist forces wary of perceived foreign interference.

#### 5. Competing Ideologies

- Secularism vs. Nationalist-Islamism:
- While the ruling Awami League pushes a nationalism-centric narrative rooted in 1971's legacy, the Jamat and allies seek to legitimize pro-Pakistan historical legacy, intensifying societal polarization.
- > Two-Party System in Flux:
- ➤ BNP's comeback (if achieved in 2026) would reflect persistent surplus towards two-party logic, but fluid coalitions signal enduring volatility.

#### **Global Practices and Insights**

Indonesia &	Student/youth activism and coalition politics have periodically unseated long-term	
Egypt	incumbents and re-shaped norms frequently, showing how mobilization can transform entrenched party systems.	
Pakistan	PR system advocacy and civil-military dynamics mirror Bangladesh's dilemmas, with military neutrality decisive in transition periods.	







#### **Indian Committees & Institutional Recommendations**

MEAs &	Security	Advise constructive engagement with all mainstream Bangladeshi actors,	
Analysts		monitoring army neutrality, and preparing for outcome volatility.	
Research	Councils	Suggest supporting civil society, press freedom, and electoral transparency—	
(Asia Studie	s)	regardless of winning alignment.	

#### **UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)**

#### Q1. With reference to river Teesta, consider the following statements: (2017)

- 1. The source of river Teesta is the same as that of Brahmaputra but it flows through Sikkim.
- 2. River Rangeet originates in Sikkim and it is a tributary of river Teesta.
- 3. River Teesta flows into Bay of Bengal on the border of India and Bangladesh.

#### 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

Ans: (b)

#### **Mains**

Q1. Analyze internal security threats and transborder crimes along Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan borders including Line of Control (LoC). Also discuss the role played by various security forces in this regard. (2018)

#### **Way Forward**

- 1. **Encourage Broad-Based Electoral Inclusion:** Actively support PR/fairness reforms so new voices, youth and minorities, gain equitable representation.
- 2. Monitor Civil-Military Relations: Diplomacy should quietly urge military's apolitical stance, discouraging extra-constitutional interventions.
- 3. **Promote Institutional Reform:** Back transparent, locally-led electoral reforms, judiciary independence, and media freedom with international partners.
- **4. Support Resilience to Ideological Polarization:** Civil society and education campaigns should promote tolerance and pluralism to counteract ideological escalation.
- **5. Strengthen Regional and Diaspora Engagement:** Facilitate cross-border dialogue and diaspora investment to help stabilize the post-election landscape.

#### **Conclusion**

Bangladesh stands at a political crossroads. Student activism, Islamist resurgence, and two-party system flux may fundamentally reshape governance in 2026. A stable Bangladesh requires transparent, inclusive politics, vigilant civil-military balance, and international support for deep democratic reform.

#### **Prelims MCQ**

- Q1. Which group is increasing influence ahead of the 2026 Bangladesh election, challenging the two-party structure?
  - a) UN
  - b) Army





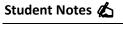


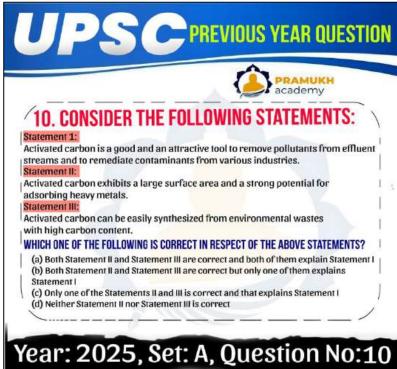
- c) Jamat-e-Islami and student activists
- d) Indian diaspora

Answer: C) Jamat-e-Islami and student activists

#### **Mains Question**

Q1. "Bangladesh's current political churn reflects wider struggles over representation, reform, and military-civilian boundaries." Discuss the actors, causes, and likely trajectories ahead of the 2026 election. (250 words)









## Powering up the Australia-India Clean Energy Partnership

**Source:** The Hindu Editorial – October 15, 2025

#### **UPSC Relevance:**

- GS Paper 2: India's Bilateral Relations, International Energy Cooperation, Climate Diplomacy
- GS Paper 3: Environment, Renewable Energy, Sustainable Development, Green Technology

#### **Introduction / Context:**

India and Australia are deepening their partnership in clean energy at a time when both nations are pursuing ambitious netzero targets and facing supply chain vulnerabilities in the renewable energy sector. The visit of Australia's Minister for Climate Change & Energy, Chris Bowen, to India in October 2025 signifies a shared strategic intent to scale up renewable energy cooperation and reduce dependence on China, which currently dominates the global processing of lithium, rare earths, and solar components.



#### **Key Facts:**

- 1. Launched: India-Australia Renewable Energy Partnership (REP), 2022
- 2. Leaders: PM Narendra Modi and PM Anthony Albanese
- 3. Target: Joint projects in solar, wind, hydrogen, and critical minerals
- 4. Australia's Target: 62–70% reduction in emissions by 2035 (over 2005 levels)
- 5. India's Goal: 500 GW non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030 & Net-zero by 2070
- 6. Indo-Pacific Vulnerability: 10 major climate disasters annually (1970–2022)

#### **Key Issues with Examples:**

#### 1. Supply Chain Concentration in China:

- China refines **90% of rare earths** and **produces 80% of global solar modules**, posing a single-point failure risk.
- Example: Global lithium price surge in 2022–23 due to Chinese export restrictions.

#### 2. Technology & Investment Gap:

- > India requires **USD 10 trillion** in green investments till 2070 to meet climate goals.
- Lack of consistent technology transfer remains a bottleneck.

#### 3. Critical Mineral Dependency:

- Australia controls lithium and cobalt mines, while India lacks refining infrastructure.
- REP aims to develop joint mining and refining projects to overcome this.

#### 4. Human Resource Challenge:

Nearly 65% of India's population is under 35, yet lacks sectoral skill training for green industries.

#### 5. Regulatory Fragmentation:

Absence of unified Indo-Pacific renewable trade standards hampers large-scale collaboration.







#### **Global Practices:**

Country	Initiative	Key Lesson
us <b>United</b>	Inflation Reduction Act (IRA,	Large fiscal incentives for domestic clean tech and supply
States	2022)	chains.
DE <b>Germany</b>	Energy Transition (Energiewende)	Long-term renewable subsidy model + innovation support.
JP <b>Japan</b>	Asia Energy Transition Initiative	Promotes hydrogen and ammonia co-firing technologies.
A∪ <b>Australia</b>	Net Zero Jobs Plan (2024)	Green skills retraining for fossil fuel workers.
CN <b>China</b>	Made in China 2025	Dominance in rare earth and solar manufacturing — India must diversify beyond this.

#### **IN Indian Committee Recommendations:**

- 1. NITI Aayog's "Green Hydrogen Policy, 2023" Encourages joint ventures and export corridors.
- 2. **India Energy Security Scenarios (IESS), 2047** Stresses on regional partnerships for critical mineral processing.
- 3. **Standing Committee on Energy (2024)** Suggested fast-tracking bilateral clean tech MoUs and integrating skill programs.
- **4. Expert Committee on Battery Storage (MNRE, 2023)** Recommends co-production facilities with friendly nations like Australia.
- 5. **Economic Advisory Council (EAC, 2025)** Proposed inclusion of green jobs in India's Skill Mission.

#### **UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)**

#### Q1. Consider the following countries: (2018)

- 1. Australia
- 2. Canada
- 3. China
- 4. India
- 5. Japan
- 6. USA

#### Which of the above are among the 'free-trade partners' of ASEAN?

- a) 1, 2, 4 and 5
- b) 3, 4, 5 and 6
- c) 1, 3, 4 and 5
- d) 2, 3, 4 and 6

Ans: (c)

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has free trade agreements with six partners, namely the People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Japan, India as well as Australia and New Zealand.

#### **Way Forward:**

- 1. **Institutionalise the Track 1.5 Dialogue** for sustained engagement between government, academia, and industry.
- 2. Create a Joint Critical Minerals Fund to support investment in lithium and rare earth refining in India.





- 3. Expand Green Skill Development Programs under "Skill India" with Australian collaboration.
- 4. Launch Indo-Pacific Green Supply Chain Initiative under Quad.
- 5. Incentivise private sector investment through tax credits and public-private partnerships.
- 6. **Promote joint R&D** in hydrogen, solar cells, and battery storage under ISRO–CSIRO (Australia).

#### **Conclusion:**

The India—Australia Clean Energy Partnership marks a paradigm shift in regional climate diplomacy, embedding mutual strengths—India's manufacturing base and Australia's mineral wealth—into a resilient Indo-Pacific energy ecosystem. By focusing on critical minerals, skill sharing, and technology co-development, this partnership can become a model for South—South cooperation in the global clean energy transition.

#### **Prelims Practice Question:**

- Q1. Consider the following statements about the India-Australia Renewable Energy Partnership (REP):\*
  - 1. It was launched in 2022 by the Prime Ministers of India and Australia.
  - 2. It includes cooperation in hydrogen, critical minerals, and circular economy.
  - 3. It functions under the International Solar Alliance framework.

#### Which of the statements given above 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

#### Mains Practice Question (GS Paper 2 – 10 Marks):

Q1. "The India-Australia Renewable Energy Partnership (REP) reflects India's growing role as a responsible stakeholder in Indo-Pacific energy security." Examine how this partnership contributes to sustainable development and strategic autonomy.

## Student Notes 💪



## **Navigating the Global Economic Transformation**

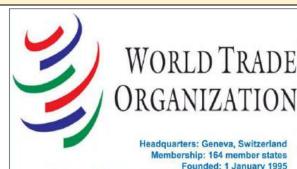
Source: The Hindu

#### **UPSC Relevance:**

- GS Paper 2: International Relations Global Economic Governance, Multilateral Institutions
- GS Paper 3: Globalization, Inclusive Growth, Economic Reforms, World Economic Order

#### Introduction

The global economic order is undergoing a **profound** realignment. With the U.S.—China rivalry intensifying and nations pursuing self-reliant, protectionist, and nationalist policies, the traditional liberal trade framework is giving way to a new **geo-economic world** order. This transformation is shaping monetary systems, global trade rules, and power equations. For India and the Global South, this flux offers both risks and a rare window



to assert leadership in building a fairer and more multipolar economic order.

#### **Key Issues with Examples:**

#### 1. Rise of Populist State-Capitalism:

- ➤ Governments are centralizing control over markets and offering subsidies for political loyalty.
- Example: U.S. "Make America Great Again" tariffs; China's state-driven Belt & Road investments.

#### 2. Economic Protectionism & Supply Chain Politics:

- ➤ U.S.—China decoupling has disrupted critical mineral trade and manufacturing.
- Example: Restrictions on semiconductor exports to China by Japan and the Netherlands.

#### 3. Erosion of Multilateral Institutions:

- ➤ Institutions like the **WTO** and **IMF** face legitimacy crises as global economic coordination weakens.
- Example: U.S. blocking WTO appellate body appointments since 2019.

#### 4. Global South's Credit & Trade Challenges:

- Cuts in aid, rising debt costs, and G7's inward policies have limited the fiscal space of developing nations.
- Example: African nations' debt servicing now exceeds **10% of GDP** on average (UNCTAD, 2024).

#### 5. Climate-linked Geo-economics:

> Developed countries are using carbon border taxes and green tariffs to reassert industrial dominance.

#### **Global Practices:**

Country/Region	Initiative	Lessons for India
us <b>United States</b>	Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) – promotes	Leverage for India's PLI and Make-in-India
	domestic green industries	2.0

67

#### **Key Facts:**

Global GDP Outlook (IMF, 2025):
 World growth projected at 3.2%, with Asia contributing 60% of total expansion.

Purpose: Reduction of tariffs and other barriers to trade

India is the founding member of WTO

- U.S.-China Trade War Impact: Over \$550 billion in global tariffs since 2018.
- Global South's Rise: India, ASEAN, and Africa now represent 40% of global population and one-third of global demand growth.



CN <b>China</b>	Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – resource-	Need for sustainable alternative via Global
	backed diplomacy	South cooperation
EU <b>European</b>	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism	India should balance trade
Union	(CBAM)	competitiveness with green compliance
BRICS+	New Development Bank, Reserve Pool	Strengthen financial autonomy of Global
Framework		South
JP <b>Japan &amp; ASEAN</b>	Supply chain resilience initiatives	India can position itself as a reliable
		manufacturing hub

#### **IN Indian Committee Recommendations:**

NITI Aayog's Strategy for New India	Calls for diversification of trade, technology alliances, and energy
@75 (2023 Update)	security partnerships.
Economic Advisory Council (2025)	Recommends forming a South-South Economic Cooperation
	Forum to resist Western fiscal dominance.
Foreign Trade Policy (FTP 2023)	Advocates "China+1" manufacturing strategy and expanded
	trade in digital services.
Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) –	Urges coordination among G20, BRICS, and IORA to protect the
Global Economic Diplomacy Division	interests of developing economies.
RBI Report on Global Capital Flows	Suggests adopting a "rupee settlement system" for trade with
(2024)	Global South partners.

#### **Way Forward:**

- 1. **Champion a "Global South Compact":** Build a bloc within BRICS, IORA, and G20 to secure fairer trade and finance terms.
- 2. Promote Rupee-based Trade Settlements: Enhance financial autonomy and reduce dollar dependence.
- 3. Strengthen South-South Infrastructure Corridors: Focus on ports, digital payments, and renewable grids.
- **4. Adopt "Balanced Protectionism":** Safeguard domestic manufacturing while promoting export competitiveness.
- 5. Institutionalise Economic Diplomacy: Establish an "India Global Economic Council" to align MEA, Finance, and Commerce policies.

#### **Conclusion:**

As the global economy transitions into a **multipolar**, **state-driven order**, India must play a pivotal role in reshaping the narrative from dependency to **sovereign self-determination**. Through inclusive trade, resilient supply chains, and leadership within the Global South, India can redefine globalization—not as Western hegemony, but as **collaborative empowerment**. The ongoing economic transformation is India's chance to build a **fairer**, **equitable**, and **sustainable global economy**.

#### **Prelims Practice Question:**

- Q1. Which of the following best explains the term "State Capitalism" as discussed in the context of global economic transformation?
  - a) A system where private corporations are fully nationalised by the government.
  - b) A model where the state exerts strong influence over markets through ownership, regulation, and incentives.
  - c) A laissez-faire system with minimal government intervention.





d) A system dominated entirely by cooperatives and mutual organisations.

Answer: (b)

Mains Practice Question (GS Paper 2/3 – 15 Marks):

Q1. "The ongoing global economic transformation presents both opportunities and challenges for the Global South." Discuss India's strategy in navigating this changing economic order through diplomacy and structural reforms.

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Student Notes 🐔



# Refugees, Infiltrators – The Need for a Non-Discriminatory Refugee Policy

Source: The Hindu

#### **UPSC Relevance:**

#### GS Paper 2:

- International Relations Refugee Issues, Asylum Policies, Humanitarian Challenges
- Governance Citizenship, Fundamental Rights, and Non-discrimination
- Internal Security Border Management and Illegal Migration

#### **Introduction:**

India, which hosts one of the world's largest refugee populations, faces a persistent challenge in distinguishing between **refugees seeking asylum** and **illegal infiltrators** crossing borders for non-humanitarian reasons. While the Home Minister recently emphasised this distinction, the absence of a **comprehensive refugee policy** has left much room for ambiguity, arbitrariness, and politicisation.

Although India is not a signatory to the **1951 UN Refugee Convention** or its **1967 Protocol**, its

historical tradition of sheltering persecuted communities — from Tibetans and Sri Lankan Tamils to Afghans and Rohingyas — demonstrates a humanitarian ethos that now requires codification in law.



#### 1. Absence of a Uniform Legal Framework:

- Refugees and infiltrators are both governed by the Foreigners Act, treating all foreign entrants alike.
- Example: Sri Lankan Tamils have been given longterm visas, but Rohingyas face detention or deportation.

#### 2. Arbitrary and Discriminatory Implementation:

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 provides accelerated citizenship to select religious minorities but excludes Muslim refugees like Rohingyas.

#### 3. Security vs. Humanitarianism Dilemma:

Security agencies cite concerns of radicalisation and illegal arms trade (e.g., in Jammu or Assam), but this often results in profiling and detention of genuine refugees.

#### 4. Administrative Ambiguity:



#### **Key Facts:**

- As of June 2023, India hosted over 2.1 lakh refugees, including Tibetans, Sri Lankan Tamils, and Rohingyas.
- India has no single refugee law only fragmented frameworks such as the Foreigners Act (1946), Registration of Foreigners Act (1939), and Citizenship Act (1955).
- The Rehabilitation Policy (2014)
   benefits about 63,000 Tibetan
   refugees.
- UNHCR estimates India's urban refugee population to have increased by 18% between 2017–2023.
- India remains outside the 1951 Refugee
  Convention, unlike neighbours like
  Bangladesh (signatory to 1951) or Nepal
  (UNHCR cooperation without formal
  accession).





➤ Refugee registration is handled by multiple authorities — MEA, MHA, and State Governments — with no unified policy.

#### 5. Impact on India's International Image:

The lack of a rights-based framework undermines India's soft-power credentials as a moral leader and plural democracy.

#### **Global Practices:**

Country	Approach	Key Feature
UN UNHCR (Global Standard)	1951 Refugee Convention	Recognises right to non-refoulement (no forced return)
us <b>United States</b>	Refugee Act (1980)	Annual resettlement quota and asylum court review
DE <b>Germany</b>	Asylum Procedure Act	Integration programs + legal aid for asylum seekers
CA <b>Canada</b>	Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program	Private sponsorship and community-based integration
BD <b>Bangladesh</b>	Managed under national security + UNHCR coordination	Rohingya camps under shared humanitarian responsibility

#### **IN Indian Committee Recommendations:**

Justice Bhagwati Committee (Refugee Law Draft, 1997)	Proposed a national refugee law defining rights, obligations, and legal protections.
National Human Rights Commission (NHRC, 2013)	Urged India to adopt a <b>non-discriminatory refugee recognition mechanism</b> and ensure due process for asylum seekers.
Law Commission of India (2018)	Recommended incorporating refugee rights under domestic law aligned with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 14).
MEA-UNHCR Cooperation Guidelines (2019)	Suggested a single nodal agency for refugee registration, distinct from illegal migrants.

#### Way Forward:

#### 1. Adopt a National Refugee Law:

> Clearly define refugees, their rights, and procedures for asylum while excluding economic migrants.

#### 2. Ensure Non-Discrimination:

> Refugee recognition must be religion-neutral, based on persecution type, not identity.

#### 3. Strengthen Institutional Coordination:

Establish a National Refugee Commission under MHA for documentation, welfare, and repatriation.

#### 4. Border Humanitarian Protocols:

Create "safe entry zones" near Indo-Myanmar and Indo-Bangladesh borders with UNHCR presence.

#### 5. Integrate Technology & Data:

Use digital identity tools for verified refugee documentation to prevent misuse or duplication.

#### **Conclusion:**

India's civilisational ethos of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" has historically provided refuge to the persecuted, from Zoroastrians to Tibetans. However, in today's politically charged climate, compassion must coexist with







security. A codified, non-discriminatory refugee framework rooted in constitutional morality will ensure that **India's humanitarian legacy aligns with modern national interests** — balancing compassion with control, and sovereignty with solidarity.

#### **Prelims Practice Question:**

- Q1. Which of the following statements is correct regarding refugees in India?
  - 1. India is a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention.
  - 2. India has a uniform national refugee law that governs all asylum seekers.
  - 3. Refugees in India are legally treated under the Foreigners Act, 1946.

#### **Options:**

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

Answer: (c)

Student Notes 🐔

#### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "India's approach to refugees has historically been humanitarian but legally ambiguous."

Discuss the need for a codified, non-discriminatory refugee policy in the context of constitutional values and international best practices.



# Strengthen Your Base - India's Strategy in a Changing Global Trade Order

Source: The Hindu Editorial

#### **UPSC Relevance:**

#### **GS Paper 2 & 3:**

- International Relations, Governance (Global Trade Regimes, WTO reforms ,Strategic Autonomy and Economic Security)
- Indian Economy (External Sector, Trade Policy, Industrial Strategy)

#### Introduction

Global trade is entering one of its most volatile and transformative phases since the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The United States, European Union, and China—once engines of globalization—are now reorienting their trade strategies for geopolitical leverage.

The U.S. has turned tariffs and technology controls into weapons of **economic statecraft**, the EU is embedding trade with **environmental protectionism**, and China is securing **strategic dominance** over critical minerals and supply chains. In this shifting scenario, **India needs to recalibrate its trade policy**, strengthening domestic production, diversifying supply dependencies, and asserting global competitiveness in a fragmented economic order.

#### **Key Issues with Examples:**

#### 1. Weaponisation of Trade and Tariffs

- > The U.S. uses tariffs as political leverage (e.g., against China, and recently India's steel exports).
- Example: **U.S. Section 301 Tariffs** on Chinese solar products have disrupted global supply chains.

#### 2. Environmental Protectionism by EU

- > EU's CBAM and Deforestation Regulation act as "green trade barriers", penalizing developing economies.
- Example: Indian iron and steel exports face 25–30% cost escalation due to compliance with CBAM.

#### 3. China's Critical Mineral Dominance

- China's control over lithium and rare earths gives it a geopolitical chokehold on global manufacturing.
- Example: Rare earth export restrictions in 2023 led to shortages in semiconductor production globally.

#### 4. India's Import Dependence

- Over 80% of key industrial inputs (semiconductors, lithium, nickel) are imported from a handful of countries.
- > Lack of domestic manufacturing depth makes India vulnerable to external shocks.

#### 5. Erosion of WTO's Authority

The WTO's dispute resolution system remains paralysed since 2020, leaving smaller economies like India without legal recourse against trade bullying.

#### **Key Facts:**

- The U.S. "Defend Industry" Tariffs (2025) target Chinese imports worth over \$300 billion across semiconductors, batteries, and electric vehicles.
- EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) imposes a levy on imports of cement, aluminium, iron, and fertilizers from January 2026.
- China controls about 70% of global rare earth supply, vital for defense and green technologies.
- **4.** Around **80% of India's trade agreements** (e.g., with ASEAN) were signed before 2010 and now face erosion in advantage.
- **5.** India's trade-to-GDP ratio remains around **46%**, but its share in global merchandise exports is just **1.8%**.



#### **Global Practices:**

Country/Bloc	Strategy	Key Features	
us <b>United States</b>	"Tariff Weaponization" & Tech	Economic coercion through tariffs, semiconductor	
05 Officed States	Restrictions	export bans	
EU <b>European</b>	"Green Trade" Regulations	CBAM, Deforestation Laws, ESG-based import	
Union	Green fraue Regulations	conditions	
CN <b>China</b>	"Resource Nationalism"	Dominance in rare earths, supply chain control,	
CN CIIIIa	Resource Nationalism	production subsidies	
ID Janan	Economic Security Act (2022)	Diversification of critical imports and strategic	
JP <b>Japan</b>	Economic Security Act (2022)	partnerships	
KR South Korea	Industrial Re-shoring	Incentives for domestic production and R&D-	
kk Joutil Korea	muustilai ne-shoriilg	linked exports	

#### **IN Indian Committee Recommendations:**

High-Level Advisory Group (HLAG), 2019	Suggested building trade alliances beyond WTO, focusing on manufacturing-linked trade policy.
Economic Advisory Council to PM (EAC-PM), 2023	Recommended fiscal incentives for <i>critical minerals, semiconductors,</i> and green tech manufacturing.
NITI Aayog Industrial Policy Draft (2024)	Advocated "Atmanirbhar Bharat 2.0" through global value chain participation and bilateral FTA modernization.
Department of Commerce Review Committee (2025)	Called for a "New Trade Strategy Document" integrating technology, green trade, and supply chain resilience.

#### **Way Forward:**

- 1. Strengthen Domestic Manufacturing:
  - > Accelerate **PLI Schemes** and industrial clusters in electronics, defence, and green energy.
- 2. Diversify Trade Partners:
  - > Reduce over-dependence on China; expand FTAs with the EU, Canada, and Latin America.
- 3. Develop Critical Mineral Reserves:
  - > Partner with Australia, Africa, and Latin America for lithium and rare earth extraction.
- 4. Negotiate Smart Trade Agreements:
  - **Ensure inclusion of** *digital trade, sustainability clauses,* and *rules of origin transparency.*
- 5. Build India's "Green Trade Competitiveness":
  - > Establish domestic carbon certification aligned with EU standards to avoid CBAM penalties.
- 6. Institutional Strengthening:
  - Create a National Trade Security Council (NTSC) for inter-ministerial coordination on trade and energy security.

#### **Conclusion:**

India stands at a decisive juncture in global trade realignment. As protectionism replaces liberalization, the country must move beyond reactive tariffs toward a **strategic trade policy** anchored in **domestic competitiveness, technology, and sustainability**.







By strengthening its industrial base, ensuring supply chain security, and integrating environmental resilience, India can transform this era of trade turbulence into a platform for **self-reliant global leadership**.

#### **Prelims Practice Question:**

- Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM):
  - 1. It has been introduced by the United States.
  - 2. It imposes a levy on imports based on the carbon emitted during production.
  - 3. It primarily targets exports from developing nations.

#### Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

#### Mains Practice Question (GS Paper 3 – 15 Marks):

Q1. "The global trade order is shifting from liberalization to weaponization."

In this context, discuss how India can safeguard its economic interests and strengthen its manufacturing base amid changing global trade rules.

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## Mapping Wellness – India's Fight Against Lifestyle Diseases

Source: The Hindu Editorial -

#### **UPSC Relevance:**

#### **GS Paper 2 (Governance, Health, Social Justice)**

- Health infrastructure & policy implementation
- Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and preventive health

#### **GS Paper 3 (Science & Technology, Environment)**

• Environmental and lifestyle linkages with public health

#### Introduction

The Global Burden of Disease Report (2025) underscores the alarming rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular ailments, diabetes, chronic respiratory disorders, and cancer — now accounting for nearly 75% of deaths in India. This epidemiological shift signifies a transition from communicable to lifestyle-related diseases, driven by rapid urbanization, sedentary habits, pollution, and dietary changes.

While India's **National Health Policy (2017)** prioritized preventive healthcare, the current trends demand an updated, multi-sectoral, and science-

based approach integrating health, nutrition, and environmental policy.



#### 1. Rising Urbanization & Sedentary Lifestyles

- Over 40% of adults in urban areas report insufficient physical activity.
- Example: Metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai show obesity prevalence above **30**%.

#### 2. Air Pollution & Environmental Stress

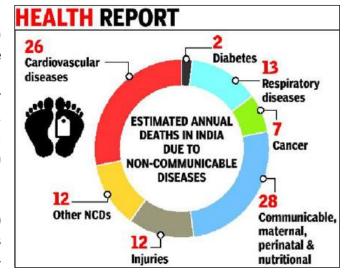
- Responsible for 20% of chronic respiratory illnesses; linked with cardiovascular deaths.
- Example: COPD is now the **second leading** cause of death in India after heart disease.

#### 3. Inadequate Primary Healthcare & Early Diagnosis

➤ 50% of NCD patients are diagnosed late due to limited access to diagnostics at PHC/CHC levels.

# 4. Nutritional Transition & Processed Food Dependence

- Increased consumption of ultra-processed, high-sodium, and sugary foods.
- Example: National Institute of Nutrition notes
   a 30% decline in fruit/vegetable intake in urban India since 2000.



#### **Key Facts:**

- 1. NCDs account for 75% of India's disease burden, compared to 60% globally.
- Cardiovascular diseases alone cause 28% of total deaths in India.
- 3. COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) and respiratory illnesses have risen by over 40% in the last decade due to air pollution and tobacco use.
- **4. Diabetes prevalence** has increased to **10.1%** among adults (ICMR 2025).
- 5. India's life expectancy (70 years) remains lower than the global average (73 years), mainly due to NCD-linked mortality.
- WHO projects NCD-related deaths will cost India \$4.5 trillion in economic losses by 2030.





#### 5. Socioeconomic & Gender Dimensions

- > Rural poor, women, and elderly face limited access to preventive care and awareness programs.
- Example: Only 35% of rural women above 50 years have undergone hypertension screening (NFHS-5).

#### **Global Practices:**

Country	Practice	Key Lessons for India	
FI Finland	National "North Karelia Project" reduced cardiovascular	Community-led awareness and	
	mortality by 80% through diet and physical activity	local-level nutrition programs.	
	reforms.		
JP <b>Japan</b>	Health reforms integrating hygiene and nutrition in school	Promotes long-term preventive	
	education since 1970s.	culture.	
AU	"Active Australia" policy links urban planning with public	Urban health planning as part of	
Australia	fitness and outdoor infrastructure.	governance.	
GB <b>UK</b>	"Sugar Tax" on high-calorie beverages reduced youth	Fiscal tools to promote healthy	
	obesity trends.	food choices.	

#### **IN Indian Committee Recommendations:**

#### 1. National Health Policy (2017):

> Shift focus from treatment to prevention; strengthen NCD screening at PHCs.

#### 2. NITI Aayog Health Strategy (2024):

> Integrate digital diagnostics, Al-based prediction, and telemedicine for early detection.

#### 3. ICMR & NPCDCS (National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, CVD and Stroke):

Suggested local-level "Health Surveillance Grids" linking schools, anganwadis, and PHCs.

#### 4. 15th Finance Commission Health Committee:

Recommended 2.5% of GDP allocation to preventive and promotive healthcare.

#### **Way Forward:**

#### 1. Promote Preventive Healthcare:

> Implement regular health screening and wellness programs through Ayushman Bharat Health & Wellness Centres.

#### 2. Strengthen Primary Care Infrastructure:

> Equip PHCs and CHCs with diagnostic kits and digital reporting mechanisms.

#### 3. Integrate Health & Environment Policy:

➤ Coordinate pollution control and urban planning with health missions.

#### 4. Taxation & Regulation:

> Impose "sin taxes" on sugary foods, alcohol, and tobacco; promote healthy alternatives.

#### 5. Health Education in Curriculum:

Include nutrition, fitness, and mental health in school syllabi as done in Finland and Japan.

#### 6. Data-Driven Governance:

> Establish a "National Lifestyle Disease Dashboard" for real-time tracking of NCD trends.

#### Conclusion:

India's demographic dividend can turn into a liability unless the country prioritizes preventive health and wellness.







Addressing NCDs requires **a multi-pronged approach**—medical, behavioral, and environmental. Strengthening PHCs, promoting lifestyle awareness, and aligning health with sustainability goals are the cornerstones for achieving **SDG 3 – "Good Health and Well-Being."** 

Only through this integrated vision can India shift from "sick-care to health-care."

#### **Prelims Practice Question:**

#### Q1. With reference to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in India, consider the following statements:

- 1. NCDs account for more than 70% of total deaths in India.
- 2. The National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) operates under the Ministry of AYUSH.
- 3. Air pollution is a recognized risk factor for NCDs.

#### Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Student Notes

Answer: (a)

#### Mains Practice Question (GS Paper 2 – 15 Marks):

Q1. "Lifestyle diseases pose a greater challenge to India's demographic dividend than communicable diseases."

Discuss the need for an integrated policy response involving healthcare, nutrition, and environmental governance.

Student Notes (2)			



# AI in Play: Google's \$15 Billion Andhra Pradesh Hub and India's AI **Growth Story**

Source: Editorial Analysis, October 2025

#### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 3)**

- Science & Technology: Artificial Intelligence, Data Infrastructure
- Indian Economy: Investments, Start-Up Ecosystem, Digital Infrastructure
- Internal Security: Emerging Technologies and Cyber Infrastructure

#### Introduction

In the wake of a global surge in AI spending, Google's announcement of a \$15 billion investment for an AI data centre hub in Andhra Pradesh marks a major milestone for India's ambitions to become an AI powerhouse. The move is set against a backdrop of international competition for semiconductors, chip design, and digital capability, with India seeking to establish itself as a leader in next-generation technology, research, and innovation.

#### **Key Fact**

- 1. According to Stanford's Alindex report, global investment in AI reached \$252.3 billion in 2024.
- 2. Google's new Andhra centre will be the company's largest outside the US and is projected to set "gigawatt-scale compute capacity."
- 3. India's data centre industry crossed the 1 GW mark in 2024, with Mumbai, Chennai, and Delhi as other major hubs.

#### **Key Issues with Examples**

#### 1. Global AI Capital Race

- Building and deploying AI models at scale requires significant investment in chips and infrastructure; Google's Andhra centre reflects India's new attractiveness for such capital.
- Apple, Meta, and Nvidia have also ramped up investments globally, driving a surge in data centre and compute needs.

#### 2. Domestic Technology Ecosystem

- India has sanctioned 10+ semiconductor plants and over 23 chip-design projects to build foundational
- > National efforts are backed by government moves to grow indigenous large language models and
- > India's first "purpose-built" AI campus by Google is expected to catalyse similar investment and job waves.

#### 3. Capacity and Security

- IMFs warning: High capital flows may not lead to guaranteed profit or returns; risks must be managed.
- Data protection, digital sovereignty, and skills gap are core policy concerns.

#### 4. Challenges and Opportunities

- India must balance global capital with local skills improvement and indigenous innovation.
- Other regions like the US, EU, and China have aggressively integrated local R&D with major global investments, aiming for digital sovereignty.

#### **Global Practices**

US/Europe/China	Strong public-private alliances, state-backed R&D grants, chip/AI clusters drive
	ecosystem growth.







Singapore/Israel Incentivize talent migration, foster start-up incubators, and support AI rese		
through strategic campus partnerships.		
Middle East (UAE, Mega-investments with foreign tech giants to leapfrog into global		
Saudi)	chains.	

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

NITI Aayog/MeitY		Push for AI innovation missions, skilling funds, regulatory sandboxes for AI/semiconductors.
Expert panels		Advocate for allied infrastructure such as sustainable power, cold storage, and high-speed connectivity for AI data hubs.
Parliamentary	Standing	Calls for prompt data protection laws and R&D investment matching
Committee on IT		international benchmarks.

#### **Way Forward**

- 1. Expand semiconductor & AI talent pipeline through new IIT/IISc programs and international partnerships.
- 2. Incentivize R&D in indigenous language models, AI cloud, and chip design for "digital self-reliance."
- 3. Strengthen data protection and cyber regulations as large AI centres increase personal/corporate data flows.
- **4.** Foster a start-up ecosystem connected to global tech giants but rooted in domestic innovation.
- **5.** Ensure energy and sustainability goals are integrated with all large-scale digital infrastructure projects.

#### **Conclusion**

Google's Andhra Pradesh hub signals India's arrival as a global AI and data centre destination. Realizing this potential demands harmonizing global finance, domestic innovation, data protection, and skills—positioning India for strategic and secure technological leadership.

#### **Prelims Practice Question**

- Q1. What is India's rank in global AI investment inflow as of 2024, and which city presently leads its data centre capacity?
  - a) Second, Delhi
  - b) Third, Mumbai
  - c) First, Chennai
  - d) Fifth, Hyderabad

Answer: B) Third, Mumbai

#### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "Large-scale global investments in AI can transform India's technological landscape, but only with commensurate advances in skill, infrastructure, and innovation policy." Critically examine this statement with reference to Google's Andhra initiative. (250 words)

# Student Notes 💪





# The Gift of Athena: Pathways to India's Knowledge Economy

Source: Editorial by Pratap Bhanu Mehta, 2025

#### **UPSC Relevance (GS PAPER 2/GS PAPER 3)**

- GS2: Governance (Innovation policy, institutional frameworks)
- GS3: Science, Technology and Economic Development (Knowledge economy, skill development)
- Essay/Interview: Role of research, ideas, and knowledge in national transformation

#### Introduction

Drawing inspiration from Nobel Laureate Joel Mokyr's work, the article explores how knowledge—beyond mere technical expertise—is the real engine of sustainable development and economic power. The Indian system, historically oriented towards compliance and resource extraction, must now shift towards fostering creation, curiosity, and the dynamic exchange of ideas to become a true knowledge power.

#### **Key Fact**

- 1. Mokyr distinguishes "knowledge economies" as environments where knowledge production, diffusion, and critical thinking—rather than just regulatory compliance or necessity—fuel exponential innovation and wealth.
- 2. India's National Knowledge Commission and current NEP reforms reflect partial shifts but face legacy constraints.

#### **Key Issues with Examples**

#### 1. Knowledge as Response to Opportunity, Not Just Necessity

- Europe's leap in the "Level of Riches" stemmed from cultivating environments where ideas circulated freely and institutions supported experimentation (Mokyr's thesis).
- India's education, research, and regulatory systems still lean towards conformity, focusing more on exams, quotas, and incremental improvements.

#### 2. Two Kinds of Knowledge and India's Weakness

- Mokyr notes the difference between propositional knowledge (rules, regulations) and prescriptive/hands-on, practical knowledge (invention, tinkering).
- Example: India's success in IT services vs. limited global breakthroughs in fundamental science or engineering.

#### 3. Institutional Reform—Culture of Curiosity

- Advanced economies nurture dissent, allow for failure, and design systems where knowledge can be challenged and improved.
- Institutional culture in India often penalizes questioning, with consequences in both innovation and public debate.

#### 4. Necessity is Not Enough

- Societies that innovate only in crisis remain vulnerable; those that sustain curiosity and enable knowledge for its own sake (not just utility) enjoy resilience and progress.
- Example: India's COVID-19 vaccine self-sufficiency—a triumph of technical execution, but also revealing gaps in foundational life sciences knowledge and basic research ecosystems.

#### **Global Practices**

United States,	Blend strong scientific institutions, robust IP regimes, generous R&D funding, and
Germany, Israel	encouragement of academic-industry linkages.







South Korea, Finland	Invest heavily in teacher training, basic science, research and skills to foster
	creative problem solving, not rote learning.
China	Large-scale government investment in research, university autonomy, global
	faculty hiring—rapidly moving up the innovation value chain.

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

National Knowledge	Mandates overhaul of curricula for creativity, independent inquiry, and
Commission (NKC) translational research.	
NEP 2020 Taskforce Calls for research-centric universities, freedom for interdisciplinary work and incentives for industry-academic collaboration.	
Parliamentary Standing	Suggests international research benchmarking, expansion of grant
Committee on HRD	mechanisms, and greater autonomy for premier scientific institutions.

#### **Way Forward**

- 1. Support research autonomy, interdisciplinary teams, and free-flowing academic debate.
- 2. Incentivize the pursuit of foundational as well as applied knowledge, through government and private sector R&D investments.
- **3.** Embed curiosity and critical thinking into school and university pedagogy; overhaul assessment away from rote to application and creativity.
- 4. Encourage open science, transparent public funding, and internationally competitive grant systems.
- 5. Foster global partnerships and talent exchanges, enabling India's researchers to innovate on the world stage.

#### **Conclusion**

India's transition to a true knowledge economy requires more than skills and necessity—it demands deep institutional and cultural changes. Embracing curiosity, supporting free inquiry, and investing in foundational research will power India's rise as a knowledge leader in the spirit of Athena.

#### **Prelims Practice Question**

- Q1. According to Mokyr, what distinguishes a true 'knowledge economy' from others?
  - a) Only exam performance
  - b) Freely circulating ideas, experimentation, and institutional support
  - c) Regulation compliance
  - d) Manufacturing dominance

Answer: B) Freely circulating ideas, experimentation, and institutional support

#### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "A knowledge economy grows on the foundations of culture, curiosity, and support for dissent."

Discuss how India can transform its institutions and policy to become a global knowledge power. (250 words)







## A New Cold War: The Struggle for Techno-Industrial Supremacy

Source: Indian express, by Manoj Pant,

#### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2 s 3)**

- GS2: International Relations (Major Power Rivalry, Changing World Order, Trade Diplomacy)
- GS3: Science s Technology and Economy (Tech Innovation, Semiconductor Race, Supply Chains)
- Internal Security: Cyber-power balance, Supply Chain Resilience

#### Introduction

The contemporary contest between the US and China has entered a new phase—a high-stakes rivalry centered not on ideology or conventional military power, but on the mastery of next- generation technologies, control over digital infrastructure, and the capacity to set global economic rules. "Tariff wars" are mere skirmishes in a deeper contest for industrial and technological leadership, the outcome of which will redefine global governance, security, and prosperity.

#### **Key Issues**

#### 1. Techno-Industrial Superiority as Ultimate Prize

- The US invests in AI, next-gen chip foundries, and quantum infrastructure under bipartisan frameworks (e.g., CHIPS, Science Act) to maintain its long-held innovation edge.
- China counters this with state-driven "Digital Silk Road," Belt and Road digital corridors, and ambitions for semiconductor self- sufficiency.

#### **Key Fact**

- In 2024–25, global investment in AI, semiconductors, and high-tech manufacturing surged past \$250 billion, with both Washington and Beijing unveiling mega- subsidy packages (CHIPS Act, Made in China 2025).
- Over 80% of advanced AI chips are either designed in the US or manufactured by Chinese/Asian companies, reflecting deep interdependence paired with intensifying decoupling moves.
- The last US-China tariff battles, escalating under Trump and continued by Biden, have led to global supply chain reordering ("friend- shoring," nearshoring) and exposed vulnerabilities in critical goods.

*Example*: US export controls on AI hardware (Nvidia/AMD bans); China's investment in home- grown chip giants and proprietary 5G/Quantum networks.

#### 2. Economic Leverage and Weaponization of Trade

➤ US and China weaponize tariffs, sanctions, and market access—Al and chip companies at the epicenter.

Example: The US bans TikTok/WeChat; China restricts US tech in government/critical sectors.

> Trade surpluses and deficits become levers in an otherwise balanced but tense global economy.

#### 3. Alliance Building and Decoupling Pressures

- The US pushes technology alliances: QUAD, AUKUS, EU, and Indo-Pacific strategic dialogues—coordinating export controls, joint research, and secure supply chains.
- > China seeks alternatives: deeper BRICS tech forums, cross-border currency deals, and leadership in new technology standards (digital yuan, Asia cloud).

Example: Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan are pressured to "pick sides" in chip supply chains.

#### 4. Systemic Risks and Global Interdependence

- ➤ Economic decoupling threatens global economic stability (inflation, shortages), but hyperconnectivity means neither bloc can fully disengage.
- Uncertainty over trade norms (WTO standoff), cyber-sabotage risks, and energy/materials bottlenecks add new layers of vulnerability.







Future flashpoints: intellectual property, cybersecurity, green tech, rare earths.

#### **Global Practices**

US/EU/Japan	Joint RsD for critical technologies, common frameworks for technology	
	governance, and trusted supply chains.	
China	Massive industrial policy for AI, 5G, and quantum, expansion of tech-financed	
	BRI; tech-based diplomatic leverage in the Global South.	
Singapore/Israel/Korea	Hedge by fostering open innovation and retaining flexible economic and	
	scientific linkages with both blocs.	

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

NITI Aayog s MEITY	Launch national " <b>Tech Sovereignty</b> " missions for AI, chips, and cyber; incentivize public–private RsD consortia.
MEA/Commerce Expand global tech alliances, but with built-in flexibility; avoid hard align could restrict economic opportunity.	
Strategic Affairs	Strengthen cyber-defense protocols, audit all critical imports/exports, and foster
Councils	diplomatic hedging to maximize "strategic autonomy."

#### **Way Forward**

#### 1. Accelerate India's Indigenous Tech Capabilities

> Prioritize domestic semiconductor, AI, quantum, and robotics ecosystems through targeted investment, talent development, and startup incubation.

#### 2. Diversify Technological and Trade Partnerships

> Build robust ties with US/chip alliances, EU regulatory space, and "Global South" forums for supply and market access.

#### 3. Invest in Cyber and Data Sovereignty

> Fortify cyber-infrastructure, develop national data standards, and fast-track digital public infrastructure.

#### 4. Champion "Smart Hedging" Diplomacy

> Maintain equilibrium in great power ties; lead on global tech standards, digital ethics, and south-south digital integration.

#### 5. Foster National Security-Economy Convergence

> Integrate strategic foresight into economic planning to anticipate technology shocks, supply chain disruptions, and cyber contingencies.

#### Conclusion

The US-China techno-industrial rivalry will shape the rules of the coming century-determining who sets global standards, controls the "commanding heights" of innovation, and defines models of prosperity. India's success rests in building world-class tech, protecting autonomy, and shaping, not just following, the emerging order.

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#### **Prelims Practice Question**

#### Q1. Which of the following best reflects the main axis of the current US-China competition?

- a) Fossil fuels
- b) Digital and technology supremacy





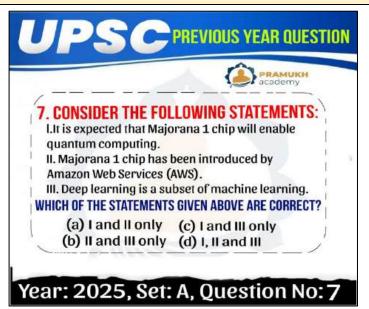


- c) Conventional military build-up
- d) Agricultural trade

Answer: B) Digital and technology supremacy

#### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "The US—China rivalry is more about setting the rules of the future technological and economic order than old-style power politics." Critically examine the new dimensions of the 'Cold War' and discuss how India can enhance both its resilience and leadership. (250 words)



Student Notes 🐔



# The Far-right's Infiltration into the West's Mainstream

Source: The Hindu (Abhishek Roy Choudhury), October 2025

#### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2/GS Paper 4)**

- **GS2:** Comparative Politics, Democracy, Global Issues (rise of populism, threats to liberal order)
- **GS4:** Ethics (pluralism, tolerance, civil liberties)
- International Relations: Impact on migration, partnership norms, and Indian diaspora

#### Introduction

Far-right parties and agendas, once relegated to the political fringes of liberal democracies in Europe and North America, now wield increasing influence over state policies, public discourse, and election outcomes. The mainstreaming of rhetoric—aided exclusionary by nativist, mobilization—tests the ability of Western democracies to uphold pluralism and human rights amidst growing polarization.

#### **Key Issues**

#### 1. Normalization of Hardline Policies

- Far-right parties now control government or heavily shape immigration and law-and-order debates (Italy, Sweden, Germany).
- Mainstream parties adopt tough stances, seeking to retain power amidst shifting voter anxieties and fear politics.

#### 2. Impact on Migration and Pluralism

- Laws and executive orders (US H1-B crackdown, UK student visa rules, Hungarian anti- migration laws) target students, skilled workers and refugees, blunting the openness that fueled earlier Western prosperity.
- Example: India's skilled professionals face stricter US/UK visa vetting; Indian diaspora affected by changing public attitudes and government policies.

#### 3. Media and Political Polarization

- Conspiracy framing, "cultural anxiety," and attack on pluralism via digital and mass media amplify division, often evoking victimhood narratives and scapegoating minorities.
- > The Overton window keeps shifting—topics once deemed taboo (e.g., "invasion" rhetoric, birthright citizenship) now see regular debate on mainstream platforms.

#### 4. Historical Lessons and Democratic Risks

> Echoes of 1630s Europe: Rise of demagogues and erosion of checks and balances can threaten hardwon civil rights and internal stability.

#### **Global Practices**

Canada, New Zealand, Scandinavia	Proactive inclusion policies, protection of minority rights— counter-campaigns against hate speech, anti-democratic narratives.
Germany (post-2015)	Anti-fascist coalitions and civic education campaigns slow normalization of farright.

#### **Key Fact**

- Italy elected its first far-right PM since WWII in Giorgia Meloni.
- France's National Rally polled 41% in 2022 presidential runoff, Germany's AfD leads national surveys, Sweden Democrats and Finland's Finns Party are no longer fringe actors, and "Unite the Kingdom" march in London drew 100,000 participants.
- In the US, policies restricting citizenship, visa access, and birthright rights reflect this hardline ideological turn.



EU/Japan	Conditional trade and partnership deals linked to human rights and democracy
	standards.

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

Parliament/MEA	Monitor migration impacts, negotiate diaspora protections, maintain strategic engagement with both liberal and hardline governments.
Diaspora Advocacy Groups	Promote social cohesion initiatives for expatriates at risk from rising xenophobia.
Ministry of Education	Intensify overseas student orientation and partner with host institutions on anti- discrimination programs.

#### **Way Forward**

#### 1. Defend Pluralistic Values and Rule of Law

> Uphold civil liberties, critique exclusionary policies, and support global coalitions for democracy and human rights.

#### 2. Proactive Diplomacy

India should combine pragmatic engagement with value-based advocacy, leveraging diaspora strengths and economic partnerships for mutual benefit.

#### 3. Foster Community Resilience

> Enable Indian expatriates and students to build bridges with host societies, investing in inclusive networks and legal support.

#### 4. Counter Hate and Disinformation

> Partner globally to tackle cyber-hate, fake news, and algorithmic bias fueling polarization.

#### 5. Renew Democratic Alliances

> Advocate restoration of multilateral norms and forums protecting global civil society, pluralism, and fair migration access.

#### **Conclusion**

The surge of far-right influence challenges Western democracies at their ethical core. The future stability of pluralist states will depend on defending reason, dignity, and active public debate—India must adapt its strategies abroad and strengthen liberal values at home.

#### **Prelims Practice Question**

Q1. Which of the following countries is cited as having adopted far-right agendas into mainstream policy after 2020?

- a) Italy
- b) Canada
- c) Japan
- d) Brazil

Answer: A) Italy

#### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "The mainstreaming of far-right politics in Western democracies threatens pluralism and has global knock-on effects." Analyse the patterns, impacts, and suggest strategic responses for India. (250 words)







# India's Travails in Negotiating a Friendless World

Source: Editorial by M.K. Narayanan, October 2025

#### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2)**

- GS2: International Relations (Foreign Policy, Multipolarity, Regional Affairs)
- **GS2:** Governance (Diplomatic Strategy, Global Order)
- Essay/Interview: India's strategic autonomy and neighbourhood diplomacy

#### **Introduction**

India faces the ongoing challenge of recalibrating its foreign policy amidst emerging global unpredictability, rising protectionism, and deepening ideological divides in world politics. Legacy frameworks of multilateralism and regional alignment are increasingly ineffective, requiring India to develop sophisticated, adaptive strategies as it navigates a more transactional and fragmented world order.

#### **Key Issues**

#### 1. Flexibility Deficit in Foreign Policy

- India's foreign policy establishment struggles to shed dogmatic legacies, often responding to upheaval with patchwork solutions rather than proactive engagement.
- Example: India's muted response to the Nepal revolution and the Bangladesh regime shift.

#### **Key Fact**

- 1. India's strategic exclusion and shrinking diplomatic space in global forums is evident, with Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan forming regional blocs that sideline Indian interests.
- China's persistent incremental engagement in South Asia and shifting Indo-China dynamics in forums like Tianjin summit highlight new realities.
- 3. Contemporary coalitions in the West Asian and Asian neighbourhood increasingly bypass Indian positions on security, trade, and crisis management.

#### 2. Neighbourhood Exclusion and Crisis Diplomacy

- India's shrinking influence is underscored by Turkey's hostile stance and Pakistan's effective marginalization of Indian interests on Afghanistan.
- Example: South Asia's regional architecture is increasingly built without India at the strategic core.

#### 3. Slow Adaptation to Multipolarity

- Frequent coalition-building around India excludes its active input; Asian and West Asian powers form pragmatic groupings that do not rely on older alliances.
- Example: Regional security agreements exclude India—evident in new mutual defence pacts, joint economic forums.

#### 4. Transactional Shifts and Bilateral Challenges

- India's relations with China, despite high-level summits, remain transactional ("cat and mouse game") with little strategic convergence beyond limited trade and technology deals.
- Example: Chinese investments in South Asia are coupled with slow progress on political and military exchanges and crisis management.

#### 5. Challenge of Reconciliation and Representation

- India's deficit in regional peace-building and inability to shape multi-party reconciliation processes leaves it reactive rather than visionary.
- Example: India's approach to Bangladesh and Nepal lacks sustained engagement required for stable outcomes.







#### **Global Practices**

ASEAN	Adaptive diplomacy—using consensus and active mediation to resolve regional crises.		
France, UK	Pragmatic engagement through flexible coalition-building, safeguarding national interests amid shifting partnerships.		
Brazil, Africa Union	Proactive outreach to new actors, combinatorial diplomacy balancing values and interests.		

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

MEA/Strateg	ic Policy	Push for anticipatory crisis diplomacy using scenario planning, intelligence	
Group		analysis, and rapid coalition engagement.	
NITI Aayog		Recommend flexible institutional frameworks to enable swift realignment and adapt policies to changing global norms.	
Regional	Security	Encourage broader dialogue platforms, regular security audits, and proactive	
Council		partnership mapping in neighbourhood and extended regions.	

#### **Way Forward**

#### 1. Institutionalize Flexible Foreign Policy Responses

➤ Build rapid response teams, diplomatic intelligence cells, and predictive analytics for neighborhood and global crises.

#### 2. Broaden Coalitional Outreach

Forge interest-based coalitions with diverse partners; move beyond reliance on legacy alliances.

#### 3. Invest in Conflict Mediation Capacity

Develop high-level expertise and institutions for peace-building, mediation, and reconciliation processes.

#### 4. Deepen Engagement in Regional Security Platforms

Participate and lead regional summits, think tanks, and policy dialogues that shape new alliances and crisis management strategies.

#### 5. Promote Strategic Pragmatism

Prioritize outcomes over ideological rigidity. Use economic, technological, and diplomatic levers to maximize national interest in changing forums.

#### **Conclusion**

As India negotiates an increasingly friendless global landscape, success depends on deep strategic flexibility, proactive crisis management, and visionary diplomacy that shapes rather than reacts to shifting power structures. New coalitions and transactional ties must be leveraged with agility to ensure India's interests remain safeguarded in a multipolar world.

#### **Prelims Practice Question**

# Q.1 Which regional countries have moved to sideline India in new mutual security agreements, as cited in the editorial?

- a) China and Russia
- b) Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan
- c) Nepal and Sri Lanka
- d) Japan and South Korea

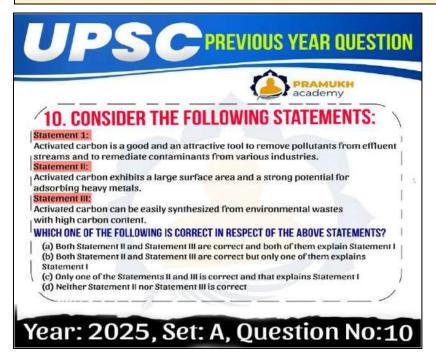




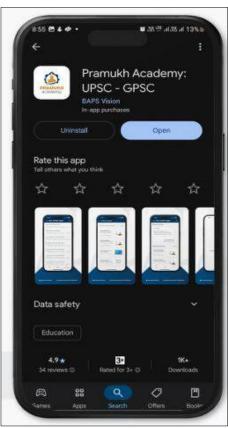
Answer: B) Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan

#### **Mains Practice Question 1**

Q.1 "India's exclusion from emerging regional coalitions highlights an urgent need for strategic flexibility and anticipatory diplomacy." Discuss how India can overcome these challenges to protect its interests in a multipolar world. (250 words)







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# On Air, Connect the Dots: Weather, Monsoon, and Delhi's Pollution **Puzzle**

Source: Editorial by Gufran Beig, National Institute of Advanced Studies/SAFAR, October 2025

#### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 3)**

- **GS3:** Environment (Air Pollution, Mitigation Strategies)
- Geography (Climatology, Monsoon, ENSO/La Niña Impacts)
- Sci-Tech (Climate Models, Weather Forecasting)
- Governance (Crisis Management, Public Policy Outcomes)

#### **Introduction**

Delhi's winters are tinged with festival joy but shrouded by the fog and dread of severe air pollution. This year, timely monsoon withdrawal and weirdly warm early winter offered fleeting relief, but deeper climatic and policy problems threaten a return to hazardous air just as festivities begin. The editorial unpacks how weather patterns, delayed monsoon, agricultural residue burning, and regulatory gaps together shape the air one breathes.

#### **Key Issues with Examples**

#### 1. Climate Patterns and Counterintuitive Effects

2. Policy vs. Ground Reality: Regulatory Gaps

- > ENSO-neutral/weak La Niña induced earlier heavy rains in North India, delaying paddy harvest and stubble burning peaks to late October/early November.
- Example: Punjab and Haryana experienced
  - record September floods, moving stubble burning—and its emissions—closer to Diwali and winter, when wind stagnation worsens particulate

# buildup.

- > Even when well-timed measures (firework bans, delayed paddy sowing) produce benefits, weak enforcement and loopholes dilute their impact.
- Example: Green crackers, relaxed judiciary bans, and selective residential fireworks saw only minor reductions—bulk of pollutants from firework activity persisted.

#### 3. Complex Interplay: Weather, Agriculture, Urban Action

- A mild early winter and late monsoon withdrawal improved short-term conditions, but model projections (NIAS/SAFAR) warn that climate variability—if prolonged—can trap pollutants longer and eventually worsen winter peaks.
- Example: 60–70% of particulate pollution continues to come from firecracker and crop residue burning events.

#### 4. Public Awareness and Policy Communication

The cyclical "hope and anxiety" over annual pollution peaks shows the need to "connect the dots," transcending short-term fixes and focusing on coordinated, sustained action.

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#### **Key Fact**

- 1. The 2025 monsoon officially withdrew from Delhi at the latest-ever date since 2002, coming in the last week of September.
- 2. October air quality was momentarily better (AQI improvement, early "very poor" label delayed) but firecracker bans and "green" crackers offered minimal sustained benefit.
- 3. Even in favorable weather, stubble burning, localized emissions, and lack of coordinated enforcement brought back AQI above 400 ("severe") by end-October.







#### **Global Practices**

China	Real-time emission caps, chemical fog dispersers, and city-wide electric transport
(Beijing)	mandates during pollution season.
France/Japan	Year-round crop residue management incentives and precision meteorology for local action.
US (California)	Strict wildland fire controls, satellite monitoring, and seasonal urban traffic restrictions.

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

NAQI/National Clean Air Programme	Push real-time pollution data transparency, enforce inter-state crop burning bans, and scale up clean energy in urban and peri-urban transport.
NITI Aayog/Environment Ministry	Integrate weather models, agricultural forecasts, and coordinated enforcement into "seasonal air crisis response plans."
Standing Parliamentary Committee on Urban Affairs	Urges dependent states to broaden farmer incentives and subsidies for stubble management and invest in non-firecracker Diwali alternatives.

#### **Way Forward**

#### 1. Seasonal Multi-Agency Air Crisis Taskforces

Institutionalize quick-response teams able to adjust to monsoon/ENSO/La Niña shifts and mobilize state, district, and city action in real time.

#### 2. Sustain Incentives for Crop Residue Management

Expand farmer buy-backs, biofuel incentives, precision machinery, and in-field management; penalty for open burning should be paired with workable alternatives.

#### 3. Targeted Enforcement and Behavior Change

Engage communities, invest in children's air quality education, and strengthen local air monitoring — not just during high-visibility events.

#### 4. Synchronize Weather, Emission, and Festival Data in Governance

Mandate use of advanced forecasting to time restrictions and communication before pollution peaks.

#### 5. Strengthen Regional Coordination

Foster inter-state pollution management compacts involving Punjab, Haryana, UP and Delhi NCR for integrated air-action.

#### **Conclusion**

Marginal improvements in pollution levels are possible when science and policy connect, but without robust implementation, climate quirks or single interventions cannot rescue Delhi's air. Only sustained, holistic action—aligning monsoon, crop, festival, and urban controls—will ensure citizens "breathe easier" in winters to come.

#### **Prelims Practice Question 1**

Q.1 Which of the following factors contributed to a temporary improvement in Delhi's AQI post-monsoon 2025?

a) Permanent ban on stubble burning







- b) ENSO-neutral/weak La Niña, late monsoon withdrawal, and mild early winter
- c) Reduction in vehicle population
- d) Complete transition to green crackers

Answer: B) ENSO-neutral/weak La Niña, late monsoon withdrawal, and mild early winter

#### **Mains Practice Question 1**

Q.1 "Air quality management in Delhi requires connecting the dots across climate variability, agriculture, enforcement, and urban policy." Discuss why fragmented interventions fail, and outline an integrated approach for long-term relief. (250 words)





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## India Should Be More Welcoming of Foreign Scholars and Experts

**Key Fact** 

1. The deportation of Francesca Orsini, an

eminent scholar of Indian literature, from the

Delhi airport after holding a five-year tourist

visa, despite significant contributions like

"The Hindi Public Sphere," highlights unclear

facing sudden bans or arbitrary interruptions,

even when their research advances India's

and inconsistent application of visa norms.

2. Similar cases have involved foreign scholars

cultural and academic reputation.

Source: The hindu

#### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2 & GS Paper 4)**

- **GS2:** Governance, International Relations (Research, Cultural Soft Power, Policy)
- **GS4:** Ethical Governance (Openness, Pluralism, Restrictions on Free Exchange)
- Society: Indian diaspora, Foreign Policy Soft Tools

#### Introduction

Open societies thrive by inviting the free movement of ideas, technology, and talent. While India seeks global prominence in science, culture, and industry, it increasingly sends conflicting signals to foreign scholars—attracting investment and technology while sometimes restricting research collaboration and academic mobility, exemplified by high-profile deportations and arbitrary visa cancellations.

#### **Key Issues with Examples**

#### 1. Ambiguities in Visa and Research Policy

- Arbitrary cancellations, blacklists, and unclear conditions undermine India's attractiveness for international research, academic conferences, and collaborative innovation.
- Example: Orsini was blacklisted over alleged academic activity, but such researchers regularly contribute to India-focused scholarship that benefits Indian culture and global image.

#### 2. Security vs. Openness: The Strategic Balance

- > Political ecosystem reflects suspicion toward foreign influence, with some groups fearing academic work on India could "shape the minds of Indians."
- **Example:** Visa decisions serve as covert gatekeeping—sometimes favoring those who praise government narratives, restricting critical or neutral voices.

#### 3. Policy Impact on Global Reputation and Innovation

- Restrictive approaches risk shrinking India's global scientific and cultural engagement, impairing research networks and international partnerships in areas of AI, medicine, history, and social sciences.
- Example: Open economies like UK, Germany, Singapore incentivize top international researchers, strengthening domestic expertise and innovation clusters.

#### 4. Contradiction with India's Aspirational Goals

- India wants to become a global knowledge hub and "Viswaguru," but policy signals sometimes repel the very agents who could help achieve this ambition.
- **Example**: Countries balancing openness with security (US, EU) have become magnets for leading scholars in science and humanities.

#### **Global Practices**

UK, US, EU	Well-established academic mobility programs, transparent visa guidelines, direct		
	university-government clearing for research visitors, and regular review processes to		
	resolve suspicions.		







Singapore,	"Talent pass" schemes, government grants for cross-border research teams, and	
Australia	aggressive international scholarly recruitment.	
Germany	"Blue Card" for researchers, merit-based permanent residency routes, and fast-track for	
	scientific collaboration.	

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

Parliamentary Panel on	Calls for transparent, independent academic visa review boards and
Higher Education	regular audits of deportations and blacklists.
NITI Aayog/Ministry of	Recommends calibrated openness—balancing security with incentives for
Education	high-value research, soft power, and innovation partnerships.
Indian Council for Cultural	Promote structured dialogues with foreign universities, joint conferences,
Relations	and streamlined visa facilitation.

#### **Way Forward**

- 1. Institutionalize Transparent Visa Policies: All academic and research visa applications should undergo clear, timely, publishable review guided by independent experts—not only national security agencies.
- 2. **Balance Openness and National Interest:** Adopt smart risk-based auditing, but default towards welcoming scholars, including those offering critical perspectives.
- **3. Expand Bilateral Research and Educational Exchanges:** Launch reciprocal talent exchange programs, government-backed international fellowships, and joint innovation hubs.
- **4. Public Outreach for Pluralism Benefits:** Proactively communicate how foreign scholars enrich Indian knowledge, values, and global standing.
- 5. **Regular Review and Public Consultation:** Institute annual stakeholder consultations—universities, ministries, civil society—on academic mobility and national benefit.

#### **Conclusion**

India's success as a global leader depends on attracting and retaining talent, technology, and critical thought. Restrictive policies, arbitrary visa decisions, or suspicion slow the pace of soft power, cultural enrichment, and innovation. Welcoming foreign scholars advances a resilient, pluralistic, and competitive India.

#### **Prelims Practice Question**

- Q.1 Which of the following has most contributed to hindering India's reputation as a global academic destination?
  - a) Over-reliance on technology import
  - b) Delays in patent approval
  - c) Arbitrary and opaque visa and deportation policies for foreign scholars
  - d) Lack of student scholarships

Answer: C) Arbitrary and opaque visa and deportation policies for foreign scholars

#### **Mains Practice Question 1**

Q.1 "Open societies thrive on the unrestricted flow of ideas, scholars, and expertise. India's progress toward knowledge power demands reform in its academic mobility and visa policies." Critically discuss with reference to recent cases. (250 words)







# Tapping the Shine: India Must Step in as a Supplier of Solar Power to Sustain Its Industry

Source: The hindu

#### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 3)**

- GS3: Economy (Renewable Energy, Industrial Policy)
- Environment (Climate Commitments, Clean Tech)
- International Relations (Energy Exports, Soft Power, Africa)

#### Introduction

India's domestic solar industry has witnessed transformative growth in both generation capacity and manufacturing scale, positioning itself as a leading global producer amid climate debates and the push for energy independence. However, risks remain—underutilized manufacturing, export constraints, costly raw materials, and tough competition from China—demanding not only policy ambition but strategic coordination for India to serve as a "solar supplier" for its own and global industries.

#### **Key Issues**

#### 1. Underutilization and Scale Mismatch

- India's ambitious target: 500 GW solar capacity by 2030 means adding 30 GW/year, but recent years have seen effective additions of just 17– 23 GW.
- Example: India's installed capacity is impressive, but domestic manufacturing lags behind grid-connected demand, and modules are still pricier and reliant on imported materials.

#### 2. Competing with China and Export Barriers

- China dominates with cheaper raw material access, higher production efficiency, and superior infrastructure; India's modules can be 1.5–2 times costlier.
- Example: Temporary US trade restrictions allowed India to make gains in 2024, but future performance is uncertain as new markets open.

#### Puga Geothermal **Energy Projects** Bhadla Solar Park 200/ laisalmer Rewa Solar Wind Park Project Brahmanyel Bio-CNG Plant Wind Farm Ramky Enviro Landfill Vankusawade Wind Park W Simhadri Floating Solar PV Plant Shakti Sthala Solar Project # urnool Ultra ga Solar Park Pavagada INDIA'S TOP RENEWABLE **ENERGY PROJECTS**

#### **Key Fact**

- 1. In 2024–25, India generated 1,08,494 GW-hour of solar energy, surpassing Japan and ranking third globally, behind only China and the US.
- 2. India's installed solar manufacturing capacity rose from 2 GW (2014) to 60 GW (2025), but domestic cell capacity is only 17 GW and "effective" capacity is just 8.5 GW.
- **3.** Export of solar modules to the US in 2024 was 4 GW—dwarfed by China's exports of 236 GW, given America's trade restrictions.

#### 3. Supply Chain and Policy Bottlenecks

- > Delays in ramping up polysilicon and wafer manufacturing, high raw material costs, and limited domestic R&D impact India's ability to be globally competitive.
- Example: PM Surya Ghar and PM KUSUM schemes show promise for rural and rooftop solar but need scaling, model outreach, and integration.

#### 4. Africa and Global South Opportunity







- India may tap nearly half its irritable land for solar irrigation, powering rural pumps and leapfrogging basic grid bottlenecks.
- > Example: International Solar Alliance (ISA) positions India as a potential supplier to Africa, pitching for global leadership if quality, affordability, and supply reliability are ensured.

#### **Global Practices**

China	Government drives investment in entire solar value chain, aggressive export policy and domestic tech upgrades; centralized procurement and subsidies.
Germany/US	Advanced R&D grants, consumer solar incentives, sustainable energy transitions using domestic modules, trade barriers easing domestic production.
Africa/ASEAN	Partners with India's ISA, piloting solar-powered microgrid solutions, biofuel linkages, and climate tech knowledge transfer.

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

MNRE/ISA	Expand support for module manufacturing, prioritize upscaling of solar			
	supply chains, and foster public-private global partnerships.			
NITI Aayog	Integrate solar supply with industrial corridors, push for affordable raw			
	materials, and incentivize green finance for solar startups.			
Parliamentary Standing	Urge adoption of dynamic export policies, technical standards			
Committee on Energy	harmonization, and wider adoption of rooftop/rural solar models.			

#### **Way Forward**

- 1. Scale Up Integrated Solar Manufacturing: Incentivize full value chain development (cells, wafers, modules), invest in domestic R&D, and reduce import dependency.
- 2. Expand Global Export Markets: Use ISA as springboard for Africa/South Asia, prioritize affordable, competitive exports and long-term bilateral agreements.
- 3. Address Policy and Pricing Gaps: Harmonize solar subsidy schemes, speed grid connectivity solutions, and promote rural model adoption for maximum inclusion.
- 4. Foster Innovation and Green Finance: Channel public and private capital into solar research, new materials, and tech upgrades for cheaper, scalable production.
- 5. Problem-Solving Collaboration: Build multilateral working groups to clear technical, regulatory, and trade barriers—helping Indian solar compete globally.

#### **Conclusion**

India's solar journey is globally significant. To become a supplier—not just a consumer—of clean power, India must rapidly scale manufacturing, deepen export market strategies, and foster robust public-private innovation. Leadership in the "solar century" means connecting affordability, reliability, and green diplomacy.

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#### **Prelims Practice Question 1**

Q.1 Which factor most threatens India's growth as a global solar supplier?

- a) Lack of sunshine
- b) High module cost and dependence on imports
- c) Too much manufacturing capacity
- d) Overuse of fossil fuels

**Answer:** B) High module cost and dependence on imports







### **Mains Practice Question**

Q.1 "India's solar sector faces supply chain, pricing and competitive challenges, but could emerge as a global supplier with strategic reforms." Discuss policy and export strategies for India's solar industry. (250 words)

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## The UN Matters, as a Symbol of Possibility

Source: The hindu

#### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2)**

- GS2: International Relations (UN Reforms, Multilateralism, Global Governance)
- GS2: Governance & Policy (Collective Security, Peacekeeping)
- Essay/Interview: Multilateral diplomacy, Global Institutions

#### Introduction

Eighty years after its founding, the United Nations stands at a crossroads: born of tragedy and pledged to prevent conflict, it has both succeeded as an instrument of possibility and suffered from inertia and the inequities of power. Witness to global transformation—from Cold War to multipolarity—today's UN faces renewed skepticism about its effectiveness and legitimacy, compelling the world to rethink the meaning and mechanisms of collective action.

#### **Key Issues**

#### 1. Crisis of Representation and Efficacy

- The Security Council's outdated veto and membership structure blocks fair representation for emerging powers (e.g., India, Brazil,
  - Africa).
- Example: India's repeated exclusion from permanent UNSC membership highlights the disconnect between today's geopolitical realities and post-1945 institutions.

# 2. UN's Civilizational Achievements and Persistent Limits

- Despite gridlock, the UN remains central for disaster relief, development goals (SDGs), global health, and normative frameworks on human rights and equality.
- Example: UN peacekeepers and agencies stabilize fragile zones (East Timor, Rwanda, Syria), though often stretched thin and sometimes hampered by politics.

#### 3. Multilateralism under Threat

- ➤ Rise of bilateralism and inward-looking nationalism challenge the consensus-based tradition of UN diplomacy.
- Example: Russia-Ukraine conflict, climate negotiations, and Covid-response exposed rifts between powerful blocs and the developing world.

#### 4. Need for Strategic Autonomy and Reforms

#### **Key Fact**

- The UN's 80th anniversary occurs amidst deep global flux: new power alignments, contestation in Security Council reforms, and the rise of nationalism.
- 2. Despite limitations, UN agencies (WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR) delivered life-saving aid in conflicts and disasters worldwide in 2024–25. India, as a vocal proponent of multilateralism and UNSC reform, remains outside permanent membership—a glaring legitimacy gap.





- India and others seek a seat at the high table to shape global norms and drive fairer policy, warning against the dangers of a hollowed-out UN or one captured by a narrow power cohort.
- Example: SDGs and planetary stewardship demand an inclusive, cooperative framework—not power politics.

#### **Global Practices**

G4 (India, Brazil, Japan,	Persistent advocacy for UNSC reform, expanded permanent seats, and veto
Germany)	reform.
African Union/EU	Use of block voting, leveraging collective bargaining for equitable global
	resource distribution, and strong alliances for peace enforcement.
Nordics/Canada	Promotion of consensus-building, peacekeeping leadership, and inclusive
	humanitarian frameworks.

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

Parliamentary Standing	Prioritizes multilateral diplomacy, active leadership in SDG negotiations,			
<b>Committee on External Affairs</b>	and global south coalition-building for UN reforms.			
Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)	Advocates continued outreach for UNSC permanent seat, robust engagement in all UN bodies, and leadership in climate, health, and digital governance.			
NITI Aayog/Think Tanks	Push for India-driven technical expertise in peacekeeping, disaster management, and global education/health initiatives.			

#### **Way Forward**

- **1. Pursue Concrete UN Reform:** States must push for time-bound expansion of UNSC, veto restraint, and substantive voice for emerging economies.
- **2. Double Down on Global Public Goods:** India should lead collaborative solutions (SDGs, disaster relief, climate finance) as proof of multilateral value and its own capacity.
- **3. Model Inclusive Multilateralism:** Emphasize shared leadership, promote "consensus plus" diplomacy, and bridge divides through norm-based partnerships.
- **4. Anchor National Interest in Universal Values:** Leverage soft power in health, peacekeeping, and disaster management; balance autonomy with commitment to a rules-based order.
- **5. Enrich UN's Relevance for the Next Generation:** Make the UN central to new threats—digital governance, pandemics, planetary risks—inviting youth, civil society, and innovators to co-design its renewal.

#### **Conclusion**

The UN, at 80, remains imperfect but indispensable—a forum of last resort, a voice for the vulnerable, and a laboratory for collective solutions. Its reinvention will test the world's ability to shape principled, effective global cooperation for the turbulent decade ahead.

#### **Prelims Practice Question**

Q.1 Which UN body's outdated structure is most often cited as the main reason for calls for UN reform?

- a) WHO
- b) Economic and Social Council
- c) Security Council
- d) International Court of Justice





Answer: C) Security Council

#### **Mains Practice Question**

Q.1 "The value of the UN lies not in perfection, but in its role as a forum of possibility for global cooperation." Critically discuss the reforms needed and India's contribution to multilateralism. (250 words)



# Good Job: Factories Must Provide Facilities for Women Employed in Hazardous Jobs

Source: The hindu

#### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2 & 3)**

- GS2: Governance (Women Empowerment, Labour Laws, Gender Equity)
- GS3: Economy (Workforce Participation, Industrial Policy)
- Society: Barriers to Female Labour, Inclusive Growth

#### **Introduction**

The Tamil Nadu government's proposal to open hazardous and night-shift jobs in factories to women marks an incremental yet progressive step toward dismantling historic, patriarchal barriers to workplace equality. However, legal change is only the beginning—true empowerment requires safer, more supportive environments and a sustained push against structural bias.

#### **Key Issues**

#### 1. Shrinking Legal and Social Barriers

- Legal permission for women's entry into hazardous work previously justified under "protection" now liberates them from patronizing exclusion.
- Example: Similar reforms in Maharashtra and Gujarat have led to gradual but real shifts in women's roles in chemical, electronics, and metallurgy sectors.

#### 2. Workplace Safety and Support Infrastructure

- Rules now require factories to provide necessary facilities and safeguards—separate toilets, safe transport, health checks, secure rooms, and monitoring—in all hazardous workplaces.
- Example: Without these, the presence of women is symbolic, as many firms could drop home facilities or penalize women's participation.

# Cycle of Work-Life Balance for Women Manage Multiple Responsibilities Achieve Balance Stress Seek Support Face Burnout

#### **Key Fact**

- Amendments to the Tamil Nadu Factories Rules (1950) will enable women, except pregnant women and young persons, to take up 20 operations previously banned as "dangerous" (e.g., glass, lead, fireworks, blasting, pesticide, and vibration-heavy industries).
- Factories must now secure consent of women for night shifts and provide safety provisions (toilets, separate canteens, secure transport, health checks, and secure changing rooms).

#### 3. Societal and Management Attitudes

- > Structural gender bias persists—employers must not penalize or coerce women into hazardous roles, nor reduce facilities in the name of compliance.
- Example: Without robust safeguards, women are at risk of exploitation or being used as tokens to meet "compliance targets."

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#### 4. Importance of Active Implementation





- Close monitoring by labour authorities and regular stakeholder feedback are crucial for enforcement and real change.
- Example: Kerala's periodic audits of women's working conditions in hazardous sectors have improved compliance and reported female participation.

#### **Global Practices**

Sweden/Japan/Canada	Require gender-neutral safety platforms, universal access to protective
	equipment, and periodic health reviews for all hazardous industries.
EU	Mandates anti-harassment and zero retaliation policies for all night and
	hazardous shift workers, regardless of gender.
Sri Lanka	Government partnership with private sector to provide on-site crèches and rest
	zones for women in night/hazardous jobs.

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

Parliamentary Standing	Mandate periodic audits, transparent data reporting, and linking			
Committee on Labour	government incentives to compliance in workplace safety.			
Ministry of Labour Propose incentives for factories going beyond minimum compliance				
	recognize industry champions of safe women's employment.			
Women's Commissions Advocate for representation of women on workplace safety boards an				
	drafting future amendments.			

#### **Way Forward**

#### 1. Ensure Comprehensive Safety and Support

Enforce full provision of safety equipment, rest/cleaning areas, safe transport for night shifts, and grievance procedures.

#### 2. Promote Awareness and Training

Conduct regular gender-sensitization and safety workshops for both management and workers.

#### 3. Monitor and Incentivize Implementation

Use inspections and government incentives to push firms beyond minimal compliance; penalize those that cut facilities.

#### 4. Active Inclusion, Not Just Access

Women must be empowered to choose roles freely, not forced or tokenized—participation should be voluntary and valued.

#### 5. Periodic Impact Assessment

Continually assess outcomes for women in hazardous jobs, adapting policies and support as needed.

#### **Conclusion**

Opening hazardous jobs to women is a breakthrough for gender parity—if legal rights are matched with real investment in workplace safety, inclusive facilities, and cultural change. Legal reform, proactive oversight, and progressive industry support will turn expanding opportunities from "damp squib" to genuine empowerment.

#### **Prelims Practice Question**

#### Q.1 Which new legal requirement is central to Tamil Nadu's move for women in hazardous jobs?

- a) Compulsory maternity leave
- b) Consent and provision of safety/support facilities



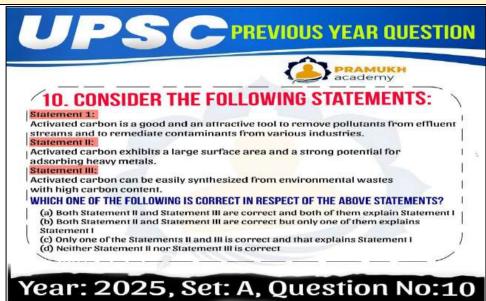


- c) Reduced working hours for women only
- d) Higher pay for hazardous jobs

Answer: B) Consent and provision of safety/support facilities

#### **Mains Practice Question**

Q.1 "Legal empowerment for women in hazardous and night-shift jobs is only the first step. Lasting inclusion needs supporting infrastructure, vigilant implementation, and a shift in managerial and societal attitudes." Discuss. (250 words)









## The Mirage of Port-Led Development in Great Nicobar

Source: The Hindu

#### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 3)**

- GS3: Infrastructure (Ports, Logistics, Maritime Economy)
- GS3: Environment (Ecological concerns, Coastal Regulation)
- GS2: Governance (Public Policy, Federalism, Strategic Geography)

#### Introduction

India's plan for a major transshipment port at Great Nicobar, touted as a springboard for regional economic dynamism and strategic security, is under scrutiny. While supporters frame the project as transformative, closer examination reveals environmental, logistical, and commercial hurdles that undermine its viability and may turn bold vision into expensive mirage.

#### **Key Issues**

#### 1. Misaligned Economic Rationale

- Current transshipment needs are already efficiently met by Colombo/Singapore; building another hub must overcome structural demand constraints and enormous capital/environmental costs.
- Example: Colombo's established links mean it manages more containers per year with fewer berths than proposed Nicobar, leveraging network effects and logistics efficiency.

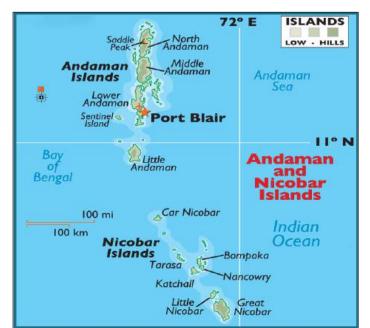
# 2. High Costs and Uncertain Commercial Prospects

- For at Nicobar's isolation means all inputs—fuel, containers, labor—must be imported; it will need massive subsidies to be cost-competitive.
- Example: Galathea Bay, the proposed site, is distant from major supply and demand centers, entailing high operational expense.

#### 3. Ecological and Environmental Risks

- The island is an ecological hotspot facing irreversible impacts from port dredging, forest clearing, and sea route expansion.
- Example: Historic port projects that neglect environmental impact assessments often face global backlash and legal challenges (e.g., Hambantota in Sri Lanka).

#### 4. Lack of Integrated Logistics and Policy Coherence



#### **Key Fact**

- 1. India's maritime trade remains deeply dependent on established transshipment hubs abroad—nearly 75% of Indian containers are routed via Sri Lanka, Singapore, or Malaysia.
- 2. Great Nicobar's port would be over 1,200 km from India's industrial heartland; genuine viability depends on ecosystem, feeder links, and competitive logistics—not just strategic location.



- Fifficient ports thrive on hinterland connectivity and regional corridor development—not mere coastal infrastructure.
- Example: Vadhavan, another port project, is logistically integrated and can operate independently; Galathea Bay is isolated, risking long-term viability.

#### **Global Practices**

Singapore & Dubai	Developed as hubs leveraging dense hinterland connectivity, trade
	facilitation systems, and logistics excellence—not just geographic placement.
China (Shenzhen),	Success stemmed from linking ports directly to industrial, export, and free
Netherlands (Rotterdam)	trade zones.
Sri Lanka (Colombo)	Built its edge on institutional partnerships with global shipping giants,
	efficient customs, and minimal bureaucratic delay.

#### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

NITI Aayog/Shipping Ministry	Mandatory rigorous cost-benefit and ecological impact assessments for all major port projects.
Parliamentary Committee on Infrastructure	Advise aligning new ports with planned industrial corridors, not standalone developments.
Ministry of Environment	Enforce strict environmental clearance and independent third-party review for all coastal infrastructure.

#### **Way Forward**

- 1. **Rigorously Assess Demand and Value Addition:** Justify port projects by clear demand, regional industrial linkages, and pricing that survives without recurring subsidies.
- 2. **Prioritize Eco-Friendliness:** Build only after comprehensive environmental studies; adopt global best practices in sustainable port construction.
- **3. Integrate Logistics and Industrial Corridors:** Embed any new port into a larger plan for transport corridors, trade facilitation, and local employment.
- **4. Phased Development and Risk Mitigation:** Pilot the project at smaller scale, ramping up only if real economic value emerges—avoid "white elephant" syndrome.
- 5. Accountable Public Consultation: Make decisions with local input, transparent cost-benefit discussion, and regular audits on delivery vs. projections.

#### **Conclusion**

The vision for a port at Great Nicobar must pass the strictest tests of economic logic, ecological stewardship, and integration with regional corridors. Unless grounded in real demand and best global practices, the project risks becoming another costly mirage in India's maritime strategy.

#### **Prelims Practice Question**

- Q1. Which factor most critically undermines the viability of the proposed Great Nicobar port?
  - a) Lack of political support
  - b) Absence of hinterland connectivity and high logistics costs
  - c) Lack of natural deep water
  - d) Overcapacity in Indian ports

Answer: B) Absence of hinterland connectivity and high logistics costs







#### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "Port-led growth only succeeds when it is grounded in robust regional integration, sound logistics, and environmental prudence." Critically assess India's Great Nicobar port plan. (250 words)

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### Respect the Health Rights of India's Children

Source: The Hindu

### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2 & 3)**

- GS2: Governance (Child Health Rights, Public Policy, Regulatory Framework)
- **GS3:** Science and Tech (Pharmaceutical Regulation, Essential Medicines)
- **Society:** Vulnerable Sections, Healthcare Delivery

### **Introduction**

The tragic deaths of 25 children due to contaminated cough syrup exposed severe lapses in India's pediatric drug oversight, catalyzing debate on regulatory response, ethical obligations, and system transparency. Protecting the health of India's youngest citizens demands a holistic policy framework, improved regulation, and genuine prioritization of child-specific healthcare.

### **Key Issues**

### 1. Regulatory Gaps and Inadequate Oversight

### **Key Fact**

- The Union Health Ministry had banned certain cough syrup formulations for children under 4 in April 2025; contamination and poor regulation persisted.
- India has approximately 3.2 crore (32 million) children born annually, yet lacks a robust pediatric pharmacovigilance system, with only one-third of all deaths in ages 1-5 due to treatable causes.
- Fragmented oversight and unclear responsibility (between Central Drugs Standard Control Organization, state authorities, and manufacturers) led to lapses in production and distribution.
- Example: Failure to monitor banned formulations and prevent tainted cough syrup from reaching vulnerable populations.

### **Danger of Therapeutic Orphans and Off-label Prescriptions**

- Children's drug responses differ dramatically from adults, yet many pediatric drugs are not tested in children, leading to "therapeutic orphans."
- Example: Dosing extrapolated from adult guidelines led to dangerous outcomes, as clinical trials often prioritize adults.

### 3. Absence of Clear Pediatric Drug Policy

- India lacks a Pediatric Medicines List like the Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act (BPCA) in the US or the WHO's Essential Medicines List for Children (EMLc)—resulting in inconsistent choices and poor market availability.
- Example: Lack of EMLc contributes to recurring issues during child health crises, making standardization difficult.

### 4. Insufficient Professional Training and Guidance

- Pharmacists, nurses, and doctors often lack adequate training in pediatric-specific medicines, compounding risks during emergencies and daily care.
- Example: Over-the-counter, unregulated medicines for children (cough syrup, antibiotics) can worsen or mask underlying problems.

### **Global Practices**

Europe/US	Mandatory pediatric clinical trials, post-marketing surveillance, EMLc adoption, and	
	strict age-based labelling.	
WHO	Regularly updates the Essential Medicines List for Children, providing scientific	
	standards for government adoption.	







Gambia,	Integrated medicine regulations and monitoring, rapid recall and public notification
Indonesia, Sri	protocols for contaminated batches.
Lanka	

### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

Indian Academy of	Establish an Indian Essential Medicines List for Children; mandate use in public
Pediatrics (IAP)	procurement and health programs.
Ministry of Health	Strengthen legal and reporting requirements for pediatric drug safety, including pharmacovigilance units at district level.
NITI Aayog	Push centralized training programs for pharmacists, paediatricians, and health workers in child-safe practices.

### **Way Forward**

### 1. Holistic Regulatory Reform

> Institute a single, accountable national regulator for pediatric medicines; enhance surveillance and recall mechanisms.

### 2. Develop an Indian EMLc

Codify and regularly revise a national essential medicines list for children, making it mandatory in procurement and insurance schemes.

### 3. Mandatory Professional Training

Regular pharmacovigilance education for all pharmacists, paediatricians, and nurses managing child health.

### 4. Transparent Risk Communication

Standard protocols for public alerts and batch recalls when contaminated drugs are detected.

### 5. Prioritize Children's Rights in All Health Policy

Embed child health as a core criterion in all drug policy, research funding, and public health campaigns.

### **Conclusion**

India's children deserve uncompromised health rights—regulatory gaps, professional undertraining, and lack of clinical rigor are not mere technical failures, but moral failures. Only with an integrated framework, evidence-based policy, and accountability can children's health be safeguarded.

### **Prelims Practice Question 1**

### Q1. Which step is critical for improving paediatric drug safety in India, as per best practices?

- a) Extrapolating dosages from adult trials
- b) Creating an Essential Medicines List for Children and enforcing pediatric pharmacovigilance
- c) Allowing over-the-counter antibiotics
- d) Relying only on state-level reporting

Answer: B) Creating an Essential Medicines List for Children and enforcing pediatric pharmacovigilance

### **Mains Practice Question 1**

Q1. "Child health rights require dedicated policies, clear drug regulation, and robust pharmacovigilance." Discuss reforms needed to prevent tragedies like contaminated cough syrup. (250 words)







### Crude Power Play: Amid US Sanctions on Russian Oil, Can India Resist or Adapt?

Source: Soumya Bhowmick, Editorial analysis, October 2025

### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2 & 3)**

- GS2: International Relations (Sanctions, Foreign Policy Autonomy, India-Russia-US Triangular Dynamics)
- **GS3:** Economy (Energy Security, Geopolitics, Currency Diplomacy, Oil Markets)
- Essay/Interview: Multipolarity, Energy Transition, Financial System Shifts

### Introduction

US sanctions on Russian oil giants—Rosneft and Lukoil pose a dilemma for major consumers, particularly India, by threatening access to a vital, discounted energy source. The episode exposes not only the fault lines in global oil markets and geopolitics, but also the question of strategic autonomy: how far will India go to secure its interests amid growing US pressure and market fragmentation?

### **Key Issues**

### 1. Fragmentation of the Oil Market

- ➤ US/EU sanctions attempt to price-cap, restrict shipping, and disincentivize purchases from Russia, forcing countries to weigh risk vs. energy security.
- Example: With each new round of sanctions, India expanded rupee-rouble transactions and explored new procurement channels (like the India–Russia BTA) to cushion supply shocks.

### 2. Pressure on India's Strategic Autonomy

- > India must balance old ties to Russia with the necessity of not antagonizing the US, all while keeping fuel costs manageable amid global volatility.
- > Example: India has historically diversified import sources, but the steep discounts on Russian crude make disengagement economically painful.

### 3. Financial Innovations & Trade Adaptation

- Growing use of alternatives to the US dollar for settlement (rupee-rouble, yuan, local currency barter) illustrates changing patterns of global finance.
- > Example: If sanctions intensify, India is likely to deepen non-dollar trades—further challenging US currency dominance.

### 4. Risk of Supply Shocks and Domestic Costs

- > If US pressure forces India to reduce imports, alternative sources (like Middle East crude) may raise costs and limit flexibility.
- Example: Spikes in international prices reverberate through India's economy, threatening inflation and current account stability.

### **Global Practices**

China Expands own payment mechanisms (CIPS), strengthens partnerships with Russia, hedges currency risk, and invests in alternative supply routes.

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### **Key Fact**

- 1. US sanctions, renewed in 2025, target the backbone of Russia's energy exports, which still supply roughly half of India's total oil imports.
- 2. Indian refineries, such as Nayara Energy (Vadinar, Gujarat), are heavily invested in Russian procurement; Russian crude now constitutes a major proportion of India's refining mix, and rupee-rouble trade has accelerated.



Japan/Korea	Diversified LNG and oil procurement, government-backed buyback schemes, strategic	
	reserves buffer short-term volatility.	
Turkey/ASEAN	Engage both US/EU and Russia via flexible, multipolar alliances and exploring barter,	
	commodity swaps.	

### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

Ministry of Petroleum &	Build larger strategic oil reserves, formalize multi-currency trade channels,
Natural Gas	encourage hedging and insurance for oil deals.
NITI Aayog	Chart scenarios for energy supply disruptions, recommend domestic reforms
	for rapidly scaling alternative/renewable energy.
MEAI/Finance Ministry	Develop a blueprint for risk-managed rupee-rouble and multi-currency trade,
	vigorously negotiate with US/EU on exemptions/safeguards.

### **Way Forward**

### 1. Sustain Supply Diversification

Keep expanding the energy import basket, using negotiation, innovation (non-dollar trades), and strategic stockpiling.

### 2. Defend Policy Flexibility through Diplomacy

> Communicate India's needs openly in all dialogues with US/EU, emphasize global multiplicity, and resist "zero-sum" pressure.

### 3. Deepen Alternative Payment Systems

> Accelerate local currency agreements, digital payment pilots; invest in bilateral settlement platforms.

### 4. Advance Domestic Energy Alternatives

> Prioritize renewables expansion, increase biofuels, and incentivize energy-saving for vulnerable sectors.

### 5. Monitor Domestic Impact Closely

> Create institutional early warnings for price, supply, and inflation risks; support vulnerable consumers if shocks intensify.

### **Conclusion**

India's approach to Russian oil sanctions will test its capacity for strategic autonomy, market innovation, and economic resilience. Success lies in deft diplomacy, pragmatic diversification, and a willingness to shape new financial strategies for an uncertain era.

### **Prelims Practice Question 1**

### Q1. Which emerging trade trend is highlighted by India's response to sanctions on Russian oil?

- a) Complete withdrawal from Russian crude
- b) Increased oil imports from Venezuela
- c) Use of rupee-rouble and non-dollar payments
- d) Immediate switch to US dollar payments

**Answer:** C) Use of rupee-rouble and non-dollar payments

### **Mains Practice Question 1**

Q1. "US sanctions on Russian oil illustrate a turning point for India's foreign economic policy and global finance." Analyse energy-security choices, challenges, and the evolving use of alternative payment systems. (250 words)







### The Contours of Constitutional Morality

Source: Justice N. Anand Venkatesh, Editorial analysis, October 2025

### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2 & 4)**

- GS2: Polity (Constitutional Values, Judicial Interpretation, Rule of Law)
- **GS2:** Governance (Morality in Public Policy, Rights vs. Law)
- GS4: Ethics (Morality, Dissent, Social Change)

### Introduction

The relationship between morality and law is central to the evolution of the Indian Constitution and its interpretation by the Supreme Court. The principle of "constitutional morality" aims to guide not only judicial decisions but also legislative action and civic conduct, balancing the letter and spirit of law with the higher values enshrined in the Constitution.

### **Key Issues**

### 1. Legal vs. Social Morality

- Social morality is shaped by prevailing customs or the will of majority, but constitutional morality is anchored in justice, liberty, and dignity for all.
- Example: Navtej Johar (2018) decriminalized same-sex relations on constitutional, not popular, grounds; Sabarimala and right to privacy cases show similar precedence.

### 2. Role of Judiciary and Separation of Powers

- Courts must ensure laws uphold constitutional principles, yet risk judicial overreach when substituting social reform for representative lawmaking.
- Example: The court's duty to protect minority rights and strike down unjust laws; but critics warn of "judicial legislation" undermining democracy.

### 3. Dilemmas in Dissent and Administrative Actions

- Applying constitutional morality can be complex in interpreting dissent, public protest, reservation, or administrative decisions.
- Example: The Supreme Court's judgments on reservation in employment highlight the need for both social justice and fidelity to constitutional ethos.

### 4. Need for Cultivation among Citizens and State

- Constitutional morality is not static; it thrives when citizens, lawmakers, and judges understand, debate, and internalize its evolving values.
- Example: Indian democracy's test lies in upholding the Constitution even when elected majorities might prefer regressive or exclusionary policies.

### **Key Fact**

- The Supreme Court's 2018 Navtej Johar judgment (decriminalizing Section 377 IPC) marked a landmark adoption of "constitutional morality," emphasizing justice, dignity, and equality over majoritarian social morality.
- 2. The doctrine is increasingly invoked in cases on privacy, gender equality, freedom of dissent, and LGBT rights, framing the judiciary's role as guardian of constitutional ideals even against popular sentiment.
- 3. The Supreme Court's 2018 Navtej Johar judgment (decriminalizing Section 377 IPC) marked a landmark adoption of "constitutional morality," emphasizing justice, dignity, and equality over majoritarian social morality.
- 4. The doctrine is increasingly invoked in cases on privacy, gender equality, freedom of dissent, and LGBT rights, framing the judiciary's role as guardian of constitutional ideals even against popular sentiment.



Uses "due process" and "equal protection" to continuously expand minori	
	rights even against social majorities.
South Africa	Post-apartheid courts consciously reference "transformative
	constitutionalism" to redress historical injustices.
European Court of Balances tradition with evolving standards, supplying rights jurisprudence for	
Human Rights	all member-states.

### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

Law Commission of India	Recommend regular judicial and legislative training on constitutional values, contemporary ethical dilemmas, and judicial restraint.
Parliamentary Standing	Urge periodic review of laws vis-à-vis constitutional morality, with public input
Committees	and impact assessments.
National Judicial	Advocate for increased dialogue between courts, civil society, and legislature
Academy	to foster participatory constitutionalism.

### **Way Forward**

- 1. **Deepen the Civic Understanding of Constitutional Morality:** Embed values-focused education in schools and universities; foster open debates on justice, equality, and social change.
- 2. Balance between Judicial Review and Legislature: Safeguard rights through reasoned judgments; respect democratic limits to avoid overreach.
- **3. Encourage Participatory Constitutionalism:** Create avenues for citizens' voices in major constitutional questions; use amicus briefs and stakeholder consultations.
- **4. Institutionalize Regular Ethical Review:** Periodic legislative and judicial review of laws to ensure alignment with evolving constitutional values.
- **5. Promote Inclusion and Dissent:** Protect the marginalized; uphold the right to dissent as a cornerstone of both democracy and constitutional morality.

### **Conclusion**

Constitutional morality elevates Indian democracy by asserting that laws must embody the highest ideals of justice, dignity, and liberty—not just majority opinion. Its true power lies in ensuring that policy, law, and society move ever closer to the Constitution's transformative promise.

### **Prelims Practice Question 1**

- Q1. Which Supreme Court judgment is most associated with the doctrine of "constitutional morality" in recent years?
  - a) Kesavananda Bharati

b) Navtej Singh Johar

c) Indira Sawhney

d) ADM Jabalpur

**Answer:** B) Navtej Singh Johan

### **Mains Practice Question 1**

Q1. "The doctrine of constitutional morality empowers the judiciary to transcend social majoritarianism and protect fundamental rights." Discuss its evolution, limits, and importance in Indian democracy with examples. (250 words)







# Friends of Friends: India, Pakistan, and the US – Strategic Balancing Beyond Diplomatic Hype

**Source:** Indian Express

### **UPSC** Relevance

- GS2: International Relations (India–US Strategic Partnership, Pakistan–US Relations, Geopolitics)
- GS2: Diplomacy (Bilateral/Trilateral Issues, Major Power Shifts)
- Essay/Interview: Foreign Policy, Strategic Autonomy

### **Introduction:**

Amid fresh US presidential terms and shifting priorities post-2025, Pakistan's growing diplomatic engagement with Washington has reignited speculation about India's standing. However, India's partnership with the US rests on deeper foundations—strategic, economic, and technological—that far exceed Pakistan's transactional gains. Rather than being distracted by Pakistan—US proximity, India should focus on renewing and expanding its own partnership with the US.

### **Key Issues**

### 1. Foundations of Partnership – India vs. Pakistan

- US-India ties span defense, security, trade, energy, and technology; US-Pakistan ties remain narrower, centered mostly on regional security and counterterrorism.
- Example: India's GDP is 10x Pakistan's; India's investments in the US and bilateral trade volumes dwarfs Pakistan's.

### 2. Transactional vs. Strategic Relationships

- Pakistan's periodic relevance is a function of US interests in Afghanistan, counterterror, and China containment—not a basis for broader alliance.
- Example: Despite US overtures to Pakistan, trade agreements, market access, and technology flows are far deeper with India.

### 3. Geo-Strategic Realignment: Multipolarity in Play

- The US is recalibrating alliances—engaging Saudi Arabia, Israel, and others—as a hedge against China, not as an endorsement of any single South Asian partner.
- Example: India's role in Quad, IPEF, Indo-Pacific corridor shows multidimensional engagement beyond security.

### 4. India-US Partnership: Resilience and Future Focus

- India must avoid reactive policy distractions and deepen engagement with Washington on tech, climate, investment, and rule-based order.
- Example: Ongoing US pressure on oil imports from Russia managed through transparent dialogue, not breakdown of ties.

### **Key Fact**

- Since January 2025, Pakistan's Army Chief has visited Washington thrice, as the US seeks to balance India's oil purchases from Russia and Pakistan's role in post-Afghanistan strategies.
- US officials, however, reaffirm that strengthening ties with Islamabad does not compromise the robust "deep, historic, and important" US— India partnership highlighted by Secretary of State remarks in Kuala Lumpur.



Japan-US, South	Balancing security dependence with independent trade and tech ties, responding
Korea-US	pragmatically to third-country relationships.
Australia-China-US	Actively manage rival partnerships through economic resilience, multilateral forums, and open channels.
EU-Russia-US	Engage each power for discrete interests, resist being drawn into zero-sum alliances.

### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

MEA/International Affairs	Develop scenario frameworks for navigating US-Pakistan engagement,
Committee	focusing on constructive US-India diplomacy.
NITI Aayog	Deepen economic and tech cooperation with the US; build insulation from short-term fluctuations in third-country ties.
Strategic Affairs Think Tanks	Prioritize Indian interests over international hype; foster regional groupings and diversify partnerships.

### **Way Forward**

- 1. Strengthen US-India Dialogue
  - Address irritants (oil, trade); emphasize future economic, technological, and defense collaborations.
- 2. Resist Reactionary Policymaking
  - Stay focused on India's core interests and strategic autonomy—not on competitor partnerships.
- 3. Leverage Multilateral Forums and Global South Networks
  - Use Quad, IPEF, and strategic partnerships as bridges to wider US engagement.
- 4. Focus on Growth, Capability, and Rule-Based Order
  - Promote Indian values and capability, not hype; respond to shifts with resilience and vision.
- 5. Proactive Diplomacy, Transparent Communication
  - Communicate objectives and concerns openly with both US and global partners; avoid escalatory narratives.

### **Conclusion**

India's US partnership remains resilient and multidimensional, unshaken by periodic US—Pakistan engagement. Strategic autonomy and focus on growth, capacity, and future-oriented diplomacy are India's best answers to geopolitical churn.

### **Prelims Practice Question**

- Q1. Which reason best explains the resilience of US-India ties versus US-Pakistan ties?
  - a) Military aid
  - b) Robust economic, technological, strategic foundations
  - c) Geographic proximity
  - d) Historical colonial links

**Answer:** B) Robust economic, technological, strategic foundations

### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "India's foreign policy must look beyond reactionary postures towards Pakistan-US shifts, renewing and deepening its own multidimensional US partnership." Analyse. (250 words)







### **Big Tech's Contempt for Indian Public Health**

Source: The Hindu.

### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2 & 3)**

- GS2: Governance, Polity (Public Health Regulation, Digital Platforms, Ethics)
- GS3: Economy (Consumer Protection, Tech Policy, Digital Economy Regulation)
- GS4: Ethics (Corporate Responsibility, Rule of Law)

### Introduction

online The unchecked proliferation of advertisements for unapproved or misleading drugs—amplified by Big Tech platforms—presents a growing threat to public health in India. Despite clear regulatory prohibitions through the Drugs Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act (DMRRA), 1954, the internet economy's global reach and lax enforcement have allowed a surge in digital health misinformation, unchecked by platform compliance or state action.

### **Key Fact**

- DMRRA prohibits any drug advertisement for treating 54 diseases (including diabetes, cancer, sexual disorders) regardless of scientific evidence; Big Tech platforms continue to permit such ads, flouting Indian law.
- Unlike in the US—where health-related ads are tightly regulated and platforms are liable— Indian regulators struggle to curb violations, complicated by the "intermediary" status of digital companies.

### **Key Issues**

### 1. Platform Evasion and Regulatory Weakness

- ➤ Big Tech ignores Indian law, running health product ads banned under DMRRA; their compliance is stricter under US or EU norms.
- Example: Cough syrup, erectile dysfunction pills, and unverified supplements are advertised on Indian digital platforms, despite being banned in print and TV.

### 2. Lack of Deterrence and Complicated Liability

- Indian courts and regulators wrestle with defining liability—publishers vs. intermediaries—letting platforms escape punishment even after convictions in rare cases.
- Example: PNDT Act violations lingered for years; court battles led to minimal enforcement, showcasing tech sector impunity.

### 3. Direct Public Health Risks

- ➤ Digital ads for unapproved or dangerous health products reach millions, risking misuse, abuse, and even poisoning.
- Example: WHO/Indian studies show a surge in online drug self-medication, poisoning, and adverse reactions tied to misleading ads.

### 4. Absence of Platform Accountability

- US Big Tech companies carefully avoid similar violations at home due to clear risk of criminal prosecution, but operate with "contempt" for Indian public health rules.
- Example: Multinational firms comply with FDA ad rules, but neither self-regulate nor adjust algorithms for Indian law.

### **Global Practices**

US/EU

Direct liability of digital platforms for health misinformation, prior regulatory review, large fines for violations.







Australia	Health regulators coordinate with digital platforms to block and rapidly delist misleading ads.	
Singapore	Joint taskforces between tech firms and medical regulators for real-time enforcement,	
	algorithmic auditing.	

### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

Parliamentary Standing	Establish legislative clarity on platform liability, mandate fast-track
Committee on Health	prosecution for repeat offenders.
DCGI/IT Ministry	Regular compliance audits of digital ads, public "blacklist" of violators, and
	periodic fines with escalation.
Consumer Affairs Ministry	Enforce influencer and health service transparency norms on social media;
	integrate proper redressal for digital health complaints.

### **Way Forward**

### 1. Legislate Platform Accountability

Amend IT and drug laws to make platforms jointly liable for health misinformation, not just "content hosts."

### 2. Enhance Regulatory Coordination

> Create an inter-ministerial task force to track digital health ads and rapidly penalize violations.

### 3. Investment in Digital Public Health Monitoring

Use digital forensics, AI, and public reporting tools for ongoing scrutiny of online health ads.

### 4. Promote Health Literacy and Awareness

Launch government and civil society drives on the risks of online drug misinformation, misinformation reporting protocols.

### 5. International Treaties and Tech Diplomacy

Collaborate for harmonized global standards and enforcement—gaps in one jurisdiction impact all others in the digital age.

### **Conclusion**

India's public health is undermined when Big Tech platforms exploit legal ambiguity, enabling banned drug ads that would never pass muster in the West. A combination of legislative clarity, coordinated enforcement, and platform responsibility is crucial to protect the health and rights of Indian citizens.

### **Prelims Practice Question 1**

### Q1. Which law prohibits the advertisement of certain drugs in India regardless of efficacy?

- a) NDPS Act
- b) Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954
- c) Drugs and Cosmetics Act
- d) PNDT Act

Answer: B) Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954

### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "India's digital economy risks a public health debacle unless platform liability and proactive regulation curb Big Tech's dissemination of misleading drug advertisements." Discuss. (250 words)







### Missed Opportunity: India and the ASEAN Summit

Source: The Hindu

### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2 & 3)**

- GS2: International Relations (India-ASEAN, Regional Groupings, Look East Policy)
- GS3: Economy (Strategic Partnerships, Maritime Security, Regional Integration)

### Introduction

India has been an ASEAN dialogue partner since 1995, and the annual ASEAN Summit provides a valuable platform to shape regional cooperation, project influence, and address pressing maritime and economic concerns. The 2025 summit, however, exposed missed opportunities for India to exert leadership and safeguard its strategic interests, especially as Indo-Pacific dynamics rapidly shift.

### **Key Issues**

### 1. Underutilization of Regional Platforms

- India's presence was marked by routine statements rather than proactive initiatives or coalition-building, weakening its voice vis-à-vis China's assertiveness.
- Example: PM Modi's brief engagement contrasted with more sustained intervention by other leaders; India fell short in addressing the China–ASEAN Code of Conduct.

### 2. Shortcomings in Maritime Security and Connectivity

- Despite vast coastline and stakes in the Indo-Pacific, India missed vital opportunities to secure sea lanes, upgrade naval cooperation, and push for effective ASEAN–India maritime dialogue.
- Example: ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific required firmer support from India to counterbalance Chinese expansion.

# MYANMAR VIETNAM PHILIPPINES THAILAND CAMBODIA BRUNEI DARUSSALAM SINGAPORE

# Key Fact ASEAN – Key Facts (Summary for UPSC) Definition

 ASEAN stands for Association of Southeast Asian Nations — a regional group promoting economic, political, and security cooperation.

### Members (10)

 Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

### 3. Missed Opportunities in Trade, Investment, and Aid

- India's proposals and offers of humanitarian assistance, infrastructure, and trade were overshadowed by sharper, more substantial pitches from other countries.
- Example: India's voice lagged on supply chain resilience and post-pandemic recovery; others offered clear roadmaps on regional growth.

### 4. Need for Strategic Political Engagement

- India failed to shape vital discussions on core issues like regional stability, digital partnerships, and climate action, focusing instead on reiterating existing policy lines.
- Example: India's ASEAN policy lacked the dynamism and follow-through required in the evolving Indo-Pacific order.



Japan/Australia	Translate engagement into concrete security, trade, and infrastructure projects at
	summits.
US/EU	Use plenary platforms to shape political consensus and build new coalitions for regional norms.
Indonesia/Singapore	Leverage summits to push multilateral agreements, coordinate maritime safety.

### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

MEA/Foreign Policy	Prepare targeted roadmaps and pre-summit consultations for each ASEAN	
Division	engagement. Focus on convergence beyond generic statements.	
Strategic Affairs Think Tanks	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	
NITI Aayog	Incentivize real economic cooperation; mobilize industry to pitch investment and aid projects for ASEAN integration.	

### **Way Forward**

### 1. Proactive Coalition Building

Use future summits for cross-country alliances, dynamic partnership proposals, and joint regional problem-solving.

### 2. Upgrade Maritime and Economic Diplomacy

Lead on Indo-Pacific security, supply chains, digital infrastructure, and port development.

### 3. Link Policy to Action and Follow-Through

> Ensure promises made at summits are implemented; track outcomes to maintain credibility.

### 4. Invest in Regional Aid and Innovation

Enhance India's reputation as a reliable humanitarian, tech, and infrastructure partner.

### 5. Continuous Engagement on Regional Stability

Pursue regular ASEAN—India forums, coordinate with Quad and Indo-Pacific partners for joint security and prosperity.

### **Conclusion**

India's missed opportunities at the ASEAN summit must drive urgent policy change towards visionary, action-based engagement. Only sustained, strategic participation will safeguard national interests and project real influence in the Indo-Pacific.

### **Prelims Practice Question**

### Q1. Which aspect did India's ASEAN summit performance most notably lack, as per the editorial?

- a) Maritime security leadership and proactive coalition-building
- b) Trade presence only
- c) Bilateral aid packages only
- d) Climate change discussion only

Answer: A) Maritime security leadership and proactive coalition-building

### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "India must shift from symbolic participation to strategic leadership at ASEAN Summits for real influence in regional stability and growth." Analyse. (250 words)







### **Rethinking Immigration in the Age of Exclusion**

Source: The Hindu

### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2 & GS Paper 1)**

- GS1: Society (Migration, Social Dynamics, Contemporary History)
- **GS2:** Governance/IR (Immigration Policy, Human Rights, Global Governance)
- **GS4:** Ethics (Dignity, Inclusion, Universal Humanism)

### **Introduction**

Modern immigration debates reflect shifting attitudes, **from the** optimism of historical global movements to contemporary **politics of exclusion.** The rise of nativism, security-driven policies, and cultural anxieties are reshaping who moves, who is accepted, and the ethics of borders—forcing a re-examination of our collective approach to human movement and integration.

### **Key Issues**

### 1. Historical Amnesia vs. Modern Xenophobia

- > The US's foundational myth of "immigrant nation" contrasts sharply with policies of exclusion, racial othering, and national security justifications.
- Example: Anti-immigrant rhetoric and border wall politics supplant the universalist aspirations of earlier migrations.

### 2. The Deterrence of Vulnerable Civilizations

- Migration is increasingly seen as a threat, not an opportunity, with host societies framing refugees and economic migrants as risks to order, jobs, or identity.
- Example: Europe's resistance to refugees from Syria, Africa, and South Asia, despite the continent's own historical debts to migration.

### 3. Structural Limits and Economic Realities

- Immigrants are essential to growth and innovation, yet face red tape, under-recognized credentials, and exploitation in host countries.
- Example: The U.S. H-1B visa regime, skilled-worker barriers, and the persistence of illegal labor economies, despite high demand for workers.

### 4. Global South/Climate Migration Trends

- > Displacement due to war, climate change, and economic crises is accelerating, compelling the Global North to rethink rigid border policies.
- Example: Venezuelan, Syrian, and African migration patterns stress international asylum systems, with politics trumping humanitarian need.

### 5. Mainstream Historians' Responsibility

- > Narratives must confront both the pains and promises of migration, avoiding simplistic exclusion or nostalgic myth-making.
- Example: Reconceptualizing Columbus's "discovery" as an era of expropriation and forced migration; history must acknowledge the costs and ethics of movement.

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### **Key Fact**

- US immigration policy has become significantly exclusionary post-Trump, with travel bans, border fortification, and reduced refugee intake echoing trends across the West.
- Over 280 million people globally are cross-border migrants (2025), with climate change and conflict driving unprecedented mobility, but also raising political resistance.







Canada/New	Points-based systems favor skills, integration, and multiculturalism, while actively		
Zealand	supporting refugee inclusion.		
Germany	Refugee quotas, integration funding, and targeted labor market absorption for humanitarian migrants.		
UNHCR/OECD	Push for fair standards, international coordination, and better refugee resettlement outcomes.		

### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

MEAI/NITI Aayog	Develop ethical migration policies rooted in human rights, economic inclusion, and diaspora support.
Ministry of Labour	Collaborate internationally to ensure protection for Indian workers abroad and fair recruitment systems.
National Migration	Advocate for global frameworks supporting climate migrants, expanding bilateral
Policy Taskforce	agreements for safe movement.

### **Way Forward**

### 1. Promote Rights-Based Migration Policies

Reject blanket deterrence; secure pathways for legal migration, refugee protection, and skill recognition.

### 2. Invest in Integration and Public Education

Counter xenophobia via awareness, language training, and anti-discrimination social services.

### 3. Encourage Global and Regional Coordination

Lead efforts for fair, orderly migration through UN/SAARC/OECD partnerships.

### 4. Address Climate-linked Displacement

> Build resilience plans for climate migrants; facilitate inclusion, not marginalization.

### 5. Frame Migration as Opportunity, Not Threat

➤ Reimagine policy narratives—immigrants as social capital, not "others" or risks.

### **Conclusion**

Immigration is a defining test of our collective morality, resilience, and responsibility. Only an inclusionary, coordinated, rights-based approach can turn the realities of mass movement into sources of mutual enrichment—restoring both dignity and hope to mobile humanity.

### **Prelims Practice Question**

Q1. Which country is cited for deploying refugee quotas and targeted integration funding in migration policy?

a) United States

b) Germany

c) Australia

d) India

Answer: B) Germany

### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "Contemporary immigration debates must be reframed from exclusion and security towards dignity, resilience, and rights-based inclusion." Critically discuss global trends, challenges, and policy solutions. (250 words)





### A Decade After Paris Accord – An Unstoppable Transition

Source: The Hindu

### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 3)**

- GS3: Environment (Climate Change, International Agreements, Renewable Energy)
- GS2: Governance (Global Partnerships, Policy Implementation)
- Essay/Ethics: Sustainability, Equity

### **Introduction**

Ten years after the Paris Agreement (COP21), the fight against climate change is at a crossroads. Despite slow headway on emission goals, unprecedented advances in clean technology, falling costs, and the unstoppable momentum of solar and electric innovations show that a global energy transformation is now inevitable—with or without perfect political alignment.

### **Key Issues**

# 1. Mixed Success of Collective Climate Action

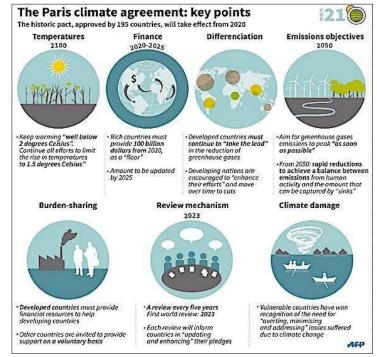
- COP21's voluntary pledges produced progress, but exact national targets remain difficult amid ongoing fossil fuel dependence.
- Example: While India, France, and UK exceed solar adoption and EV growth targets, global coal and oil use are dropping slower than desired.

### 2. The Solar-Electric Revolution

- Clean energy progress far exceeds forecasts; solar, wind, batteries, and zero-carbon innovations are outpacing even optimistic scenarios.
- Example: Europe and China led in wind/solar scale, but India's PM Modi launched the International Solar Alliance, solidifying global south leadership.

### 3. Persistent Gap in Global Justice and Financing

Financing adaptation and loss/damage for the poorest countries remains contentious, with rich—poor divides wide in implementation and support.



### **Key Fact**

- More than 20% of global electricity in 2025 comes from renewables, chiefly solar and wind, with global electric vehicle sales surging and battery storage breakthroughs accelerating.
- The Paris Agreement goal of tighter warming limits (well below 2°C and closer to 1.5°C) remains at risk, but technology and private finance are "unstoppable" forces in decarbonization—reinforced by the EU, India, and China's push.
- Example: Despite climate funds, promises of \$100B/year for developing countries have lagged, leading to ongoing negotiations.

### 4. Rise of Non-State and Subnational Climate Champions

Cities, companies, and local governments push bolder measures independent of central governments—picking up where politics lags.



- Example: Indian states and US cities setting ambitious net-zero goals; global banks scaling green finance by 30-50% since 2020.
- 5. Paris's Legacy A "Point of No Return"
  - The fundamental mind-shift toward sustainability is now so embedded that even rollback threats cannot reverse progress.
  - Example: Car manufacturers, utilities, and investors are now locked into green transitions because the economics make sense.

France/European	Leading with mandatory carbon pricing, increased renewables, circular economy	
Union	policies.	
China	World's largest renewables investor, piloting "carbon market zones" and green	
	belt initiatives.	
US/California	State-driven climate targets, public-private partnerships on electric mobility.	

### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

MoEFCC/International	Accelerate finance to domestic solar/wind startups, prioritize grid renewal, and			
Solar Alliance	advocate for climate justice in forums.			
NITI Aayog	Foster ecosystem for energy storage and electric vehicles, support "just ransition" retraining for fossil workforce.			
Climate Policy Think	Track global climate finance flows; build capacity for local climate innovation and			
Tanks	adaptation.			

### **Way Forward**

- 1. **Deepen Decarbonization Pathways:** Scale up renewables, invest in next-gen storage, electrify transport and cities, and reform fossil subsidies.
- 2. Close the Finance and Justice Gap: Accelerate technology and adaptation finance for poorer nations; advocate for loss-damage mechanisms and transparent reporting.
- **3. Leverage Non-State Action:** Support city- and industry-level innovations as "force multipliers" for sustainability.
- **4. Global Norm-Setting for Just Transition:** Shape global dialogue to include equity, skill-building, and the right to sustainable energy for all.
- **5. Persistent Diplomacy, Ambitious Policy:** Ensure Paris+ momentum is maintained at COP summits—raising ambition, verifiability, and tangible outcomes.

### **Conclusion**

The Paris Agreement's deepest legacy is the irreversible momentum it has set in motion. Global green transition is now propelled by economics, innovation, and collective ambition—ensuring climate progress will outlive short-term politics if ambition and cooperation hold.

### **Prelims Practice Question**

- Q1. Which sector has seen the most rapid transformation since the Paris Agreement, according to the editorial?
  - a) Cement
  - b) Agriculture
  - c) Solar-Electric renewables







d) Aviation

Answer: C) Solar-Electric renewables

### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "A decade after Paris, technological change and private action, more than official pledges, are driving an unstoppable climate transition." Discuss India's policy priorities in this new context. (250 words)

Student Notes 💪



### **Uneven Growth: Increasing Incomes and Jobs to Boost Demand**

8.0%

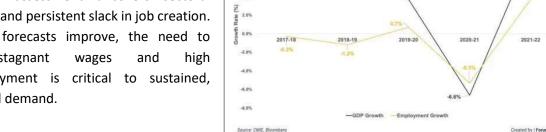
Source: The Hindu

### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 3)**

- GS3: Economy (Industrial Production, Employment, Inclusive Growth)
- GS2: Governance (Welfare Policy, Structural Reform)
- Essay: Sustainable Development

### **Introduction**

India's latest industrial production data for September reveals a story of two economies: headline figures show stability and recovery, but deeper assessment uncovers sectoral weaknesses and persistent slack in job creation. As growth forecasts improve, the need to address stagnant wages and high underemployment is critical to sustained, broad-based demand.



**Jobless Growth** 

### **Key Issues**

### 1. Volatility and Sectoral Divergence

- Apparent rebounds are uneven: manufacturing and capital goods led the upturn, but broad-based gains remain elusive, and dependence on a few high performers leaves demand fragile.
- Example: September's surge was partly attributed to upbeat monsoon seasonality and a restocking cycle, masking weak consumer segments and strategic sectors.

### **Key Fact**

 The April–September 2025 IIP data showed the slowest half-yearly industrial growth in at least five years, despite a Q2 4.8% quarter-onquarter jump—the second-best in the financial year—compared to Q1's 2% gain.

India's economic growth has failed to create enough job opportunities

• Year-on-year, September's 4.8% growth trailed the prior quarter's 8.3%, revealing volatility despite headline improvement.

### 2. Demand-Side Risks and Income Stagnation

- Despite top-line industrial numbers, working-class incomes have not kept pace with inflation, dampening consumer spending and investment.
- Example: FMCG and rural segments recorded minimal growth—manufacturing alone cannot offset weak wage trends.

### 3. Policy Correction for Employment and Equity

- > Structural barriers persist; jobs recovery is still lagging behind production. Focused efforts to revive high-multiplier sectors (like MSMEs, rural infra, tourism, and textiles) are yet to show sustained momentum.
- Example: "Jobless growth" and income disparity risk a further drag on future demand if left unaddressed.

### 4. Inflationary and External Pressures

- Input costs, erratic global supply chains, and rising oil prices continue to challenge sustained expansion and resilience.
- Example: Core inflation remains sticky, impacting margins and consumer affordability.





South	Expansion of income support, skills training, and targeted wage growth policies to
Korea/China	stimulate domestic demand.
US	Combination of labor market innovation, infrastructure spending, and minimum wage
	boosts to counter shallow recoveries.
Vietnam	Rural industry support and structural reform to rebalance growth.

### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

Finance Commission/NITI Aayog	Integrate jobs-centric incentives into production-linked schemes;		
	recalibrate GST/MSME support for job-rich sectors.		
Labour Ministry	Expand social safety nets, streamline skilling programs, and ensure wage growth in sync with productivity.		
Parliamentary Economic Affairs	Mandate regular reviews of income and employment data to inform		
Committee	adaptive fiscal policy.		

### **Way Forward**

### 1. Make Growth More Inclusive and Job-Rich

Reorient policy toward sectors with high employment elasticity; invest in rural, MSME, and service sector revival.

### 2. Directly Boost Incomes and Social Security

Raise real wages, expand welfare and social safety nets, and reduce informality in labor markets.

### 3. Monitor and Mitigate Demand Risks

> Deploy early warning systems and responsive fiscal tools to address sudden consumption shocks.

### 4. Sustain Macro Stability and Address Inflation

Coordinate monetary, fiscal, and supply-side interventions to keep input costs and inflation in check.

### 5. Foster Broad-Based, Regionally Balanced Growth

Support laggard states and regions through capacity-building, infrastructure investment, and localized demand generation.

### **Conclusion**

Reviving India's growth momentum rests on boosting household incomes and employment as the true engines of demand. Only through structural correction, targeted welfare, and deeper policy focus on jobs can industrial gains translate into shared prosperity.

### **Prelims Practice Question**

### Q1. What is highlighted as the main risk to sustained demand in India's industrial recovery?

- a) Manufacturing shortfall only
- b) Volatile inflation
- c) Weak job and income growth
- d) High rural demand

Answer: C) Weak job and income growth

### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "Industrial growth without wage and job recovery risks a demand crisis and deepening inequality. Policy must now pivot to income and employment." Discuss remedies. (250 words)





### Al's Rewriting of the Rules of Education

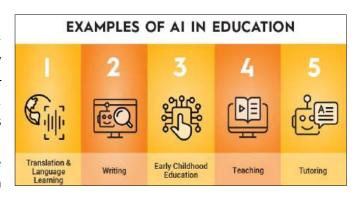
Source: The hindu

### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2 & 3)**

- GS2: Governance (Education Policy, Digital Inclusion, Capacity Building)
- **GS3:** Technology (AI, EdTech, Workforce Transition, Innovation)
- Essay/Interview: Future of Work, Ethics, Inclusivity

### **Introduction**

India is on the brink of a transformative leap introducing Artificial Intelligence (AI) from early primary school (class 3 onwards, beginning 2026-27) as part of NEP 2020's overhaul. With over 1 crore teachers to upskill and millions of students involved, integrating AI is both a technological and pedagogical challenge, reshaping how the future workforce will be educated for a data-driven economy.



### **Key Issues**

### 1. Teacher Training and Upskilling

- Effective AI integration requires equipping educators to deploy adaptive assessments, learning paths, and feedback—far beyond mere plug-and-play.
- Example: Government and partners (Intel, IBM) are providing real-time, Al-powered design tools for lesson plans and resource creation, with ongoing support.

### **Key Fact**

- NEP 2020 drives India's Al-for-education strategy: pilot projects since 2019, training 10,000+ teachers, and partnerships with tech giants and leading institutes.
- NITI Aayog forecasts that AI may both disrupt two million tech jobs and create four million new ones through deeply personalized, skill-adaptive learning by 2030.

### 2. Personalization and Inclusion

- Al platforms can tailor learning for diverse student needs, breaking barriers for language, disability, and region through generative assessments and tutoring.
- Example: Math AI tutors offer customized explanations and alternative learning routes for students struggling with core concepts.

### 3. Human-Al Collaboration

- > All augments—not replaces—the teacher, handling repetitive tasks and freeing educators for empathy-driven engagement and critical thinking.
- Example: Automated grading, attendance, and analytics tools enable teachers to focus on value-added connections and mentoring.

### 4. Workforce Transition, Disruption Risks

- Dual edge: while some jobs may be lost to automation, more will be created—demanding skills in AI, data, and adaptability. "Al literacy" will become as important as basic literacy.
- Example: Indian higher education institutes already incorporate generative AI into teaching and assessment—skills gaps must be addressed.

### 5. Ensuring Equity, Accessibility, and Ethics







- Al-driven learning personalizes content; it must also be designed for cultural, linguistic, and regional equity, and shielded from algorithmic bias.
- Example: Adaptive learning modules accommodate non-native speakers and students with disabilities, empowering inclusion.

South	National AI curriculum, teacher upskilling, and lifelong learning initiatives for digital
Korea/Finland	literacy.
US/UK	Rapid scale-up of EdTech personalization, focusing on equity, digital safety, student autonomy.
Singapore	Government-EdTech partnerships in multilingual adaptive learning, early adoption, and rigorous teacher training.

### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

Ministry of Education	Ensure ethical AI standards, mandatory teacher upskilling, and continuous curriculum updates reflecting tech changes.		
NITI Aayog	Soft-skill/job reskilling for displaced workers; fast-track AI literacy for K-12 and higher education.		
Parliamentary	Guarantee monitoring of inclusion, remove access barriers, and fund rural-		
Education Committee	disadvantaged EdTech rollout.		

### **Way Forward**

### 1. Massive Upskilling and Adaptive Policy

Scale teacher training nationwide; set benchmarks for tech adoption and pedagogy.

### 2. Guarantee Equity and Access

Design AI learning for diverse social, cultural, linguistic populations; monitor algorithmic fairness.

### 3. Ethics and Safety First

> Enforce transparent, bias-free AI guidelines, privacy-protective standards, and public digital literacy campaigns.

### 4. Flexible Curriculum and Assessment

Update standards and assessments in sync with tech advances; use student feedback loops for agility.

### 5. Continuous Stakeholder Engagement

Include teachers, students, parents, and industry in EdTech policy formation and review.

### **Conclusion**

India's bold AI push can be a springboard for education equity and economic leadership—if anchored in teacher empowerment, inclusion, and robust ethics. The next five years will define whether Indian education sets the global standard or deepens digital divides.

### **Prelims Practice Question**

### Q1. Which policy drives India's Al-in-education strategy?

- a) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
- b) New Education Policy (NEP 2020)
- c) Atal Innovation Mission
- d) National Skill Development Mission







Answer: B) New Education Policy (NEP 2020)

### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "Al offers radical new possibilities for personalized, inclusive education while also challenging teachers and policymakers with skills, equity, and ethics gaps." Discuss India's Al integration strategy with examples. (250 words)

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### Two Superpowers: US-China Rivalry and the Making of Global Order

**Source:** Indian express

### **UPSC Relevance (GS Paper 2 & 3)**

- GS2: International Relations (Major Power Rivalry, Global Governance)
- GS3: Economy (Tech, Trade, Innovation, Strategic Autonomy)
- Essay: Geopolitics and Emerging World Order

### **Introduction**

The US-China relationship is defining 21st-century geopolitics. Much of the debate focuses on the supposed decline of US global influence and the rise of China's assertive power, but the true story is more nuanced—each superpower faces strategic choices, internal contradictions, and external limits, all of which will shape the evolving world order.



### **Key Issues**

### 1. Power Shifts and Mutual Constraints

- The US still wields unmatched institutional power, but faces waning global favor and crisis in alliance confidence; China's rise is real, yet constrained by demographic, economic, and technological headwinds.
- Example: The US failed to deter China's consolidation in the South China Sea, but China's global initiatives (like BRI) increasingly meet local resistance and skepticism.

### 2. Strategy of Self-Renewal vs. Innovation Diplomacy

The US's long-term influence depends on scientific leadership, alliance renewal, and maintaining appeal as an "aspirational" power; China seeks global primacy

innovation-led growth tightening economic controls.

- by exporting innovation, acquiring tech, and projecting "model" economic governance.
- Example: China's push for "quality production" and self-reliance (made explicit in 2025 party plenum) contrasts with American promotion of open science and global norms.

### 3. Regional Allies and Global Impact

- > The rivalry is not just bilateral: ASEAN, India, Europe, and other actors will help determine the balance. Both superpowers now face hedging, multi-alignment, and competitive partnerships in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.
- Example: India, ASEAN, South Korea, and EU are keen to avoid dependency and seek leverage through flexible coalitions.

### 4. Legacy of Crisis Management and Adaptability

- Both face internal political and economic frictions—from US policy swings to China's demographic and growth slowdowns—that test adaptability and credibility.
- Example: Post-COVID recovery, US—China tech war escalation, and challenges of climate leadership.

### **Key Fact**

- The US remains the central hub for science, innovation, alliances (NATO, G7), and global finance; China's massive economic clout and technological ambitions now contest US supremacy on multiple fronts, including military, innovation, global trade, and regional leadership.
- Both countries face limitations: US policy volatility (especially post-Trump) and China's need for internal amid



EU	Strategic autonomy policy, leveraging US and China ties for economic and security advantage.
ASEAN	Hedge strategy—engage both superpowers for aid, trade, and security, while resisting binary alignments.
Japan/ Australia/ India	Build trilateral/quadrilateral mechanisms (Quad, CPTPP) to balance risks and enhance agency.

### **Indian Committee Recommendations**

MEA/Strategic Affairs	Develop scenario analysis on decoupling, tech bifurcation, global supply chain
Council	shifts.
NITI Aayog	Advance indigenous innovation, resilient trade agreements, and tech standards.
Institute of Defence	Encourage "non-alignment 2.0"—strategic autonomy with flexible engagement
Studies	and regional coalition-building.

### **Way Forward**

- 1. **Double Down on Domestic Innovation and Capabilities:** Invest in science, research, and industrial policy to build economic resilience and strategic independence.
- 2. **Maximize Multi-Alignment:** Pursue flexible engagement with both superpowers: leverage them for growth while insulating vital interests.
- **3. Support Global Governance Reform:** Play a proactive role in reformed multilateral institutions, rulemaking, and cross-cutting partnerships.
- **4. Strengthen Regional Partnerships:** Deepen ties with like-minded Indo-Pacific partners for collective security, trade, and tech.
- **5. Build Resilient Crisis Management:** Prepare for global shocks (supply chains, pandemics, tech disruption) through scenario planning and institutional reform.

### Conclusion

US—China rivalry is not a simple contest of "rise and decline," but a complex, multi-front struggle shaping the future of the global order. For India and the world, the challenge—and opportunity—lies in navigating this rivalry with adaptability, agency, and long-term national vision.

### **Prelims Practice Question**

- Q1. What is cited as China's main strategy to contest US global influence?
  - a) Military alliances
  - b) Export-led innovation and economic "model" diplomacy
  - c) Currency manipulation
  - d) Resource nationalism

Answer: B) Export-led innovation and economic "model" diplomacy

### **Mains Practice Question**

Q1. "US-China rivalry will shape global institutions, alliances, and technological futures for decades. India must balance strategic autonomy and multi-alignment." Discuss. (250 words)







### **PRELIMS FOCUSED CURRENT AFFAIRS**

### **Wassenaar Arrangement**

### Why in News?

Microsoft faced criticism after allegations that its **Azure cloud infrastructure** supported Israeli military operations in Palestine, leading to civilian harm. This incident highlighted regulatory weaknesses in global **export control frameworks**, especially the Wassenaar Arrangement, in dealing with **cloud-based dual-use technologies**.

### What is the Wassenaar Arrangement?

### Overview

- A multilateral export control regime focusing on conventional arms and dual-use technologies.
- 2. Founded in 1996 in Wassenaar (Netherlands).
- 3. Replaced the Cold War-era CoCom (Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls).
- **4.** Decision-making is **consensus based**.

### Objective

To enhance international peace and security by:

- Preventing sensitive technologies from reaching hostile states and non-state actors.
- **2.** Ensuring transparency and responsibility in defense-related exports.

### **Institutional Structure**

Component	Role	
Plenary	Highest decision-making body	
	(Chair rotates annually). India	
	chaired in <b>2023</b>	
Secretariat	Located in Vienna, Austria	
Membership	42 states; India joined in 2017	

### **Control Lists**

- Munitions List → Tanks, combat aircraft, small arms, etc.
- Dual-Use List → Items with civilian + military applications
  - In 2013 expanded to include intrusion software and cyber-surveillance tech

### **India and the Wassenaar Arrangement**

- 1. Aligns India's **SCOMET** export controls with global norms.
- Enhances access to sensitive space, defense, and high-tech goods.
- Strengthens India's candidature for the NSG (blocked by China).
- Showcases India's leadership in counterterrorism (e.g., No Money for Terrorism initiative).
- **5.** Reinforces India's commitment to **non- proliferation** despite being outside **NPT**.



### **Challenges for the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA)**

Challenge	Explanation	
Hardware-	Initially designed for physical	
centric	exports; inadequate for <b>AI,</b>	
approach	SaaS, digital surveillance tools	
Cloud services	Remote access/API control not	
loophole	recognized as "export,"	
	enabling risky tech transfers	
Voluntary	Consensus slows updates;	
enforcement	implementation varies across	
	countries	



Fragmented	Lack of standardized licensing	
interpretation	ightarrow policy gaps & loopholes	
Limited	Emphasis on WMDs;	
human rights	insufficient safeguards against	
focus	surveillance abuse & civilian	
	harm	

Modern technologies are evolving faster than WA's regulatory framework.

# Measures to Strengthen the Wassenaar Arrangement

Reform	Proposed Action	
Priority		
Broaden scope	Regulate <b>AI systems, digital</b>	
	surveillance tools, cloud data	
	flows, biometrics	
Redefine	Include remote access, SaaS,	
exports	<b>cloud-based controls</b> as	
	export activities	
Improve	Mandatory licensing, peer	
compliance	reviews, shared high-risk	
	watchlists	
Agile	Tech-specific committees for	
governance	Al & cyber weapons, faster	
	rule updates	
Human rights	End-use monitoring focusing	
protection	on misuse potential + civilian	
	safety	

### **Conclusion**

The Wassenaar Arrangement remains a key pillar of global export control architecture. However, its relevance is being tested by rapidly emerging digital, autonomous, and cloud-based technologies. To stay effective, WA must evolve into a modern, human-security-driven regime with binding rules, faster governance, and expanded oversight of virtual tech transfers.

- Q1. In India, why are some nuclear reactors kept under "IAEA safeguards" while others are not? (2020)
  - a) Some use uranium and others use thorium
  - b) Some use imported uranium and others use domestic supplies
  - Some are operated by foreign enterprises and others are operated by domestic enterprises
  - d) Some are State-owned and others are privately owned

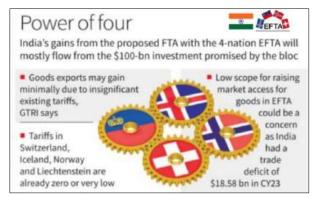
Ans: (b)

### Student Notes 🐔



### India-EFTA FTA (TEPA) - A Major Step in India's Global Trade Strategy

### Why in News?



India's Free Trade Agreement with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) — comprising Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein — has officially come into force. This marks a strategic shift in India's trade policy focused on deeper integration into global value chains and higher foreign investment inflows.

### What is the India-EFTA FTA (TEPA)?

1. Signed: March 2024

2. Effective: 1 October 2025

Designed to complement India's recent FTAs with UAE, Australia, and the UK (under negotiation).

### **Key Objectives & Provisions**

Objective	Provision		
Enhanced	EFTA granted 100% tariff		
Market	elimination on India's industrial		
Access	& non-agri exports; concessions		
	on processed foods.		
Investment-	Binding commitment of <b>USD 100</b>		
led Growth	billion over 15 years, targeting 10		
	lakh direct jobs in India.		
Ease of	EFTA Investment Facilitation		
Doing	Desk (2025) as a single-window		
Business	support system for investors.		

### What are Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)?

 Agreements to reduce or eliminate tariffs, quotas and regulatory barriers on trade in goods & services.

- India currently has FTAs with Japan, Singapore, UAE, Australia, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, and EFTA;
- 3. India-EU FTA is in advanced negotiation.

### India's Gains from FTAs (Selected Examples)

Dimension	Evidence	
Export Growth	UAE CEPA $\rightarrow$ <b>12% export rise</b> in year one as 90% of	
	goods gained duty-free access	
FDI Boost	India–Australia ECTA → <b>25% increase</b> in FDI inflows	
Agriculture	Mauritius CECPA → rise in	
Benefits	sugar, tea & food	
	processing exports	
Technology &	Renewable tech	
Supply Chain	cooperation under ECTA	
Upgradation		
MSME Support	Singapore CECA helped	
	MSMEs integrate with	
	global IT & engineering	
	supply chains	
Regulatory	TEPA harmonizes	
Alignment	standards → reduced	
	compliance burden	

### **Concerns / Challenges in India's FTA Strategy**

- 1. Trade Deficits: ASEAN FTA widened imports gap  $\rightarrow$  \$44 bn deficit in FY23
- 2. **Non-Tariff Barriers:** Standards & certification issues restrict export access (especially to EU)
- Pressure on MSMEs & Farmers: Cheaper imports harm sectors like rubber, dairy, toy manufacturers
- 4. Labor & Environment Conditionalities: New mechanisms like EU's CBAM could hurt competitiveness
- **5. Weak Dispute Settlement:** Prolonged tariff-related friction with ASEAN countries

Way Forward: Strengthening India's Trade Competitiveness





Strategy	Priority Actions	
Make in India for	Upgrade quality, branding,	
Global Markets	logistics, and innovation	
Support	Dedicated schemes for	
Vulnerable	MSMEs, farmers, and	
Sectors	labor-intensive industries	
Infrastructure	Faster development of	
Push	ports, industrial corridors,	
	cold chains	
Meet Global	Capacity-building for	
Standards	compliance with SPS/TBT,	
	labor & green norms	
Diversify Trade	Focus on <b>Africa, Latin</b>	
Partnerships	America, Indo-Pacific	
Digital Trade	E-commerce exports,	
Enablement	digital FTA awareness,	
	virtual trade facilitation	

### **Conclusion**

The India–EFTA FTA reflects a shift from tariffdriven trade to investment-driven economic integration. If India effectively strengthens quality standards, domestic competitiveness, and logistics, TEPA can:

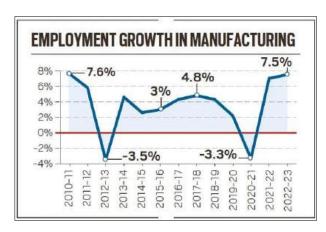
- 1. Boost exports
- 2. Generate employment
- 3. Deepen global value chain integration
- 4. Enhance India's economic diplomacy footprint

However, vigilant management of MSME protection, trade deficits, and sustainability obligations remains crucial for maximizing gains.

### Student Notes 🐔



# Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) 2023–24: Highlights and Policy Significance



### Why in News?

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has released the **Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) 2023–24**, providing key insights into the performance of India's registered manufacturing sector.

### **Key Findings of ASI 2023-24**

### **Strong Value Creation & Output Growth**

**1. Gross Value Added (GVA)** grew **11.89%**, outpacing growth in:

Output: +5.80%Inputs: +4.71%

Indicates improved efficiency and higher value capture within factories.

### **Leading Industries by Contribution**

Industries driving GVA growth:

1. Basic metals

2. Motor vehicles

3. Chemicals

4. Food processing

5. Pharmaceuticals

Together, these account for nearly **48% of total** industrial output

These sectors are **export-intensive and employment-generating** 

### **Top Industrial States (GVA Share)**

1. Maharashtra — 16%

- 2. Gujarat 14%
- 3. Tamil Nadu 10%
- 4. Karnataka 7%
- 5. Uttar Pradesh 7%

Reflects **coastal** and **western corridor** dominance in industry.

### **Employment Trends**

- 1. Industrial employment grew 5.92% YoY
- 2. **57 lakh jobs added** during 2014–24
- 3. Wage/emolument growth at 5.6% rising, but still trailing GVA growth
- Top job-creating states mirror GVA leaders:
   TN, Gujarat, Maharashtra, UP, Karnataka

Suggests growth translating into jobs, but wage productivity gap persists

### What is the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI)?

- Conducted by National Statistical Office (NSO) under MoSPI
- 2. Covers:
- 3. Factories under Factories Act, 1948
- 4. Bidi & Cigar establishment units
- 5. Electricity undertakings not under CEA
- Large establishments (100+ workers) in state Business Registers

### **Key Terms**

- 1. Gross Value Added (GVA): Output Input
- 2. Total Emoluments: Wages + Salaries + Bonus

### **Opportunities vs Challenges in Indian Industry**

Opportunities	Challenges	
Manufacturing's	Logistics &	
contribution is 17% of	infrastructure gaps	
<b>GDP</b> — large expansion	still raise costs	
potential		
India received \$81 bn	MSMEs face credit	
FDI (FY25);	constraints & high	
manufacturing FDI	borrowing costs	
+18%		







Growth sectors:	Foreign competition	
electronics, pharma,	from China/Vietnam;	
autos, textiles	low R&D	
PLI, GST reforms, PM	NTBs & FTA issues;	
MITRA parks strengthen	tariff retaliation e.g.	
competitiveness	US 50% on certain	
	goods	
Skill initiatives (PMKVY,	Only 4.7% workforce	
Skill India) empower	formally trained	
youth		
Green manufacturing =	High compliance cost	
new export	for <b>net-zero and</b>	
opportunities	CBAM rules	

### **Conclusion**

The ASI 2023–24 confirms that India's industrial sector is entering a **high-efficiency growth phase**, backed by:

- 1. Strong value addition
- 2. Job creation
- 3. Global demand in key sectors

As India moves toward becoming a \$35 trillion economy by 2047, manufacturing will be the principal engine of growth. To achieve industrial leadership, India must close infrastructure gaps, skill its workforce, boost R&D, and integrate MSMEs into global value chains.

If these reforms remain on track, India is poised to transform from a manufacturing destination to a global hub of innovation and industrial excellence.

### Student Notes 🐔



### **Foodgrain Storage System in India**

### Why in News?



India has recorded **353.96 million tonnes** of foodgrain production in **2024–25 (Third Advance Estimates)**.

The surplus highlights the urgent need for **modern**, scientific storage infrastructure to reduce post-harvest losses, maintain food security, and stabilize market prices.

### What is the Foodgrain Storage System in India?

A coordinated network of storage facilities ensuring safe preservation, efficient movement, and year-round availability of grains for consumers and the Public Distribution System (PDS).

### It includes:

- Centralized storage (FCI, CWC, State Warehousing Corporations)
- 2. Decentralized household storage
- 3. Cold storage and modern silos
- 4. Private sector facilities

Nearly **60–70%** stored at **household level** — often in traditional structures such as:

1. Morai, Mud Kothi, Kuthar, Gunny bags

### **Major Storage Agencies in India**

Agency	Role	Legal Basis
Food	Procurement,	FCI Act, 1964
Corporation	storage,	
of India (FCI)	movement of	
	foodgrains	

Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC)	Scientific warehousing	Warehousing Corporations Act, 1962
State	State-level	Respective
Warehousing	warehousing	State Acts
Corporations		
Private	Provides hired	Contractual
Agencies	storage to FCI	mechanisms
	& states	

### FCI + State agencies capacity: 917.83 LMT

### Other Stakeholders:

- WDRA (regulation + negotiable warehouse receipts)
- 2. Railways (logistics support)
- 3. State Civil Supplies Depts.

### Significance of Foodgrain Storage

Benefit	Impact
Reduced post-	Protects both quantity &
harvest losses	quality
Food security	Maintains buffer stocks for
assurance	crises & PDS
Price	Helps prevent
stabilization	inflation/deflation cycles
Farmer income	Avoids distress sales;
support	promotes MSP operations
Industry &	Ensures sustained supply to
export support	processors & exporters

### **Government Initiatives to Improve Grain Storage**

### **Infrastructure Development**

- 1. Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), 2020
  - Interest subvention + credit guarantees for post-harvest infra
- Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure (AMI) under ISAM
  - Support for godowns, warehouses, and rural markets
- 3. Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana
  - Strengthens farm-to-market supply chain





Reduces food wastage and boosts processing & exports

### **Schemes Focused on Increasing Storage Capacity**

Scheme	Focus
Construction of Steel	Bulk mechanized
Silos	storage; less pest loss
Private Entrepreneurs	Private investment in
Guarantee (PEG)	warehousing assured
	by FCI
Central Sector	Priority to Northeast,
Scheme – Storage &	hill & tribal areas
Godowns	

Shift toward scientific silos replacing old CAP (Cover and Plinth) open storage

### **Key Challenges Still Persist**

1. 10–15% losses due to **pests**, **improper storage**, **moisture** 

- Regional storage imbalance surplus in NW India vs deficit in Eastern states
- 3. Slow modernization and poor cold chain connectivity

### **Conclusion**

With record foodgrain production, India must transform its storage architecture to a **modern**, **technology-driven system**.

Better storage means: secured buffer stocks farmer income protection reduced wastage

stable food prices

A resilient storage ecosystem is **central to India's food security**, nutrition agenda, and agricultural sustainability

### Student Notes 🐔





# Mahatma Gandhi & Lal Bahadur Shastri — Tribute and Legacy (Enhanced Version)



### Why in News?

The Prime Minister paid homage to **Mahatma Gandhi** and **Lal Bahadur Shastri** on their birth anniversaries, acknowledging their transformative role in India's freedom struggle and nation-building.

Their ideals of humility, peace, and selfless service continue to shape India's governance and global image.

### Mahatma Gandhi: The Apostle of Peace & Truth

### **Early Life & Moral Foundations**

- Born on 2 October 1869 in Porbandar (Gujarat)
- 2. Studied law in London (1888–91)
- **3.** Married **Kasturba (1882)**; partnership rooted in shared struggle and social reform

### South Africa: Birthplace of Satyagraha

- Humiliated at Pietermaritzburg (1893) a turning point in his life
- 2. Founded **Natal Indian Congress (1894)** and *Indian Opinion* newspaper
- 3. Established Phoenix Settlement (1904) & Tolstoy Farm (1910)
- **4.** Developed **Satyagraha**: mass, non-violent resistance against injustice

### Return to India & Struggle for Independence

- Returned on 9 January 1915 (now Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas)
- Created Sabarmati Ashram (1917) ethical and spiritual center of resistance

### Led key movements:

- 1. Champaran (1917) & Kheda (1918) Satyagraha
- 2. Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22)
- 3. Civil Disobedience Movement (1930) Dandi March as a symbol of defiance
- 4. Quit India Movement (1942) "Do or Die" Thought & Constructive Work

### 1. Major writings:

- > Hind Swaraj, My Experiments with Truth
- Promoted Khadi, Charkha, Swadeshi & village industries

### 2. Founded:

- > All India Spinners' Association (1925)
- Harijan Sevak Sangh (1932)

### **Legacy**

- Devoted final years to communal harmony & social equality
- 2. Assassinated on 30 January 1948
- 3. Revered as "Father of the Nation"
- 4. 2 October celebrates his values as:
- 5. Gandhi Jayanti
- **6.** International Day of Non-Violence (UN)

### **Gandhian Philosophy & Modern India**

Contemporary	<b>Gandhian Ideal Reflected</b>
Initiative	
Swachh Bharat	Cleanliness & civic
Mission	responsibility
Self-Help Groups	Cooperative
(SHGs)	empowerment & rural
	self-reliance
Khadi & Village	Swadeshi, dignity of labour
Industries	
SVAMITVA	Grassroots governance &
Scheme	village autonomy







PM	Janjatiya	Inclusion	of	marginalized
Unnat	Gram	communi	ties	
Abhiyan				
MGNREG	iΑ	Right	to	dignified
		employm	ent	

## Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: Symbol of Simplicity & Courage

### **Early Life & Inspiration**

- 1. Born 2 October 1904 at Mughalsarai (UP)
- 2. Inspired by Gandhiji; joined Non-Cooperation Movement (1920)
- Earned the title "Shastri" from Kashi Vidyapeeth, symbolizing scholarship and humility

### **Role in Freedom Movement**

- Active in Civil Disobedience & other satyagraha activities
- Imprisoned multiple times spent 7+ years in jail

### **Political Journey in Free India**

- 1. Served in UP Government; later held key Union ministries:
- 2. Railways, Home, Commerce & Industry etc.
- Set high ethical standards resigned as Railway Minister (1956) over train accident tragedy

### Prime Ministership (1964–66)

- 1. Took office after Nehru
- Guided India with bold leadership during Indo-Pak War (1965)
- 3. Gave the unifying national motto:
- 4. "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan"
- 5. Emphasizing defense strength & food security

### **Death & Remembrance**

- Passed away in Tashkent on 11 January 1966, soon after Tashkent Declaration
- Remembered as the "Little Dynamo" of Indian politics soft-spoken but resolute

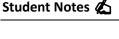
### **Conclusion**

Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri exemplify moral leadership, sacrifice, and service to the nation.

Their teachings on truth, dignity, self-reliance, national security, and farmers' welfare remain foundational to India's democratic journey.

### Why in News?

India has emerged as the **third-largest generator of e-waste** globally (after China and the USA), producing **2.2 million metric tonnes (MT) in 2025**. However, most of this waste is handled by the **informal sector**, posing severe risks to human health and the environment—especially in densely populated urban centres.





### What is E-Waste?

Electronic waste includes discarded or end-of-life appliances such as computers, mobile phones, TVs, printers, refrigerators and air conditioners.

Many of these products contain **toxic substances** like **lead, mercury, cadmium and chromium**, which cause pollution when not handled properly.

### **E-Waste Scenario in India**

Indicator	Status
Growth	150% rise since 2017–18 (0.71
	million MT $\rightarrow$ 2.2 million MT)
Urban	60% generated in 65 cities
Concentration	
Major	Seelampur, Mustafabad
Hotspots	(Delhi), Moradabad (UP),
	Bhiwandi (MH)
Formal	43% officially processed (2023–
Recycling	24) despite 322 registered units
Informal	Handles <b>&gt;50%</b> , using unsafe
Processing	techniques

At this growth pace, e-waste will almost double by **2030**.

### **Policy and Regulatory Framework**

### **Key Rules & Reforms**

- 1. E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016
  - Introduced Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs)
- 2. E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022
  - Strengthened Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
  - Mandatory recycling targets via registered recyclers
- 3. Amendment Rules, 2023
  - Focus on safe refrigerant handling in appliances
  - Added under Rule 5 of 2022 Rules
- 4. Amendment Rules, 2024
  - Platform for EPR certificate trading under CPCB pricing
- 5. Hazardous Wastes Amendment Rules, 2025
  - Non-ferrous metal scrap EPR

➤ Targets: 10% (2026–27) → 75% (2032–33)

### **Major Challenges in E-Waste Management**

- Informal dominance → unsafe burning, acid leaching → disease & pollution
- Weak enforcement → fake certificates, low penalties
- Infrastructure gaps → limited technology for precious metal recovery
- **4. Low consumer awareness** → e-waste mixed with municipal waste
- Complex product design → multi-layered, compact components hard to recycle

### **Environmental & Health Impacts**

Domain	Impacts
Human	Respiratory diseases, cancers,
Health	neurological disorders, DNA damage
Environment	Air pollution (dioxins), groundwater contamination, toxic soil
Agriculture	Metal uptake → food toxicity, soil degradation
Economic	Formal industry growth hindered; risk of data theft

### <u>The Way Forward: Making E-Waste Management</u> Sustainable

Strategy	Key Actions	
Formalizing	Training, PPE, social security	
informal sector	(green collar jobs)	
Technology	Bioleaching, shredding,	
innovation	urban mining hubs	
Consumer	Awareness campaigns,	
responsibility	reverse vending incentives	
Circular	Right-to-repair, eco-design,	
economy	refurbished market	
approach		
International	Strict Basel Convention	
cooperation	compliance	



Robust enforcement

Digital tracking (blockchain), real-time monitoring

### **Conclusion**

India's digital transformation has created an escalating **e-waste emergency**. Without urgent reforms, environmental damage and public health

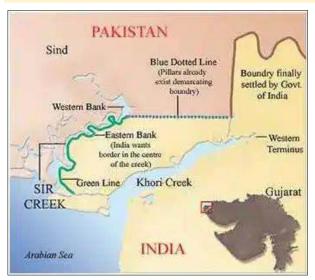
crises will deepen—particularly for marginalized communities working in unsafe conditions.

A **multi-stakeholder approach**—strong laws, responsible production and consumption, technological innovation, and formalizing informal workers—is essential for a **cleaner**, **safer and circular economy**.

# Student Notes 🐔



# **India-Pakistan Sir Creek Dispute**



#### Why in News?

India's Defence Minister emphasized that any aggressive moves by Pakistan in the **Sir Creek area** would be met with a **firm response**, underscoring India's vigilance and preparedness.

#### **About Sir Creek**

- A 96-km tidal waterway in the marshlands of the Rann of Kutch, Gujarat, forming the maritime boundary between India (Kutch) and Pakistan (Sindh).
- 2. Opens into the Arabian Sea.
- Historically called Ban Ganga, renamed "Sir Creek" during British rule.

## **Dispute Background**

- 1. The disagreement arises from different interpretations of the maritime boundary.
- 2. Pakistan claims the entire creek under a 1914 resolution.
- 3. India invokes the thalweg principle, which sets the boundary along the mid-channel of a navigable waterway, supported by:
  - ➤ 1925 maps
  - Mid-channel pillars
- **4.** Pakistan argues the creek is non-navigable, so thalweg principle should not apply.

#### **Importance of Sir Creek**

- Strategic Significance: Sensitive border area; impacts surveillance and defense readiness.
- Economic Value: One of Asia's largest fishing grounds; potential oil and gas reserves.
- 3. Ecological Importance: Supports flamingoes and migratory birds, crucial for biodiversity.

# Female Labour Force Participation in India (FLFPR)



#### **Current Trends**

- FLFPR = women who are employed or actively seeking work.
- PLFS 2023–24 reports 41.7%, up from 23.3% in 2017–18, but driven largely by rural women returning to agriculture and unpaid/selfemployment.
- **3.** Key trends:
  - Share of rural women in agriculture rose from 71.1% (2018–19) → 76.9% (2023–24).
  - Increase mainly in helpers in household enterprises (9.1% → 19.6%) and ownaccount/self-employed workers (4.5% → 14.6%).
  - ➤ Women moving from domestic duties  $(57.8\% \rightarrow 35.7\%)$ .





## **Structural Constraints**

- Overrepresentation in low-productivity sectors: Agriculture and informal sector dominate; limited access to high-paying jobs.
- Double burden: Domestic responsibilities overlap with work; unpaid care contributes
   3.1% of GDP.
- Gender norms & mobility barriers: Lack of childcare, safe transport, and societal expectations limit opportunities.
- **4. Informality & weak social protection:** Over 90% of women in informal sector; unstable, seasonal, low-wage jobs.

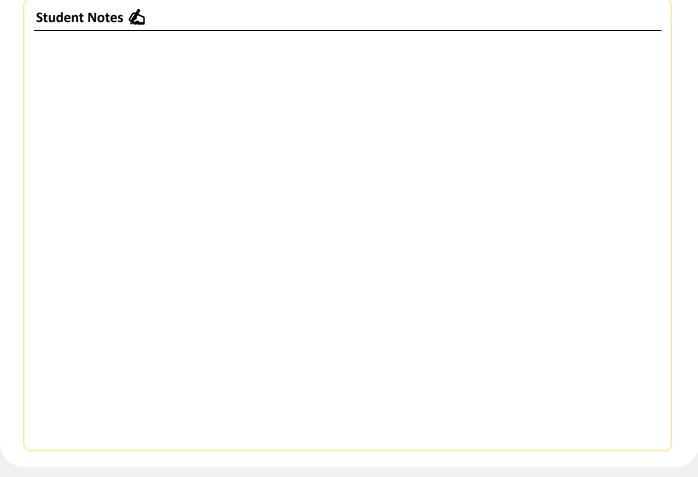
### **Pathways to Qualitative Inclusion**

- Redefine employment metrics: Include wages, work conditions, hours, and asset control. Capture unpaid work in national surveys.
- Targeted formal employment creation: Gender-sensitive incentives via PLI, MSMEs, Make in India, focusing on rural proximity jobs.

- Care infrastructure & social services:
   Community childcare, eldercare, public kitchens reduce unpaid work.
- Skills & digital inclusion: Sector-specific skill programs; access to gig economy and platform jobs.
- Support self-employed women: Strengthen SHGs, market linkages, digital literacy, and enterprise training.
- **6. Challenge gender norms:** Awareness campaigns, school sensitization, media promotion of women in non-traditional roles.

## **Conclusion**

The rising FLFPR reflects **resilience** rather than **empowerment**. Real progress requires transforming **quantity into quality employment** with fair wages, social security, and equitable access. Achieving this aligns with **SDG 5: Gender Equality** and ensures women's full and effective participation in economic life.





# Passive Euthanasia in India: Legal, Ethical, and Reform Perspectives

Active Euthanasia	Passive Euthanasia		
Positive or Aggressive Euthanasia	Negative Euthanasia/Non-Aggressive Euthanasia		
Intentional death by direct intervention is performed to end meaningless existence, by lethal doses of a drug or injection.	Intentional death by not providing essential care/food/water & discontinuing, withdrawing or removing artificial life support systems.		
Quicker death & all forms are illegal. Not allowed in India.	Slower, uncomfortable & all forms are legal. Allowed in India by SC.		

# Why in News?

In June 2025, the **UK House of Commons** passed the *Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill*, allowing passive euthanasia and reviving global debate on the **right to die with dignity**.

India already recognises **passive euthanasia** through Supreme Court rulings, but **implementation challenges** highlight the need for reforms to uphold constitutional guarantees of dignity in death.

## What is Euthanasia?

**Definition:** Deliberately hastening a person's death to prevent further suffering from incurable or terminal illness.

## Types:

- Active Euthanasia: Directly causing death (e.g., lethal injection)
  - Voluntary: Patient consents
  - ➤ Non-voluntary: Patient incompetent
  - Involuntary: Death without consent
- Passive Euthanasia: Withholding or withdrawing life-support or medical treatment for terminally ill patients, allowing natural death.

**Goal:** Protect the **right to die with dignity** and prevent futile suffering.

#### **Legal Status in India**

- Active Euthanasia: Illegal under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 (Sections 100, 101).
- 2. Passive Euthanasia: Legalized by the Supreme Court (SC):

- Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India (2011): Withdrawal of life-support allowed for patients without decision-making capacity.
- Common Cause v. Union of India (2018): Right to die with dignity recognized under Article 21; advance medical directives ("living wills") legalized.

# **Supreme Court Guidelines (2023):**

- Living Wills: Adults of sound mind can create advance directives; must be signed by executor
   + 2 witnesses; attested by notary/gazetted officer.
- Medical Board Approval: Hospital forms 2 boards; decisions communicated within 48 hours.
- **3. High Court Oversight:** If denied, kin can approach HC for fresh review.

**Global Perspective:** Passive euthanasia widely accepted; active euthanasia legal in countries like **Netherlands, Belgium** under strict safeguards.

# **Ethical Perspectives**

- 1. Autonomy: Patients' right to choose life or death; supports passive euthanasia.
- Beneficence: Medical actions should relieve suffering; withdrawing futile treatment aligns with this.
- **3. Justice:** Ensure equitable access to palliative care and prevent coercion of vulnerable patients.

#### **Need for Reform in India**

- **1. Bureaucratic Delays:** Multi-tier approvals prolong suffering.
- **2. Practical Inaccessibility:** Complex procedures discourage families and doctors.
- **3. Low Awareness:** Limited knowledge of living wills and advance directives.
- **4. Cultural Concerns:** Moral and religious opposition to euthanasia.





**5. Fragmented Healthcare:** Uneven infrastructure, lack of ethics committees.

#### **Recommended Reforms**

- 1. Digitisation of Advance Directives:
  - National Euthanasia Portal linked with Aadhaar.
  - Online validation of mental capacity.
- 2. Hospital-Level Ethics Committees:
  - Senior physicians + palliative specialists + independent member.
  - ➤ Empowered to authorize withdrawal within **48 hours**.
- 3. Transparent Oversight:
  - Digital dashboards or State Health Commissioners to monitor cases.
  - > Periodic audits to prevent misuse.
- 4. Mandatory Safeguards:

- 7-day cooling-off, counselling, palliative care review.
- Protect vulnerable groups from coercion.

# 5. Capacity Building & Awareness:

- ➤ Integrate end-of-life ethics and legal training in curricula.
- Public awareness campaigns on living wills and palliative care.

# 6. Streamlined Procedures:

Simplify approvals while maintaining safeguards to reduce delays.

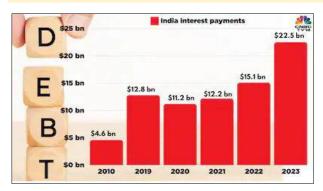
## Conclusion

Reforming passive euthanasia is essential to bridge the gap between legal recognition and practical access, ensuring ethical, timely, and humane end-of-life care, consistent with India's constitutional commitment to dignity in death.





# India's External Debt: Status, Risks, and Management



## Why in News?

As of June 2025, India's external debt rose to USD 747.2 billion, up 1.5% from the previous quarter, according to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

# **What is External Debt?**

**Definition:** Funds borrowed by a country from **foreign sources** such as international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank), foreign commercial banks, and other governments.

**1. Denomination:** Foreign currency or domestic currency.

# 2. Key Features:

- Liability to repay principal + interest
- Currency exposure affecting repayment burden
- Borrowed by government, financial institutions, or private corporations
- Instruments include loans, trade credits, bonds, deposits, etc.

# <u>Current Status of India's External Debt (June 2025)</u>

#### 1. Valuation Effects:

- Debt increase mainly due to currency fluctuations.
- US dollar depreciation caused a valuation loss of USD 5.1 billion.

# 2. Debt Coverage:

- > 93% of debt covered by foreign exchange reserves, ensuring resilience.
- External debt-to-GDP ratio: 18.9% (moderate & sustainable).
- 3. Debt Maturity Profile:

- Long-term debt (>1 year): USD 611.7 billion (majority).
- ➤ Short-term debt: 18.1% of total; short-term debt-to-reserves ratio improving, reducing rollover risks.

# 4. Currency Composition:

US Dollar: 53.8%Indian Rupee: 30.6%Japanese Yen: 6.6%

SDRs: 4.6%Euro: 3.5%

## 5. Sectoral Distribution:

- Non-financial Corporations: 35.9% (largest share, reflecting private-sector borrowings)
- Government & Financial Institutions:
  Remaining share

# Key Challenges Associated with Rising External Debt

## 1. Exchange Rate Risk:

Foreign currency debt exposes India to currency fluctuations, increasing repayment costs.

# 2. Interest Burden:

- Rising debt raises interest obligations, reducing funds for development.
- Inflation may push interest rates higher, slowing growth and increasing debt-to-GDP ratio.

#### 3. Vulnerability to Global Shocks:

Global stagflation or economic slowdown may reduce export demand, affecting debt service capacity.

# 4. Crowding Out Domestic Investment:

Servicing debt may divert funds from infrastructure, welfare, and development projects.

# **Key Measures to Manage External Debt**

1. Diversify Currency Exposure:



Reduce dependency on US dollar; promote rupee-denominated external debt to mitigate currency risks.

# 2. Adopt Sustainable Debt Practices:

Borrow for productive investments (infrastructure, development) rather than consumption.

## 3. Extend Loan Maturities:

Prefer long-term loans to spread repayment burden and reduce fiscal pressure.

## 4. Strengthen Fiscal Policies:

Control deficits, manage inflation, and ensure economic stability to reduce external debt vulnerability.

### **Conclusion**

India's external debt remains moderate and manageable, backed by foreign exchange reserves. However, rising debt, currency exposure, and global economic uncertainties necessitate careful management, sustainable borrowing, and fiscal prudence to maintain economic resilience.

Student Notes 💪	



# RBI's Credit Reforms: Deepening Financial Markets and Advancing Rupee Internationalisation

# Why in News?

In 2025, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** announced key credit reforms aimed at:

- 1. Deepening India's financial markets,
- Strengthening banks' role in corporate consolidation, and
- Advancing rupee internationalisation, amid rising US-India trade tensions and renewed BRICS discussions on alternatives to the US dollar.

## **Key Credit Reforms Announced by RBI**

- 1. Banks Financing Mergers & Acquisitions (M&As):
  - Banks can now lend directly for corporate takeovers, a space earlier dominated by NBFCs and private funds.
  - Previously restricted due to concerns over misuse, promoter risk, and credit concentration.
- 2. Rupee-Denominated Lending to Neighbours:
  - Banks can lend in Indian rupees to countries like Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka.
  - Objectives:
    - ✓ Reduce dollar dependence in regional trade
    - ✓ Provide rupee liquidity
    - ✓ Promote rupee internationalisation and regional financial influence
- 3. Increased Capital Market Lending Limits:
  - Loan against shares limit raised from Rs 20
     lakh → Rs 1 crore
  - ▶ IPO financing limit increased from Rs 10 lakh → Rs 25 lakh
  - Goal: Improve market-based financing and energise primary capital markets
- 4. Use of Special Rupee Vostro Accounts (SRVA) in Corporate Debt:

- Funds in SRVAs can now be invested in corporate bonds and commercial papers, not just government securities.
- Strengthens rupee liquidity and deepens India's bond market
- 5. Expanded Currency Benchmarks:
  - FBIL (Financial Benchmarks India Limited) to include more currencies beyond USD, Euro, Pound, and Yen.
  - Enables direct forex quotes with additional countries, reducing dollar dependence
- 6. Revised Basel III Capital Norms (from April 2027):
  - Reduced capital requirements for sectors like MSMEs and residential real estate loans
  - Introduces lower risk weights, boosting banks' capital adequacy ratios while maintaining financial stability

# **Financial Markets in India**

**Definition:** Platforms where **stocks**, **bonds**, **currencies**, **and derivatives** are traded.

#### Components:

- Money Market: Short-term instruments (<1 year) for interbank lending</li>
- Capital Markets: Long-term instruments (>1
  year), including primary (new securities) and
  secondary markets (existing securities)
- Foreign Exchange Market: Facilitates currency trading, crucial for international trade & investment
- 4. Derivatives Market: Trading in options, futures, deriving value from underlying assets Importance: Supports capital raising, risk management, and economic stability. Dysfunction can lead to recession and unemployment.

# **Implications of RBI's Credit Reforms**

1. Enhanced Capital Access:





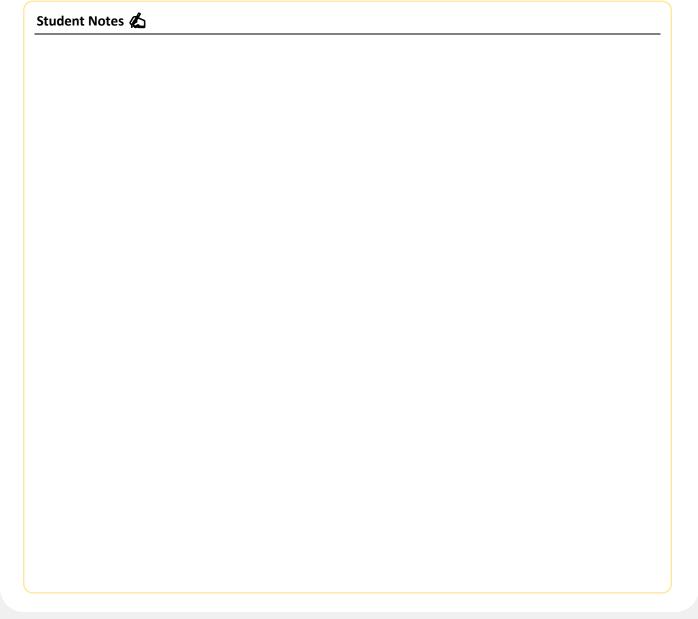


- Corporates gain low-cost structured finance for scaling operations
- Requires robust credit appraisal, monitoring, and governance to mitigate promoter risk
- 2. Corporate Sector Empowerment:
  - Facilitates strategic expansions and sectoral consolidation
  - Likely to boost infrastructure, energy, logistics, and manufacturing, enhancing global competitiveness
- 3. Rupee Internationalisation:
  - Rupee-denominated lending positions India as a regional financial anchor

Using SRVA balances for corporate bonds deepens rupee liquidity abroad and builds international confidence

# **Conclusion:**

The RBI's reforms aim to deepen financial markets, empower corporates, and promote rupee internationalisation. Together, these measures enhance India's economic resilience, reduce dollar dependence, and position the rupee as a regional trade and credit instrument.





# Mission Digital ShramSetu: Empowering India's Informal Workforce through Technology

# Why in News?

In 2025, NITI Aayog released a study titled "AI for Inclusive Societal Development", exploring how AI and frontier technologies can transform the lives of India's informal workers.

The report proposes **Mission Digital ShramSetu**, envisioned as a **technology-driven bridge** to formalize and uplift the informal workforce.

# **About Mission Digital ShramSetu**

**Objective:** Digitally empower India's informal workforce using **AI**, **blockchain**, **robotics**, **and immersive learning**.

#### **Key Features:**

- 1. Digital Identities & Financial Access:
  - Create verifiable digital identities
  - Enable timely payments, skill certification, and access to social security benefits
- 2. Inclusive Skilling:
  - Adaptive, multilingual, offline-compatible training modules
  - > Enhance skills and employability
- 3. Federated Credentialing System:
  - Decentralized trust model for real-time verification of worker credentials
  - Involves training providers, employers, and government bodies
- 4. Smart Contracts for Fair Compensation:
  - Blockchain-based contracts ensure transparent and timely payments
  - Reduce disputes and wage delays
- 5. Grassroots Innovation & Outreach:
  - > State-level programs for digital literacy
  - Partnerships with local institutions for technology adoption

## **Governance & Structure:**

 Apex Governing Body: Chaired by PM, includes key ministries

- Sectoral Task Forces: Agriculture, healthcare, retail, construction
- 3. State Coordination Units: Ensure local adaptation and execution

## **Current State of Informal Workers in India**

Parameter	Statistics (2025)	
Workforce Size	490 million (~85% of total	
	labour force)	
GDP Contribution	~45%	
Average	USD 5/hour (national avg:	
Productivity	USD 11/hour)	
Per Capita Income	USD 1,800/year	
Female	15% (national avg: 37%,	
Participation (non-	global avg: 47%)	
agri)		
Social Security	48%	
Coverage		

# **Definition (ILO):**

- 1. Informal employment: Jobs not protected by labour laws, taxation, or social security, lacking benefits like paid leave or severance.
- Includes self-employed, casual, temporary, or family workers, even in formal sectors.

#### Formalisation Targets (India by 2047):

- 1. 73.2% of informal enterprises to be formalised
- 2. Reduce informal sector share to 40%

## **Existing Schemes for Informal Workers:**

- 1. PMJJBY (Life Insurance)
- 2. PM-SYM (Pension Scheme)
- 3. Atal Pension Yojana
- 4. eShram Portal

# **Challenges Faced by Informal Workers**

- 1. Financial Fragility:
  - Delayed/inconsistent wages due to lack of formal contracts
  - Difficulty accessing loans; dependence on high-interest informal lending
- 2. Market Access & Demand Linkages:







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- ➤ No consistent demand or digital presence
- Migrant workers face regional mobility challenges, exploitation by intermediaries

# 3. Skilling & Technology Adoption:

- Limited access to formal training and digital tools
- Low productivity due to outdated methods and scarce adaptive programs

# 4. Social Protection & Occupational Safety:

- ➤ Lack of awareness and digital barriers prevent access to government schemes
- > Non-portable records hinder benefits

#### 5. Productivity Gaps:

- Absence of workflow optimization and digital tools
- Leads to wasted effort, low visibility of performance, and reduced income potential

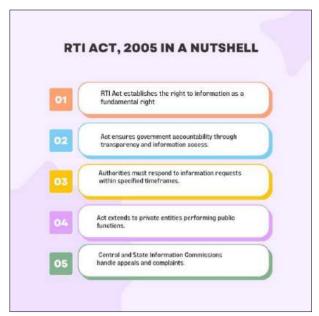
## **Conclusion:**

Mission Digital ShramSetu aims to formalize, skill, and financially empower India's informal workers using AI, blockchain, and digital solutions, addressing challenges in income security, social protection, and productivity, and paving the way toward inclusive economic growth.



# Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 – 20 Years of Implementation

## Why in News?



In October 2025, the **RTI Act, 2005** completes **20 years** of implementation. A recent study highlights significant gaps in its functioning, indicating a transparency framework under stress.

### About the RTI Act, 2005

- Purpose: Enables citizens to access information held by public authorities, promoting openness, accountability, and good governance.
- 2. First RTI Filed: Shahid Raza Burney in Pune.
- 3. Scope: Applies to Central, State, and Local government bodies.
- 4. Key Sections:
  - Section 8(2): Disclosure allowed when public interest outweighs confidentiality.
  - Section 22: RTI prevails over conflicting laws.
- Exemptions: Information that could compromise sovereignty, integrity, security, foreign relations, or incite offences is protected.

# RTI Amendment, 2019:

1. Previously, **CIC and ICs** served **5-year terms** or until age 65, with salaries matching Election Commissioners.

 Post-amendment, the Central Government controls terms, salaries, and service conditions, reducing autonomy.

#### **Achievements of the RTI Act**

- Accountability in Public Funds: Access to MGNREGA, PDS records, and local projects reduced leakages.
- Exposing Corruption: High-profile scams like Adarsh Society, 2G spectrum, and Commonwealth Games were exposed.
- Institutional Awareness: Officials act more cautiously knowing actions are under public scrutiny.

# **Challenges Facing the RTI Framework**

# 1. Delays:

- Average resolution time in Information Commissions (ICs) exceeds 1 year.
- Extreme cases: Telangana 29 years 2 months, Tripura 23 years.

#### 2. Vacancies:

- Several ICs defunct due to delayed appointments (Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh).
- Some function without a Chief Information Commissioner (CIC, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh).

#### 3. Erosion of Autonomy:

- ➤ 2019 amendment gives the executive control over IC terms and pay.
- DPDP Act, 2023 exempts personal information, including public officials' data, from disclosure.

#### 4. Excessive Exemptions:

- Departments often deny RTIs citing national security (Official Secrets Act, 1923).
- Agencies like RAW, IB, CERT-In are largely exempt.

### 5. Threats to Activists:

RTI activists face harassment, attacks, and even killings.





> Weak implementation of Whistleblower Protection Act, 2014 leaves them vulnerable.

# **Suggested Reforms for Strengthening RTI**

# 1. Strengthen Information Commissions:

- > Ensure timely appointments via a transparent, time-bound process.
- Provide adequate staff, infrastructure, and technology.
- > Set **performance benchmarks** to reduce backlogs.

# 2. Leverage Technology:

- > Use **AI chatbots** to draft applications.
- > Blockchain for data authenticity.
- ➤ Integrate RTI portals with **DigiLocker** for real-time tracking.

# 3. Enforce Compliance Strictly:

- > Mandate **proactive disclosure** under Section 4.
- > Penalize PIOs for wrongful denial or delays.
- > Ensure ICs submit annual reports per Section 25.

#### 4. Protect RTI Activists:

- > Full implementation of the **Whistleblower Protection Act**.
- > District helplines, legal aid funds, and emergency safeguards.
- Fast-track courts for cases of attacks.

#### 5. Restore Partial Autonomy:

- > Introduce parliamentary oversight for appointments.
- Periodic review by Supreme Court/High Courts to strengthen independence.

## **Conclusion**

Two decades after its enactment, the RTI Act, 2005 has faced challenges like delays, vacancies, weakened autonomy, and threats to activists.

**reforms**—strengthening commissions, integrating technology, enforcing penalties, and activists—are vital to transparency, accountability, and democratic governance in India.

# Student Notes 🐔





# Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) – Promoting Sustainable Agriculture

## Why in News?



Over the past decade, **PKVY** has emerged as a key initiative for **organic farming and sustainable agriculture** in India. Launched in **2015**, the scheme addresses challenges like **soil degradation**, **water pollution**, **and chemical residues**, while aiming to **increase farmer incomes** and promote ecofriendly practices.

# **About PKVY**

- Mission: Part of the Soil Health Management (SHM) under the National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA).
- **2. Objective:** Promote organic farming, improve soil health, and reduce chemical inputs.
- 3. Certification: Uses the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS-India)—a locally relevant, trust-based organic certification system involving producers and consumers.
  - PGS-India operates outside the third-party certification framework.

#### **Funding Pattern**

Region	Central Share	State Share	Remarks
General States	60%	40%	Standard pattern

NE &	90%	10%	Encourages	
Himalayan			adoption	in
States			difficult terra	ains
Union	100%	0%	Fully Ce	ntral
Territories			assistance	

 Eligibility: All farmers and institutions; maximum landholding: 2 hectares per applicant.

## **Key Features**

- Cluster-Based Approach: Farmers are grouped into 20-hectare clusters to standardize practices, share resources, and reduce costs.
- End-to-End Support: Assistance provided from production to processing, certification, and marketing.
- Training & Capacity Building: Guidance on organic techniques, soil fertility, and diversified cropping systems.
- Market Linkages: Promotes direct access to local and national markets.
  - The Jaivik Kheti Portal facilitates direct farmer-to-consumer sales.

#### **Benefits**

- 1. Farmers transitioning to organic farming receive ₹31,500 per hectare over 3 years.
- Major portion of the fund is used for on-farm and off-farm organic inputs.

## **Significance**

- Encourages eco-friendly agriculture, reduces chemical dependency, and enhances soil and environmental health.
- 2. Supports **farmer incomes**, entrepreneurship, and integration into **organic markets**.
- 3. Aligns with India's commitment to sustainable agriculture and food security.



# **Industrial Safety and Workers' Rights in India**

#### Why in News?

# Examples of Labour Laws in India



## **Industrial Disputes Act, 1947**

Aims to maintain peace and harmony in industries by resolving conflicts through concillation, arbitration, and adjudication

#### Minimum Wages Act, 1948

Mandates contractors to pay their workers a minimum wagee and ensures double wages for overtime work





#### Factories Act, 1948

Regulates working conditions in factories, covering aspects such such health, safety, and overall welfare

## Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952

Establishments with over 20 employees are requited to have a provident fund. In this scheme, employees contribute 12% of their wages, and employers contribute an equal amount



The Sigachi Industries reactor blast in Telangana, along with multiple industrial accidents in 2025, has reignited debates on industrial safety, weakening labour protections, and the erosion of workers' rights in India.

### **Reasons for Rising Industrial Accidents**

- **1. Negligence & Cost-Cutting:** Employers often skip maintenance, operate outdated machinery, or ignore safety checks.
  - ➤ ILO notes most industrial accidents are preventable, caused by underinvestment in safety, long hours, and low wages.
  - Example: At Sigachi, the reactor operated at twice the permissible temperature without alarms.
- 2. Lack of Training & Safety Systems: Poorly trained workers and insufficient safety infrastructure increase accident risks.

- Overwork & Fatigue: Long hours and high pressure in hazardous environments lead to human errors.
- **4. Weak Law Enforcement:** Irregular inspections allow unsafe practices to persist.
- Unregistered/Informal Workers: Lack of records and legal protections increases vulnerability and delays compensation.
- Insurance Fraud & Underreporting: Some incidents are manipulated for insurance claims, obscuring true safety gaps.

#### **Key Labour Laws in India**

Key Labour Laws III III	<u> </u>
Law	Objective
Factories Act, 1948	Regulates working conditions, machinery safety, hours, rest, and amenities; amended post-Bhopal disaster.
Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923	Compensation for work-related injuries or death.
Employees' State Insurance (ESI) Act, 1948  Payment of Wages Act, 1936 & Minimum Wages	Health coverage, cash benefits for sickness, maternity, or injury.  Ensure timely and fair remuneration.
Act, 1948 Industrial Disputes Act, 1947	Protects against unfair termination, layoffs, and supports dispute resolution.
Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions (OSHWC) Code, 2020	Consolidates 13 labour laws, covering safety, health, and working conditions; full implementation pending.

## **Challenges in Protecting Workers' Rights**

 Erosion of Legal Safeguards: Flexibility measures and self-certification rules







- undermine inspections and safety enforcement.
- **2. Normalization of Informality:** Contract and informal workers remain unregistered and lack legal or social protection.
- **3. Gendered Exclusion:** Weak enforcement disproportionately affects women's participation and benefits.
- **4. Corporate Accountability Deficit:** Limited inspections reduce legal repercussions for negligence.
- 5. Economic & Productivity Impact: Unsafe workplaces lower productivity; informal workers earn ~USD 5/hour, far below the national average of USD 11/hour.

# Steps to Strengthen Worker Rights & Safety

- Reinforce Legal Frameworks: Fully implement OSHWC Code, align with ILO conventions on safety, decent work, and social protection.
- 2. Formalisation & Social Security:
  - Digitally register informal workers via Shram Suvidha Portal.
  - ➤ Extend **PM-SYM pension** and health coverage to all informal workers.
- Skill Development & Safety Training: Use NSDC, Skill India, and Mission Digital ShramSetu for sector-specific training.

- **4. AI & Predictive Monitoring:** Track compliance, hazards, and high-risk industries using **#AlforAll** tools.
- Gender Inclusion: Promote workplace childcare, maternity benefits, and training for women in informal sectors.
- Corporate Responsibility & ESG Compliance: Integrate worker welfare into CSR and ESG initiatives.
- Collective Action & Safety Culture: Encourage worker representation, whistleblower protection, and "safety-first" industrial culture.
- **8. Data-Driven Oversight:** Establish dashboards to monitor compliance, accidents, and social security coverage.

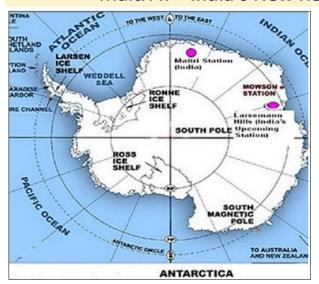
#### Conclusion

Protecting workers' rights requires strong laws, effective enforcement, formalisation, social security, skill development, gender inclusion, corporate accountability, and data-driven monitoring. Strengthening these measures is essential to safeguard workers, improve productivity, and achieve Viksit Bharat 2047.

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# Maitri II - India's New Research Station in Antarctica



# Why in News?

The Ministry of Finance has granted in-principle approval for Maitri II, India's fourth Antarctic research station, strengthening India's long-term scientific presence under the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS, 1959).

# **About Maitri II**

- **1. Timeline:** Scheduled for completion by January **2029**.
- Purpose: To replace the old Maitri station (1989), which has exceeded its design life and faces issues like poor waste management.
- Nodal Agency: National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

#### **Key Features**

- Larger & Greener: Bigger than the original Maitri; designed as a "green research base."
- Renewable Energy: Uses solar power in summer and wind energy to harness Antarctic winds.

- Advanced Technology: Automated instruments allow data relay to India even when unmanned.
- **4. Improved Infrastructure:** Enhanced living conditions and modern facilities.

# **Significance**

- Climate Research: Antarctica holds 75% of Earth's freshwater; ice sheet studies are vital for sea-level forecasting.
- Scientific Exploration: Critical for understanding mineral deposits, marine biodiversity, and ecological baselines.
- 3. Global Governance: Reinforces India's voice in climate and polar governance discussions.

## **India's Antarctic Research Stations**

Station	Year	Notes		
Dakshin	1983	First base; submerged in ice		
Gangotri		by 1990.		
Maitri	1989	Located in Schirmacher Oasis; freshwater Lake Priyadarshini nearby.		
Bharti	2012	Compact station east of Maitri; supports <b>year-round research</b> .		

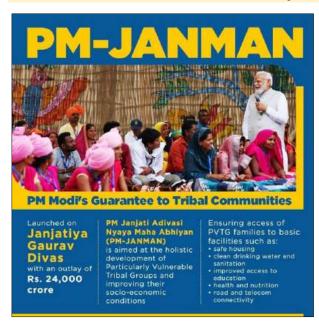
#### **Did You Know?**

- Antarctica: 5th-largest continent, 14 million sq km, 98% ice-covered, contains 75% of Earth's freshwater.
- 2. Human presence: Limited to scientific researchers at about 69 stations.
- Governed by the Antarctic Treaty (1959): Ensures peaceful use, scientific cooperation, and suspends territorial claims.

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# WCD Ministry Receives National Award for Outstanding PMJANMAN Implementation



## **News:**

The Ministry of Women & Child Development (WCD) was felicitated for its outstanding contribution to the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PMJANMAN) at the National Conclave on 'Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan' in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Secretary Shri Anil

Malik received the award from the President of India.

# **Key Highlights:**

- PMJANMAN is a flagship government scheme aiming to ensure justice, development, and comprehensive service delivery for Scheduled Tribes, particularly PVTGs.
- Target population: India recognizes 75 PVTGs across 18 states/UTs, with total population exceeding 28 lakh (Census 2011, Ministry of Tribal Affairs data updated for 2025).
- 3. Direct cash transfer pilot (Jan-Dhan linked): Rs 4,000 per family per annum for vulnerable tribal groups, plus nutritional supplements and maternal health cash incentives implemented in select blocks of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.
- Collaboration with Ministry of Tribal Affairs' Van Dhan Yojana and Eklavya Model Residential Schools enhances convergence and service usage.

Source: PIB

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# Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2025 - India-Australia Defence Cooperation

# India, Australia Begin Joint Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2025



AUSTRAHND 2025, the fourth edition of the annual India-Australia joint military exercise, begins on October 15 in Perth and runs till October 26. The exercise aims to strengthen defence cooperation and enhance operational synergy and tactical interoperability between the two armies, especially in urban warfare scenarios.

# Why in News?

An Indian Army contingent has departed for Australia to participate in the 4th edition of India-Australia joint military exercise 'AUSTRAHIND 2025', reflecting growing bilateral defence cooperation.

# **About Exercise AUSTRAHIND**

- Inception: 2022; first edition in Mahajan, Rajasthan.
- 2. Frequency: Planned as annual, alternating between India and Australia.
- 3. Objective:
  - Foster collaborative partnership and share best practices.
  - Promote interoperability in multi-domain operations in urban and semi-urban terrain.
  - Conduct operations under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (peacekeeping scenarios).

# India-Australia Defence Relations

- Strategic Partnership: Both countries became Comprehensive Strategic Partners (2020).
- Mutual Logistics Support Agreement: Signed in 2021.
- 3. Multilateral Exercises Participation:
  - Malabar
  - > Talisman Sabre
  - Cope India
- **4. Significance:** Demonstrates shared commitment to **Indo-Pacific regional security** and **military interoperability**.

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# **DRAVYA Portal – Digitised Repository for Ayurvedic Ingredients**

## Why in News?

The Ministry of Ayush launched the DRAVYA Goa, establishing the comprehensive digital repository of Ayurvedic ingredients and formulations.

## **About DRAVYA Portal**

- 1. Full Form: Digitised Retrieval Application for Versatile Yardstick of Ayush.
- 2. Purpose: Bridges traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with modern research and innovation.
- 3. Al-Ready Platform: Integrates with Ayush Grid and other Ministry initiatives to strengthen research, regulation, and global recognition of India's medicinal heritage.
- 4. Phase 1 Objective: Catalogue 100 key medicinal substances with precision and authenticity.
- 5. Developed by: Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), under Ministry of Ayush.

## **Key Features**

- 1. Comprehensive **Profiles:** Covers pharmacotherapeutics, botany, chemistry, pharmacology, and safety data of Ayurvedic substances.
- 2. Intelligent Data Analysis: Links with Ayush **Grid** and national health databases to support policy, research, and innovation.
- 3. Research and Validation: Facilitates evidencebased study, pharmacopoeial harmonisation, and Ayush drug validation.
- 4. Stakeholder Support: Useful for researchers, practitioners, students, and policymakers.

## **Significance**

- 1. Digital Transformation: Positions India at the forefront of Ayurveda digitisation.
- 2. Global Recognition: Enhances credibility and standardisation Ayush formulations of internationally.
- 3. Innovation & Policy Support: Provides a datadriven foundation for research, regulation, and clinical integration.





# **Natural Farming in Himachal Pradesh – A Sustainable Shift in Agriculture**

#### Why in News?

Thousands of farmers in Himachal Pradesh are transitioning from chemical-based farming to natural farming, reflecting India's broader push for eco-friendly and sustainable agriculture.

# What is Natural Farming?

- 1. Definition (NITI Aayog): A chemical-free traditional farming method based on agroecological principles, integrating crops, trees, livestock, and functional biodiversity.
- 2. Philosophy: Works with nature, minimal human intervention ("do-nothing farming"), and completely avoids synthetic chemicals.

# **Key Principles & Practices**

- 1. No Chemical Inputs: Avoids chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and growth regulators.
- 2. On-Farm Input Generation: Uses locally prepared bio-inputs like Neemastra, Agniastra, Jeevamrit, and Beejamrit (cow dung, cow urine, jaggery, gram flour, soil).
- 3. Livestock Integration: Native cow breeds support nutrient cycles and input preparation.
- 4. Diversified Cropping: Intercropping, mixed cropping, agroforestry, and crop rotation.
- 5. Soil Health & Biodiversity: Mulching, cover cropping, and promoting microbial activity.
- 6. Water Efficiency: Minimal irrigation and natural moisture retention.

# **Environmental & Scientific Benefits**

1. Enhances soil organic carbon and fertility.

- 2. Promotes biodiversity (pollinators, beneficial insects, soil organisms).
- 3. Reduces greenhouse gas emissions by avoiding urea and nitrogen fertilizers.
- 4. Improves climate resilience, especially under drought or erratic rainfall.

## **Benefits for Farmers & Rural Livelihoods**

- 1. Reduced Cultivation Costs: Bio-inputs cut costs by 50-60% compared to conventional farming.
- 2. Improved Incomes: Long-term productivity improves through soil health, intercropping, and value-added products.
- 3. Employment Generation: **Boosts** local entrepreneurship in bio-input production, seed banks, composting, and local markets.
- 4. Health & Food Security: Chemical-free produce ensures better nutrition and food safety.
- 5. Women Empowerment: Women participate in bio-input preparation, kitchen gardening, and farmer producer groups.

# **Government Initiatives**

- 1. National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF):
  - Centrally sponsored scheme promoting chemical-free, ecosystem-based farming.
  - Targets **7.5 lakh hectares**, 15,000 clusters, and 1 crore farmers.
  - Incentive: ₹4,000 per acre per year for 2 years.
- 2. Builds on Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati (BPKP) under PKVY.

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# **Ancient Indian Wolf To Be Recognized as a New Species**

#### **News:**

The Indian wolf (Canis lupus pallipes), with a population of ~3,000 in India and Pakistan, is proposed to be classified as a new species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) due to its distinct lineage and vulnerability.

# **Key Highlights:**

 The Indian wolf is the oldest living lineage among world wolves, showing genetic and behavioral divergence from Eurasian and Himalayan wolves.

- Listed as 'vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List, requiring urgent habitat protection and species-level policy action. Ecological & Conservation Significance:
- Indian wolf is already listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act; however, it lacks designated protected areas compared to other carnivores.

Source: The Hindu

# Modi to Face Quad and BRICS Leaders at ASEAN Summit Next Week

## **News:**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is attending the ASEAN summit in Kuala Lumpur (October 26–28, 2025), engaging with Quad (India, US, Japan, Australia) and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) leaders at East Asia Summit (EAS) and other regional forums. This reflects India's balancing act in Indo-Pacific diplomacy and rising role as bridge between major powers.

# **Key Highlights:**

- Leaders from China, Russia, Japan, US, Australia, and major ASEAN states (Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Philippines) will be present; Brazil expected as EAS invitee.
- 2. India's 2025 BRICS and Quad engagements are critical, as India will host both summits

next year; Malaysia has announced Modi's likely participation after EAM confirmation.

- 3. Key Stats
- 4. India's Indo-Pacific trade: ASEAN block is India's 4th largest trade partner, at USD 111.4 billion (2024), up 8.9% year-on-year. Largest Indian FDI destination in Asia-Pacific outside China.
- 5. **BRICS expansion:** 2025 marks the first BRICS+ summit with new invitees (Egypt, UAE, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia) India expected to focus on south-south connectivity, energy, and de-dollarization proposals.

Source: The Hindu

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# **Chandrayaan-2 Makes First-ever Observations on Lunar Exosphere: ISRO**

#### **News:**

ISRO announced that the Chandrayaan-2 orbiter's CHACE-2 payload made the world's first observation of surges in lunar exosphere pressure due to the Sun's coronal mass ejection (CME) impacting the moon. This marks a scientific breakthrough in studying how solar phenomena directly affect bodies with thin atmospheres, such as the Moon.

# **Key Highlights:**

- CHACE-2 (Chandra's Atmospheric Composition Explorer-2) detected a more than tenfold increase in total dayside lunar exosphere pressure during the CME event (May 10, 2024).
- 2. This is the first time direct effects of a solar CME on the Moon's exosphere have been measured, validating predictions from earlier theoretical models.

- Lunar exosphere (thin atmosphere): Typically about 104–10510^4 10^5104–105 particles/cm³; surged more than an order of magnitude above normal during CME, according to CHACE-2.
- India's Chandrayaan-2 orbiter was launched July 22, 2019; it continues to send payload science data, despite the lander losing contact in September 2019.
- Chandrayaan-2, Lunar Exosphere & Space Weather
- Chandrayaan-2 orbiter: In extended mission,
   scientific payloads, still operational in lunar orbit.
- 7. **CHACE-2:** Measured direct effects of solar weather on lunar thin atmosphere world first.
- **8. Space weather on moon:** CMEs cause "sputtering," impacting atmosphere, dust, and potential human activity.

Source: The Hindu

# Kerala Joins PM SHRI Scheme: Demand for More Funds for Students and Teachers

#### **News:**

Kerala's CPI(M)-led government has announced its decision to join the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme, which aims to upgrade existing schools and secure central funding for modern educational infrastructure, students, and teachers.

## **Key Highlights:**

- Kerala joins 24 other states and UTs in PM SHRI: Tamil Nadu and West Bengal remain outside.
- Release of ₹1,000 crore to Kerala's education sector was withheld pending MoU; ₹1,466 crore now requested for immediate school expenses including grants, salaries, infrastructure, and students' welfare.

- PM SHRI requires states to share 40% of project expenditure. Central funds cover 60%. Kerala has already connected 40,000 classrooms with broadband, exceeding most states' infrastructure progress.
- Kerala ranks No. 1 in digital infrastructure (NITI Aayog SDG Index 2023); 97% schools have computer labs, 86% have functional internet. 2024 student-teacher ratio: 22:1 (best among large states).
- 5. Kerala's education spending (2024–25): ₹17,320 crore (7.2% of state budget), devoted primarily to school infrastructure, teacher salary, free uniforms, mid-day meals, and technology upgradation.
- Kerala's gross enrolment ratio (GER 2024):
   99.8% for primary; 98.2% for secondary;





dropout rate below 1.2%. Kerala is an outlier in education quality: literacy is 96.2%, highest in India (Census 2021).

**Source:** The Indian Express

# 'Failure to Meet Climate Targets Doesn't Make COP Irrelevant'

### **News:**

COP30, the 30th Conference of Parties, will take place in Belem, Brazil, Nov 10–21, 2025. The article explores why, even with missed climate targets (notably, the 1.5°C cap looking increasingly unachievable by 2030), COPs (Conference of Parties) remain essential for climate diplomacy, finance, mitigation, and transparent global reporting.

# **Key Highlights:**

- Brazil's COP30 Presidency will prioritize climate finance delivery, climate adaptation, and implementing the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), with less direct focus on revising emission targets, given widespread shortfall on current commitments.
- Global warming is on track for 2.5°C by 2100 (UNEP Emissions Gap Report, 2024), with 2024 registering the hottest year (1.55°C

- above pre-industrial). No country is on pace for 1.5°C; G20 emissions intensity fell only 1.9% annually (well below the 4.2%/yr needed to hit 1.5°C).
- 3. The New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance is under negotiation, with developing countries seeking \$1.3 trillion/year by 2030 (OECD 2024: only \$102 bn delivered in 2023 against \$100 bn/yr pledge).
- 4. Developing nations, notably India, Brazil, and African group, pushing for operationalizing climate adaptation and just energy transition (India's new Mission LiFE: Lifestyle for Environment, National Green Hydrogen Mission).
- India's climate readiness: Net-zero by 2070, 50% non-fossil electricity by 2030, National Hydrogen Mission, major afforestation goals regularly updated at COP review.

**Source:** The Indian Express

# India Develops its First Indigenous Antibiotic - Nafithromycin



#### **News:**

India has developed its first indigenously discovered and clinically validated antibiotic,

"Nafithromycin", a novel drug found effective against resistant respiratory infections and particularly beneficial for cancer patients and poorly controlled diabetics. The discovery was led by the Department of Biotechnology (Govt. of India) in partnership with private pharma company Wockhardt, making it a model for successful industry-academia collaboration.

#### **Key Highlights:**

 Nafithromycin (WCK 4873) is the first new macrolide antibiotic approved in India in over 30 years, representing a major milestone for self-reliance (Aatmanirbhar Bharat) in pharmaceuticals.





- 2. Unique among macrolides: Dual binding action at both domains II and V of the 23S rRNA, bypassing typical resistance mechanisms troubling older antibiotics; minimal adverse effects, improved safety, and immunomodulatory effects observed in preclinical trials.
- Clinically effective against multi-drug resistant (MDR) Streptococcus pneumoniae and other atypical respiratory pathogens especially valuable for populations at high risk:

- cancer patients and those with uncontrolled diabetes.
- 4. India's pharmaceutical sector is the world's third-largest by volume, but >80% of new drugs were previously imported or licensed from abroad; Nafithromycin sets the template for Indian-origin novel drugs.
- Nafithromycin is a global scientific milestone: First-in-class for India, a template for AMR strategy and "Atmanirbhar" drug discovery in the Global South.

Source: PIB

# World Osteoporosis Day 2025: Ayurveda's Preventive and Restorative Approach to Bone Health

### **News:**

On World Osteoporosis Day 2025, the Ministry of Ayush spotlighted the importance of early prevention, lifestyle change, and Ayurveda's holistic, evidence-backed solutions for osteoporosis a global "silent epidemic" causing bone fragility and fractures, especially in elderly and postmenopausal women.

#### **Key Highlights:**

Osteoporosis is a major public health challenge affecting **1** in **3** women and **1** in **5** men globally over 50 years of age; estimates suggest 50–60 million Indians have osteoporosis or low bone mass, with onset 10–20 years earlier than the West.

## Osteoporosis & Ayurveda

Indicator	2025 Value/Fact
Global	1 in 3 women, 1 in 5 men ≥50
prevalence	with fracture
Estimated	50–60 million
Indians affected	
Main causes	Vit D deficiency, low calcium,
	ageing, hormones
High-risk group	Women >45 (esp.
	postmenopausal), elderly
	men
Ayurveda	Rasayana, Snehana, Vata-
interventions	pacifying diet, yoga
India's annual	>4.7 million (all age groups,
fractures	2025 estimate)
2025 WOD	"It's Unacceptable!"
theme	

# **ASEAN Summit 2025 – India's Virtual Participation**

- Update: PM Narendra Modi will attend the 47th ASEAN Summit virtually; not traveling to Malaysia.
- 2. About ASEAN:
  - Founded: 1967 via Bangkok Declaration.
  - Founding members: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand.
- Current members: 10 (Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia added later).
- > Headquarters: Jakarta, Indonesia.
- > Pillars:
  - ✓ Political-Security Community
  - ✓ Economic Community
  - ✓ Socio-Cultural Community





Key principles: Consensus-based decisionmaking, non-interference in internal affairs.

# 3. India's Engagement:

- Member of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since 1996.
- Uses ASEAN platform to enhance Indo-Pacific cooperation, regional trade, maritime security, and political dialogue.

# 4. Significance for India:

- > ASEAN is India's 4th largest trade partner (USD 111.4 bn in 2024).
- Supports India's Act East Policy, regional stability, and connectivity with Southeast Asia.

# **National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMS)**

- 1. Purpose: Prevent dropout of meritorious students from economically weaker sections at secondary stage (Classes IX–XII).
- **2. Launched:** 2008 (Centrally Sponsored Scheme).
- 3. Key Features & Benefits:
  - ➤ **Scholarship Amount:** ₹12,000/year per student (₹1,000/month).
  - ➤ Coverage: One lakh fresh scholarships annually across States/UTs.
  - Disbursement: Direct Bank Transfer via National Scholarship Portal (NSP).

## 4. Eligibility:

- Parental income ≤ ₹3.5 lakh/year.
- Minimum 55% marks in Class VII (50% for SC/ST).

Must be studying in Government/Govtaided/local body schools; NVS/KVS/residential schools excluded.

#### 5. Selection & Renewal:

- Class VIII test conducted by State/UT.
- Renewal requires 60% marks in Class X (relaxable 5% SC/ST) and promotion to next class.

#### 6. Significance:

- Promotes equity in education and ensures continuity in secondary education for deserving students.
- Aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and social inclusion objectives.

# JAIMEX 2025 – India-Japan Maritime Exercise

- 1. **Update:** INS Sahyadri participated in **sea phase** of JAIMEX-25.
- Objective: Strengthen India-Japan naval cooperation under the Special Strategic & Global Partnership (2014); ensure peace and stability in Indo-Pacific.
- 3. Exercise Structure:
  - Sea Phase: Anti-submarine warfare (ASW), missile defense drills, flying operations, underway replenishment.
  - Harbour Phase (Yokosuka): Professional/cultural exchanges, crossdeck visits, operational planning.

- 4. INS Sahvadri Facts:
  - Class: Shivalik-class stealth frigate; commissioned 2012.
  - Equipped with Barak-1, Shtil-1, BrahMos missiles, anti-submarine rockets.
  - Multi-role capability: Bilateral/multilateral deployments, naval diplomacy.
- 5. Other India-Japan Exercises:
  - ➤ Malabar (Navy), Veer Guardian (Air Force), Dharma Guardian (Army).
- 6. Strategic Significance:





- Strengthens maritime interoperability, intelligence sharing, and coordinated response in the Indo-Pacific.
- > Supports India's 'Act East Policy' and regional security architecture.

# **UPSC Relevance Summary**

	Topic	Prelims Focus	Mains Focus	
Ī	ASEAN	Members,	India-ASEAN trade,	
	2025	pillars, ARF,	Act East Policy,	
		India's virtual	regional security,	
		participation	diplomatic strategy	

NMMS	Scholarship amount, eligibility, selection	Education equity, dropout reduction, social inclusion, SDG alignment
JAIMEX 2025	INS Sahyadri, exercise phases, missile systems	India-Japan strategic partnership, Indo- Pacific security, maritime diplomacy, bilateral exercises

# Skilling for AI Readiness (SOAR) Programme

- Launched by: Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- 2. **Objective:** Prepare **students** and **teachers** for an Al-driven future; integrate Al learning in school education and training ecosystem.
- 3. Target Audience:
  - ➤ Students: Classes 6–12.
  - > Teachers: Across India.
- 4. Course Structure:
  - Students: Three 15-hour modules.
  - Teachers: One 45-hour module.
  - Topics: Al fundamentals, machine learning, data literacy, ethical use of technology.
- Budget Support: ₹500 crore (Union Budget 2025–26) to establish a Centre of Excellence in Al for Education.

## 6. Significance:

- Promotes Al literacy and innovation.
- Strengthens multilingual AI resources and AI curriculum development in schools and technical institutions.
- Complements IITs and AICTE efforts in advanced AI courses.

### 7. UPSC Relevance:

- Prelims: Ministry, budget allocation, target group.
- ➤ **Mains:** Al in education, skill development, Atmanirbhar Bharat, technology-driven employment and entrepreneurship.

# **President Droupadi Murmu Visits Sabarimala Temple**

- 1. **Historic Event:** First woman President of India to offer prayers at **Sabarimala**, Kerala.
- 2. About the Temple:
  - Dedicated to Lord Ayyappa (Dharma Shasta).
  - ➤ Located in the **Western Ghats**, altitude 4,134 ft; part of **Periyar Tiger Reserve**.
  - ➤ Annual pilgrims: 40–50 million (Mandalam-Makaravilakku season).

- Pilgrimage includes 41-day vratham (austerity).
- Vavaru Nada: Dedicated to Vavar, symbolizing religious harmony.
- Architecture: Blend of Kerala and Dravidian styles; main temple on 40-ft plateau; 18 sacred steps.
- 4. Sabarimala Case:
  - > Pre-2018: Women 10–50 years barred.







- Supreme Court Verdict 2018: Prohibition unconstitutional; larger bench review pending.
- Significance: Highlights gender equality, constitutional rights, and socio-religious reforms.

# **Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI)**

- 1. Launched: 2014 under CMS COP11.
- Objective: Conserve 17 iconic migratory mammal species across 14 Central Asian countries.
- **3. Species Include:** Snow leopard, Asiatic cheetah, wild camel, Przewalski's horse, argali, saiga antelope, Persian leopard, etc.
- **4. Programme of Work:** 2021–2026 adopted at CMS COP13.
- 5. About CMS (Bonn Convention):
  - Signed: 23 June 1979, Bonn, Germany.

- UN-based treaty for conservation and sustainable use of migratory species.
- Mechanism: Legally binding Agreements or MoUs.

# 6. UPSC Relevance:

- Prelims: CAMI, CMS, key species.
- Mains: Transboundary wildlife conservation, migratory species protection, international environmental treaties.

# Ningol Chakouba Festival - Manipur

- Event: Annual Fish Fair & Fish Crop Competition held by Manipur Fisheries Dept. on eve of Ningol Chakouba.
- 2. Festival Significance:
  - ➤ Ningol = married woman; Chakouba = feast invitation.
  - Strengthens familial bonds: married sisters invited to parental homes.
  - Customary: Sons formally invite sisters a week prior.
- 3. History:
  - Origin: King Nongda Lairen Pakhangba era.

- ➤ Name evolved during King Chadrakirti Singh (1831–1886).
- 4. Cultural Relevance:
  - Promotes social cohesion, cultural heritage, and community bonding.
- 5. UPSC Relevance:
  - Prelims: Festival name, location, cultural significance.
  - ➤ **Mains:** Traditional practices, socio-cultural integration, intangible cultural heritage.

# Striped Hyena Sighting at Kali Tiger Reserve, Karnataka

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- Event: Foresters recorded a striped hyena (locally: katte kiruba) in Kali Tiger Reserve near Dandeli, surprising conservationists.
- 2. About Kali Tiger Reserve:
  - Location: Uttara Kannada, Karnataka |
     Area: 834.16 sq.km
- Components: Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary + Anshi National Park, forming a contiguous Western Ghats protected area.
- ➤ River: **Kali River** flows through the reserve.
- Vegetation: Semi-evergreen & moist deciduous forests, bamboo patches, grasslands.





- Fauna Highlights: Tiger, Leopard, Elephant, Sloth Bear, Black Panther, Great Indian Hornbill, Wild Dog, Bison, Sambar, Spotted Deer.
- **3. Significance:** Highlights rich biodiversity of Western Ghats; rediscovery of rare species
- underlines the importance of monitoring and habitat protection.
- **4. UPSC Relevance:** Western Ghats ecology, flagship species, biodiversity hotspots, wildlife conservation laws.

# International Maritime Organisation (IMO) - Carbon Pricing Debate

 Event: US President expressed opposition to IMO's proposed carbon pricing on global shipping, calling it a "Global Green New Scam Tax."

#### 2. About IMO:

- UN specialised agency ensuring safety, security, and marine environmental protection in international shipping.
- Members: 176 countries + 3 associate members | HQ: London.
- Functions: Sets global standards for shipping safety, security, and

**environmental performance**; contributes to **SDG 14** (life below water).

- > Structure:
  - Assembly: Supreme governing body, meets biennially.
  - ✓ Council: Executive organ.
  - Committees: Includes Marine
     Environment Protection Committee
     (MEPC).
- UPSC Relevance: International organisations, climate governance, marine environmental law, SDGs.

# Rakchham Chitkul Wildlife Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh



- Event: Hosted international bird-watching programme.
- 2. About Sanctuary:
  - Location: Kinnaur district, Himachal Pradesh | Area: 30.98 sq.km
  - ➤ Elevation: 3200–5486 m | Part of Western Himalayas.
  - Climate: Dry zone; no monsoons.
  - Flora: Rhododendrons, oak, pine, medicinal herbs.
  - Fauna: Snow leopards, Himalayan black bears, musk deer, diverse bird species.
  - ➤ Trekking: Lamkhanga Pass connects Kinnaur (HP) to Gangotri (UK).
- UPSC Relevance: Himalayan biodiversity, highaltitude ecosystems, eco-tourism.



# Pakistan Seeks BRICS Bank Membership via China

- Event: Pakistan requested China's support for membership in New Development Bank (NDB).
- 2. About NDB:
  - Established by BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) in 2014; operational since 2015.
  - HQ: Shanghai, China | Regional offices: South Africa, Brazil.
  - Objective: Finance infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS & other emerging economies.
  - ➤ Capital: Authorized USD 100 bn; Subscribed USD 50 bn (equally divided).

- Governance: Board of Governors (Finance Ministers), Board of Directors; presidency rotates among founding members.
- Membership: Open to UN member states; equal voting power for members.
- Key sectors: Clean energy, transport, water
   & sanitation, environmental protection,
   social & digital infrastructure.
- **3. UPSC Relevance:** International finance, BRICS diplomacy, multilateral development banks, global governance.

# India Develops Indigenous Antibiotic - Nafithromycin

- Event: India's first indigenously discovered antibiotic, Nafithromycin (Miqnaf), developed by BIRAC + Wockhardt.
- Target: Resistant respiratory infections, especially in cancer patients and poorly controlled diabetics.
- 3. Significance:
  - First new macrolide-class antibiotic globally in 30+ years.
  - Conceptualized, developed, clinically validated entirely in India.

- Treats Community-Acquired Bacterial Pneumonia (CABP); effective against both typical & atypical pathogens.
- 4. About Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR):
  - Pathogens (bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites) develop resistance to antimicrobial medicines.
  - Consequences: Treatment failure, spread of infections, increased mortality.
- **5. UPSC Relevance:** Public health, biotechnology, AMR management, Atmanirbhar Bharat, pharmaceutical innovation.

# **Bathou Religion Gets Separate Code in Census**

#### **News:**

The Bathou religion, followed by the Bodo community in Assam, will have a separate code in the upcoming census.

# **About Bathou Religion:**

1. Traditional faith of the Bodos, Assam's largest plains tribe.

- 2. Name origin: 'Ba' = five, 'thou' = deep philosophical thought.
- 3. Based on five elements: Bar (Air), San (Sun), Ha (Earth), Or (Fire), Okhrang (Sky).

# **Beliefs and Practices:**

 Worships Bwrai Bathou as the supreme deity; Bwrai means 'eldest' in terms of knowledge or power.





- 2. Central symbol: Sijou plant (Euphorbia splendens) planted on an elevated altar surrounded by bamboo fencing (18 pairs of posts with 5 split bamboo strips).
- The five bamboo strips represent five life stages: birth, marriage/procreation, sorrow, happiness, and death.
- **4.** The Sijou is regarded as the living symbol of Bathoubwrai.

# 'We Rise' Initiative for Women Entrepreneurs

#### **News:**

NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and DP World launched the **We Rise Initiative** to scale women-led businesses globally.

#### **About We Rise Initiative:**

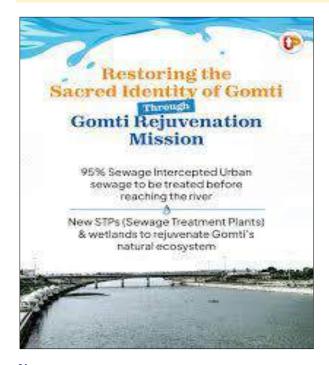
- 1. Full form: Women Entrepreneurs Reimagining Inclusive and Sustainable Enterprises.
- Launched under WEP's Award to Reward (ATR) program.
- **3.** Focus: Empower **product-centric women entrepreneurs** through trade facilitation, mentorship, and strategic partnerships.

 Public-private collaboration aimed at expanding market access and growth opportunities.

#### **About Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP):**

- 1. Incubated in NITI Aayog in 2018; became a public-private partnership in 2022.
- Functions as a national aggregator addressing six ecosystem needs: finance, market linkages, training, mentoring, compliance, and business development.

# **India Celebrates 80 Years of FAO Partnership**



News:

India and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) marked 80 years of collaboration on World Food Day 2025.

#### **About FAO:**

- 1. UN specialized agency established in 1945 to defeat global hunger.
- Mandate: Improve nutrition, increase agricultural productivity, enhance rural living standards, and support global economic growth.
- **3.** Functions: Coordinates agricultural, forestry, fisheries, and land-water programs; provides technical knowledge and policy guidance.
- **4.** Membership: 195 members (194 countries + EU); India is a founding member.
- 5. Key reports: SOFO, SOFIA, SOCO, SOFI.
- 6. Headquarters: Rome, Italy.







# Supreme Court Ruling on Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021

#### **News:**

The **Supreme Court** clarified that age limits under the **Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021** do **not apply** to couples who had frozen embryos and started surrogacy **before January 25, 2022**.

# About Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021:

- Prohibits commercial surrogacy; allows only altruistic surrogacy.
- 2. Surrogate must be married, aged 25–35, and have at least one child.

- Intended couple must be Indian nationals, married for at least 5 years; women aged 23– 50, men 26–55.
- **4.** Surrogacy clinics must be **registered**; abortion requires **written consent**.
- **5.** Surrogate cannot provide her own gametes or act as a surrogate **more than once**.
- 6. Child born through surrogacy is legally the biological child of the intended couple, with all rights of a natural child.

# **International Solar Alliance (ISA) Latest News**

#### **News:**

India, as the presiding nation, will host the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Assembly later this month to review progress and address challenges in advancing affordable solar energy globally.

# **About International Solar Alliance:**

- **1. Type:** Treaty-based international intergovernmental organization.
- Launch: 2015 by India and France at COP21, Paris, to promote solar energy as a sustainable solution for energy access and climate change mitigation.
- **3. Headquarters:** National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE), Gurugram, India.
- 4. Significance: ISA is the first international organization established in India.

## **Objectives and Functions:**

- Scale up solar energy deployment and reduce costs through aggregated demand for finance, technology, research, innovation, and capacity building.
- Promote global solar cooperation, enhance energy security, and support the transition to clean energy systems.
- 3. 'Towards 1000' Strategy:

- Mobilize USD 1000 billion investment in solar energy by 2030.
- Provide clean energy access to 1000 million people.
- > Install 1000 GW of solar capacity.
- Reduce global CO2 emissions by 1000 million tonnes per year.
- Partners with MDBs, DFIs, public and private sectors, civil society, and international institutions to deploy cost-effective solar solutions, especially in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

## **Membership:**

- Open to solar-resource-rich countries fully or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn, and UN members.
- Countries outside this zone may obtain Partner Country Status.
- Over 100 countries are signatories; 90+ have ratified as full members.

# **ISA Assembly:**

1. Apex decision-making body with representatives from all member countries.





Key functions: select **Director General**, approve **operating budget**, and oversee ISA operations. **3. First Assembly:** October 2018, Greater Noida, India.

Source: Economic Times

# **AgriEnIcs Programme Latest News**

#### **News:**

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) recently announced the transfer of technology under the AgriEnlcs Programme to strengthen precision agriculture and environmental management.

## **About AgriEnIcs Programme:**

- 1. Type: National programme under MeitY.
- Objective: Research, development, deployment, demonstration, and commercialization of technologies in agriculture and environmental management.
- **3.** Serves as a **national platform** for R&D and technology translation in sectors directly affecting farmers and communities.
- 4. Technology Focus: Integrates AI, IoT, machine vision, and sensor networks to enable digital precision in agriculture and environment sectors.

Collaborative Framework: Brings together research institutions, industry partners, and government agencies.

# **Implementation and Nodal Agency:**

- Implemented by: Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Kolkata, as the nodal agency.
- Participants: Academic institutes, R&D laboratories, and industries collaborate under this programme.

# **About C-DAC:**

- 1. Apex R&D wing of MeitY, established in 1988.
- Mandate: Conduct research in electronics, IT, and allied domains.
- Notable Achievement: Built India's first indigenously developed supercomputer Param 8000 in 1991, following import restrictions on supercomputers by the USA.

# Myanmar Assures India: No Chinese Presence at Coco Islands

# News:

Myanmar has assured India that **no Chinese military or strategic presence exists** at the **Coco Islands** in the Bay of Bengal.

#### **About Coco Islands:**

- Location: Small group of islands in the Bay of Bengal; Great Coco Island is just 55 km from India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- Administrative: Part of the Yangon Region, Myanmar.
- **3. Geography:** Geological extension of the **Arakan/Rakhine Mountains**, forming a chain

that continues into the **Andaman & Nicobar Islands**, sharing similar topography with India's islands.

#### **Historical Background:**

- 1. Early 19th century: Provided food for British India's penal colony in the Andamans.
- 2. Leased to the **Jadwet family of Burma**, resulting in poor governance.
- 1882: Became part of British Burma; remained a self-governing crown colony even after Burma's separation from British India in 1937.

**Source:** Hindustan Times



# **Madras High Court Orders Action in Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve**

#### **News:**

The Madras High Court has directed action against all illegal resorts and tourist lodges operating within the prohibited zone of Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR), Tamil Nadu.

# **About Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve:**

- Location: Junction of the Eastern and Western Ghats, Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Erode District, Tamil Nadu.
- Area: Over 1,400 sq.km; contiguous with Mudumalai, Bandipur, and BR Tiger Reserves, forming a landscape with the largest tiger population in the world (~280 tigers).

- Terrain & Climate: Hilly, 750–1649 m altitude; subtropical dry climate with hot summers and wet monsoons.
- 4. Rivers: Bhavani, Moyar, and Noyyal.
- 5. Tribal Communities: Irula and Kurumba tribes.
- 6. Vegetation & Flora: Southern tropical dry thorn forests, mixed deciduous, semievergreen, riparian forests; species include teak, sandalwood, bamboo, Terminalia, Albizia, plus medicinal plants.
- 7. Fauna: Tiger, elephant, panther, sloth bear, gaur, blackbuck, spotted deer, wild boar, blacknaped hare, common and Nilgiri langurs, bonnet macaque, and striped-neck mongoose.

# India Unveils National Red List Roadmap at IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025

## **News:**

At the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, India presented its National Red List Roadmap and Vision 2025–2030 to strengthen biodiversity conservation.

#### **About IUCN World Conservation Congress:**

- Frequency: Every four years; largest global gathering of conservation experts, leaders, and policymakers.
- 2. Theme 2025: "Powering Transformative Conservation."
- 3. Components:
  - Forum: Knowledge marketplace for science, practice, and innovation in conservation.
  - **Exhibition:** Pavilions and events by IUCN members, businesses, partners, and academia.

Member's Assembly: IUCN's highest decision-making body; members vote on conservation policies, programme approvals, statutes, and elect the Council.

#### **About IUCN:**

- **1. Full form:** International Union for Conservation of Nature.
- **2. Founded:** 1948; largest and most diverse environmental network globally.
- 3. Governance:
  - Council: Principal governing body between Congress sessions, presided over by the IUCN President.
  - Statutes: Define governance, functions, and decision-making processes.
- **4. Role:** Guides global priorities for nature conservation and climate change action.

Student Notes 🐔





# **LEAPS 2025 Launched to Boost Logistics Excellence**

#### **News:**

The Union Minister for Commerce and Industry recently launched LEAPS 2025 (Logistics Excellence, Advancement, and Performance Shield) in New Delhi.

## **About LEAPS 2025:**

- 1. Flagship Initiative: By DPIIT under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Aim: Benchmark logistics excellence, strengthen India's global competitiveness, and support the National Logistics Policy (NLP) and PM GatiShakti vision.
- Scope: Recognizes best practices, innovation, and leadership across logistics sectors — air, road, sea, rail freight, warehousing,

- multimodal transport, MSMEs, startups, and academia.
- 4. Focus Areas: Sustainability, ESG practices, green logistics, and collaboration among government, industry, and academia to improve efficiency, transparency, and resilience.

# **About PM GatiShakti:**

- Objective: Identify gaps in logistics connectivity and develop integrated infrastructure linking roads, rail, waterways, and air transport.
- 2. Expected Impact: Reduce logistics costs and enhance supply chain efficiency.
- 3. Estimated Cost: ₹100 trillion.

# **Indian Wolf Evaluated Separately by IUCN**

#### **News:**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has for the first time assessed the Indian wolf (Canis lupus pallipes) as a distinct subspecies.

## **About Indian Wolf:**

- 1. Subspecies: Grey wolf variant found in the Indian subcontinent and Southwest Asia.
- 2. Habitat: Prefers scrublands, semi-arid grasslands, and pastoral agro-ecosystems.
- **3. Behavior:** Small packs (6–8 individuals), territorial, mostly nocturnal, and less vocal than other wolves.

- **4. Appearance:** Intermediate in size between **Tibetan and Arabian wolves**, with a lighter coat adapted to warmer climates.
- Distribution: Found in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Israel, Turkey, Iran, and Syria.
- **6. Threats:** Habitat loss, declining prey base, and human persecution.

# **Conservation Status:**

- 1. IUCN: Vulnerable
- 2. CITES: Appendix I
- 3. Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I

Source: Times of India

# **Integrated Alert System (SACHET) at G20 DRR Session**

# News:

At the ongoing **G20** ministerial meeting on **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)** in Durban, India highlighted its multi-agency architecture integrating meteorological, hydrological, seismic, and oceanographic institutions through a **Common** 

Alert Protocol (CAP)-compliant Integrated Alert System.

# **About SACHET (Integrated Alert System):**

 Purpose: Disaster early warning platform by NDMA providing real-time, geo-targeted alerts to citizens.





- Developer: Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), Department of Telecom's premier R&D centre.
- 3. Technology: CAP-based, compliant with ITU recommendations; integrates multiple channels—SMS, cell broadcast, mobile app, TV, radio, social media, RSS feed, browser notifications, and satellite.
- 4. Features:

- Operational in all States and Union Territories.
- Users receive alerts for current or subscribed locations.
- SACHET app provides disaster warnings from government authorities and weather forecasts from IMD.

Source: The Hindu

# **Five Maharashtra Beaches Receive Blue Flag Certification**

#### **News:**

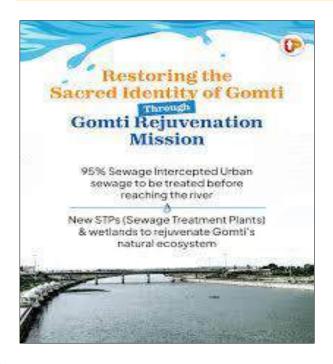
Recently, **five beaches in Maharashtra** were awarded the **international Blue Flag certification**.

# **About Blue Flag Certification:**

- **1. Issuing Body:** Foundation for Environmental Education (**FEE**), Denmark.
- 2. Criteria: 33 standards related to cleanliness, beauty, safety, environmental management, and sustainability.
- **3. History:** Started in **France (1985)**; expanded beyond Europe in **2001**.

- **4. Mission:** Promote sustainable tourism, environmental protection, and education in **freshwater and marine areas**.
- Other Blue Flag Beaches in India: Shivrajpur (Gujarat), Ghoghla (Diu), Kasarkod and Padubidri (Karnataka), Kappad (Kerala), Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh), Golden (Odisha), Radhanagar (Andaman & Nicobar), Kovalam (Tamil Nadu), Eden (Puducherry), Minicoy Thundi, and Kadmat (Lakshadweep).

# **Gomti Rejuvenation Mission Launched in Uttar Pradesh**



## News:

The **UP Chief Minister** launched the **Gomti Rejuvenation Mission** to ensure uninterrupted flow of the river and achieve **95% interception of urban sewage** entering it.

#### **About Gomti River:**

- 1. **Tributary of:** Ganga, flowing entirely through Uttar Pradesh.
- 2. Origin: Gomat Taal (Fulhaar Jheel), Pilibhit
- Course: Flows southwards through Lucknow, Barabanki, Sultanpur, Faizabad, Jaunpur; joins Ganga.
- **4. Length & Basin:** ~900 km; basin ~18,750 sq.km.





- Geology: Thick alluvial sediments; younger alluvium in floodplains, older alluvium in elevated areas.
- **6. Tributaries:** Sai, Chowka, Kathina, Saryu.
- 7. **Cities on banks:** Lucknow, Sultanpur, Jaunpur, Lakhimpur Kheri.
- **8. Issue:** River highly polluted over the years.
- 9.

# **Taftan Volcano in Iran Shows Signs of Activity**

#### **News:**

Recent studies indicate that **Taftan volcano** in Iran may be reactivating after **700,000 years of dormancy**.

### **About Taftan Volcano:**

- **1. Type:** Semi-active **stratovolcano**, 3,940 m (12,927 ft), southeastern Iran, 56 km from Pakistan border.
- Significance: Only active volcano in the Makran continental volcanic arc; hosts hydrothermal systems and fumaroles.

 Structure: Two summits—Narkuh and Matherkuh; no known eruptions in human history.

# **Stratovolcano:**

- 1. Tall, steep, cone-shaped volcanoes; often above **subduction zones**.
- 2. Comprised of andesite and dacite lavas (viscous), prone to explosive eruptions.
- **3.** Mixed layers of lava and pyroclastic materials, also called **composite volcanoes**.

Source: Live Science

# **Supreme Court Expands Scope of Public Trust Doctrine**

### **News:**

The **Supreme Court** ruled that the **public trust doctrine** is not limited to natural waterbodies but also applies to **man-made or artificial waterbodies** serving ecological or environmental purposes.

#### **About Public Trust Doctrine:**

- 1. Origin: Rooted in Roman law, developed through English common law.
- 2. Principle: Certain resources (rivers, lakes, wetlands, ecosystems) are preserved for public use; the government is a trustee.

- Purpose: Ensure resources are protected for public benefit, not private ownership or industrial use.
- 4. Restrictions:
  - Resources must serve public purposes and remain available to the public.
  - > Cannot be **sold**, even for fair market value.
  - Must be maintained for intended uses.

# **Astronomers Discover Rings Around Celestial Body Chiron**

#### **News:**

For the first time, astronomers have observed a ring system around Chiron, an icy celestial object in the outer solar system.

## **About Chiron:**

- Category: Centaur an object orbiting between Jupiter and Neptune showing features of both asteroids and comets.
- 2. Discovery: 1977 by Charles Kowal.
- Size & Orbit: ~200 km in diameter; completes an orbit around the Sun in 50 years.







- 4. Ring System: Four rings identified; three inner rings embedded in a dust disk; likely composed of water ice mixed with rocky material, similar to Saturn's rings.
- **5. Composition:** Rock, water ice, and complex organic compounds.
- **6. Activity:** Occasionally exhibits **comet-like behavior**, ejecting gas and dust.
- 7. **Observation Method:** Detected through **stellar occultation** by a team of Brazilian, French, and Spanish researchers.

**Significance:** This discovery helps scientists understand ring formation in smaller celestial bodies beyond the giant planets.

Source: DD News

# **Chikungunya Case Reported in USA After Six Years**

## **News:**

New York State confirmed the **first locally acquired chikungunya case** in the United States in over six years.

# **About Chikungunya:**

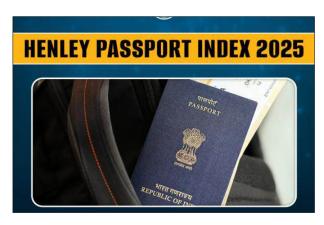
- Cause: Mosquito-borne virus (CHIKV) transmitted primarily by Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus.
- Symptoms: Sudden fever, severe joint pain, muscle aches, headache, fatigue, nausea, and rash. Joint pain may persist for months or even years.

- History: First outbreak recorded in Tanzania (1952); now present in over 110 countries across Asia, Africa, Americas, and Europe.
- **4. Transmission:** Only via mosquito bites; **not contagious** person-to-person.
- **5. Treatment:** No vaccine or antiviral; management is **symptomatic relief**.

**Significance:** Highlights the re-emergence of vector-borne diseases in non-endemic regions due to climate change and global travel.

**Source:** Financial Express

# India's Passport Ranks 85th in Henley Passport Index 2025



#### **News:**

India's passport strength slipped to 85th position in the Henley Passport Index 2025, down five ranks from the previous year.

**About Henley Passport Index:** 

- Purpose: Ranks passports based on the number of countries that can be visited without a prior visa.
- **2. Data Source:** International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- 3. Global Highlights 2025:
  - ➤ **Top Rank:** Singapore visa-free access to **193 countries**.
  - > Others: South Korea (190), Japan (189).
  - **US:** 12th, visa-free access to 180 countries.
  - ➤ **Lowest:** Afghanistan 106th, access to 24–26 countries.

**Significance:** Reflects India's diplomatic reach, global mobility, and international perception.

**Source:** Indian Express







# **India and Brazil Expand MERCOSUR Trade Agreement**

#### **News:**

India and **Brazil** agreed to **expand trade relations** under the **MERCOSUR bloc**, strengthening economic ties.

#### **About MERCOSUR:**

- 1. Full Name: Southern Common Market (Mercado Común del Sur).
- 2. Formation: 1991 via Treaty of Asunción; became a customs union in 1995.
- 3. Objective: Promote free movement of goods, services, capital, and people.
- **4. Members:** Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay (full members); Bolivia and Venezuela joined later (Venezuela suspended since 2016).

- 5. Associate Members: Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname.
- **6. Headquarters:** Montevideo, Uruguay. Languages: **Spanish & Portuguese**.
- Governance: Common Market Council ministers of foreign and economic affairs; presidency rotates every six months.
- India-MERCOSUR Relations: PTA signed in 2004; ongoing expansion aims to increase market access and trade volume.

**Significance:** Strengthens India's trade footprint in South America and aligns with **global trade diversification strategies**.

Source: IE

# Carabid Beetle as a Bioindicator



# **News:**

Recent research indicates that carabid ground beetles can serve as potential bioindicators for tracking soil microplastics.

## **About Carabid Beetle:**

1. Common Name: Ground beetles.

- **2. Family:** Carabidae.
- Habitat: Found across forests, grasslands, agricultural fields, wetlands, and urban areas; adapted to temperate and tropical climates.
- Appearance & Features: Long legs, strong mandibles for hunting, and a pungent odor released when threatened.
- Diet: Prey on garden pests like snails, caterpillars, slugs, and other small invertebrates.
- 6. Life Cycle: Egg  $\rightarrow$  Larva  $\rightarrow$  Pupa  $\rightarrow$  Adult.
- **7. Reproduction:** Sexual, with internal fertilization.
- **8. Ecological Role:** Key predators in soil ecosystems; crucial for **biological pest control** in agriculture.

9.

**Significance:** Their presence and health reflect **soil ecosystem quality** and can help monitor environmental pollution such as microplastics.



# **Malabar Gliding Frog Sighted in Karnataka**



#### **News:**

A rare **Malabar Gliding Frog** was recently spotted at Hirebagewadi near Belagavi.

# **About Malabar Gliding Frog:**

- 1. Scientific Name: Rhacophorus malabaricus.
- Habitat & Distribution: Endemic to the Western Ghats rainforests, usually found on

- tree leaves near streams; breeds on overhanging trees above water bodies.
- Gliding Ability: Uses webbed toes to glide 9–
   meters, roughly 115 times its body length.
- 4. Appearance:
  - ➤ Body length ~10 cm; males smaller than females.
  - Back: vivid green, finely granulated, unmarked.
  - > Belly: pale yellow and rough.
  - Webbing between toes and fingers: large, orange-red.

7

Conservation Status: IUCN Red List – Least Concern.

**Significance:** Highlights the rich **biodiversity of the Western Ghats** and the importance of preserving its rainforest habitats.

# **WTO Praises India's AEO Programme**

## **News:**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) lauded India's Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme for enhancing MSME participation in global trade.

### **About AEO Programme:**

- Framework: Part of the World Customs
   Organisation (WCO) SAFE Framework of
   Standards, established in 2005 to secure
   international supply chains.
- Purpose: Strengthens collaboration between customs authorities and trade stakeholders including importers, exporters, logistics providers, warehouse operators, and customs brokers.
- 3. Indian Context:
  - Launched as a pilot in 2011 by CBIC, revised in 2016.

- Merges India's previous Accredited Client Programme.
- Managed by the Directorate of International Customs, CBIC.
- 4. Voluntary Compliance: Businesses meeting security standards receive AEO status and benefits such as:
  - > Faster customs clearances
  - Reduced inspection frequency
  - Deferred duty payments
- Significance: AEO-certified entities are considered secure and reliable trading partners, allowing customs to focus resources on higher-risk businesses.

**Impact:** Boosts **international trade efficiency**, enhances **supply chain security**, and supports MSMEs in accessing global markets.



# **Deepavali Celebrations on INS Vikrant**

### **News:**

The Prime Minister of India celebrated **Deepavali aboard INS Vikrant** and praised the armed forces' coordination in **Operation Sindoor**.

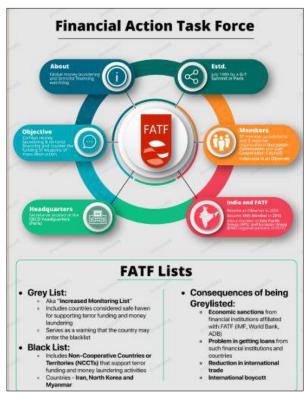
# **About INS Vikrant:**

- 1. Significance: India's first indigenously designed and built aircraft carrier.
- Design & Construction: By Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau and Cochin Shipyard Limited; commissioned in 2022.
- 3. Specifications:
  - Length: 262 m | Width: 62 m | Decks: 14

- Displacement: 43,000 tonnes
- Propulsion: 4 Gas Turbines (88 MW), Max Speed: 28 knots
- ➤ Endurance: 13,890 km (~8,600 miles), 45 days at sea independently
- 4. Air Operations: Can operate 30 aircraft including MIG-29K, Kamov-31, MH-60R, ALH, LCA (Navy). Uses STOBAR (Short Take-Off, But Arrested Landing) with ski-jump and arrester wires.

**Significance:** Demonstrates India's **indigenous defence capability** and naval operational readiness.

# **FATF Meetings in Paris**



# News:

FATF meetings are deliberating **state-sponsored terrorism financing**, including support for banned outfits in Pakistan.

## **About FATF:**

- 1. Full Form: Financial Action Task Force
- Established: 1989 (G7 Summit, Paris); mandate expanded in 2001 to include terrorism financing
- 3. **HQ:** Paris, France | Members: 39 countries (India joined in 2010)
- **4. Purpose:** Develops policies to **combat money laundering and terrorist financing**; enforces compliance with FATF standards globally.
- 5. Lists:
  - Black List: Non-Cooperative Countries/Territories (e.g., North Korea, Iran, Myanmar)
  - Grey List: Countries under monitoring for money laundering or terror funding
- Consequences: Blacklisted nations face economic restrictions and no aid from IMF, World Bank, ADB, EU



# **Gulf of Kutch – Dugong Conservation**

### **News:**

Dugongs face an uncertain future in the Gulf of Kutch and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

# **About Gulf of Kutch:**

- 1. Location: Inlet of Arabian Sea, Gujarat; separates Kutch & Kathiawar
- 2. Size & Features: 7300 sq.km; tidal range generates fast currents (2.5 m/s); rich in mangroves, coral reefs, mudflats, and islands

3. Marine National Park: First National Marine Park in India, located on southern shore

#### **About Dugongs:**

- 1. Significance: Only herbivorous marine mammal in India; called the sea cow
- 2. Habitat: Shallow waters with seagrass beds; found along Andaman, Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay, and Gulf of Kutch
- 3. Life: Long-lived (up to 70 years) | IUCN Status: Vulnerable

# Markanda River Pollution - NGT Directive

#### **News:**

NGT directed Himachal & Haryana Pollution Control Boards to report industrial pollution in the Markanda River.

## **About Markanda River:**

1. Tributary: Ghaggar River; historically linked to Saraswati River

- 2. Course: Originates in Shiwalik Hills, Himachal Pradesh, flows through Kala Amb, enters Haryana (130 km) before joining Ghaggar
- 3. Tributaries: Begna, Nakati, Ran, Salani, Roon, Sukdoh Nallah
- 4. Cultural Significance: Markandeshwar Temple on its banks

# State Mining Readiness Index (SMRI) 2025

### **News:**

Ministry of Mines released SMRI 2025 to benchmark states' mining efficiency and reforms.

#### **About SMRI:**

- 1. Purpose: Encourage competition, sustainable mining, and reform implementation
- 2. Parameters: Auction performance, early mine operationalisation, exploration focus, sustainable practices (non-coal minerals)

- 3. Categories & Top States 2025:
  - ➤ (High minerals): Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat
  - (Moderate minerals): Goa, Uttar Pradesh,
  - > (Limited minerals): Punjab, Uttarakhand, Tripura

Student Notes 🐔



# **Kolam Tribe Bamboo Plantation Project**

### **News:**

Telangana initiated a pilot bamboo plantation to restore traditional livelihoods of the Kolam tribe in Adilabad.

### **About Kolam Tribe:**

- 1. Other Names: Kolamboli, Kulme, Kolmi
- 2. Region: Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh

- 3. Status: Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)
- 4. Society & Tradition: Patrilineal, clan-based; rituals include Matya/Churaghali, Bai-Baki, Sati, Jaitur, Waghai
- 5. Language: Kolami (Dravidian), also speak Marathi, Telugu, Gondi; use **Devanagari script**
- **6. Occupation:** Farming, forest work; historically practiced shifting cultivation

# **Bhavani River - Injured Elephant Incident**



#### **News:**

Tamil Nadu Forest Department is monitoring an injured tuskless elephant standing in Bhavani River.

## **About Bhavani River:**

- 1. Tributary: Cauvery River; second largest in Tamil Nadu
- 2. Course: Originates in Nilgiri Hills, flows through Kerala's Silent Valley NP, then back to Tamil Nadu; meets Cauvery at Bhavani town
- 3. Length & Basin: 217 km; basin ~6,200 sq.km (TN 87%, Kerala 9%, Karnataka 4%)
- **4. Usage:** ~90% water for agriculture; dams: Bhavani Sagar Dam, Kodiveri Dam
- 5. Cultural Significance: Bhavani Sangameshwarar Temple at confluence

# Jal Jeevan Mission - GIS Mapping



News:

Govt plans to map all drinking water assets under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) on PM GatiShakti GIS platform.

## **About Jal Jeevan Mission:**

- 1. Launched: 15 August 2019; goal: household tap water in rural India by 2024
- 2. Nodal Ministry: Jal Shakti
- 3. Key Features:
  - Community-driven planning & O&M
  - Women empowerment in water governance





- > Tap connections for schools, tribal hostels, anganwadis
- > Greywater reuse & groundwater recharge
- Safe drinking water to reduce waterborne diseases

# 4. Funding:

> Centre-State: 50:50 (Himalayan/North-Eastern: 90:10; UTs: 100% central)

udent Notes 💪		

ज्या TAS, TPS, नेवी पहले अस इरी आया अर्थिया शहर में यह वर्त अने सामा तथा ह्यानी सेवा डरे.

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