

Pramukh
इवलएडेरइहव



MONTHLY
CURRENT AFFAIRS

Preface

PRAMUKH SAMEEKSHA MAGAZINE compilation attempts to encapsulate crucial analysis published in **The Hindu and The Indian Express** from **April 1 to April 30, 2026**, specifically tailored for aspirants preparing for UPSC and various State PSC examinations.

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

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

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

Best Wishes,

BAPS Pramukh Academy

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

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

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

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

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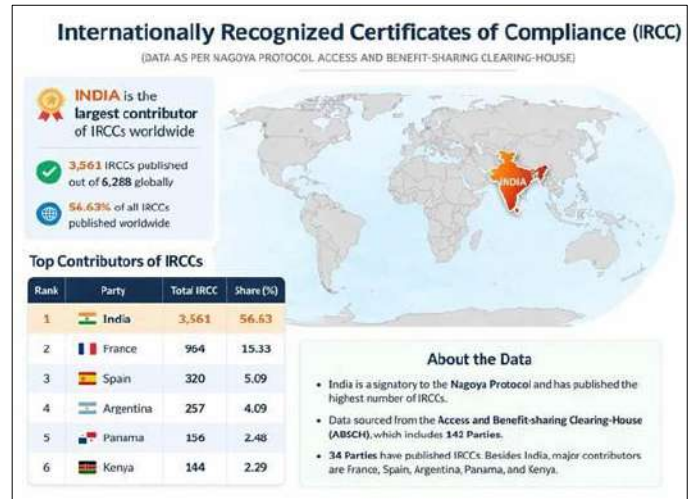
Internationally Recognized Certificates of Compliance (IRCCs)

News

India has become the largest contributor of Internationally Recognized Certificates of Compliance (IRCCs) under the Nagoya Protocol, accounting for more than half of all certificates issued globally.

Key Facts

1. India issued **3,561 IRCCs** out of **6,288** globally.
2. Contributes **56.63%** of total IRCCs worldwide.
3. IRCCs are generated under the **Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)**.
4. Data available on **Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (ABSCH)** platform.
5. **34 countries (Parties)** have published IRCCs globally.
6. Other major contributors: **France, Spain, Argentina, Panama, Kenya**.
7. IRCC certifies **legal access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing compliance**.



Static Information

1. **Nagoya Protocol (2010)**
 - a. A supplementary agreement to the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**.
 - b. Ensures **fair and equitable sharing of benefits** from genetic resources.
 - c. Came into force in **2014**.
2. **IRCC (Internationally Recognized Certificate of Compliance)**
 - a. Issued as proof of **Prior Informed Consent (PIC)** and **Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT)**.
 - b. Facilitates **transparency and tracking of genetic resource utilization**.
3. **Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (ABSCH)**
 - a. Global platform for **information exchange under Nagoya Protocol**.
4. **India's Framework**
 - a. Governed by **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**.
 - b. Implemented through **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Nagoya Protocol is related to access and benefit sharing of genetic resources.
2. IRCC is issued to certify compliance with prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms.
3. India is the largest contributor of IRCCs globally.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) 1, 2 and 3

Source: ABS Clearing-House / PIB Data

14th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14)

News

The 14th WTO Ministerial Conference concluded in Yaoundé, Cameroon, with discussions on WTO reforms, fisheries subsidies, e-commerce, agriculture, and TRIPS issues, while several negotiations remain ongoing.

Key Facts

1. Held in **Yaoundé, Cameroon (March 2026)**.
2. Focus areas: **WTO reforms, fisheries subsidies, e-commerce, agriculture, TRIPS issues**.
3. India emphasized **consensus-based decision-making** as core WTO principle.
4. No consensus on **moratorium on customs duties on e-commerce transmissions**.
5. India supported extension of **TRIPS non-violation and situation complaints (NVSC) moratorium**.
6. Highlighted need to address **food security, PSH, Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM), and cotton issues**.
7. Raised concerns over **Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement** undermining WTO principles.
8. Fisheries negotiations focused on **sustainable practices and protection of small-scale fishermen**.



Static Information

1. **World Trade Organization (WTO)**
 - a. Established in **1995**; headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
 - b. Governs **global trade rules and dispute settlement**.
2. **Ministerial Conference**
 - a. **Highest decision-making body** of WTO.
 - b. Meets **every two years**.
3. **Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies**
 - a. Aims to **curb harmful subsidies contributing to overfishing**.
4. **TRIPS Agreement**
 - a. Deals with **intellectual property rights in global trade**.
5. **Public Stockholding (PSH)**
 - a. Allows developing countries to **procure food grains for food security**.
6. **Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM)**
 - a. Enables developing countries to **protect farmers from import surges**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. WTO Ministerial Conference is the highest decision-making body of the WTO.
2. TRIPS Agreement deals with intellectual property rights.
3. Special Safeguard Mechanism allows developed countries to protect their farmers from imports.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Source: PIB (Press Information Bureau)

Bhagwan Mahavir Janma Kalyanak

News

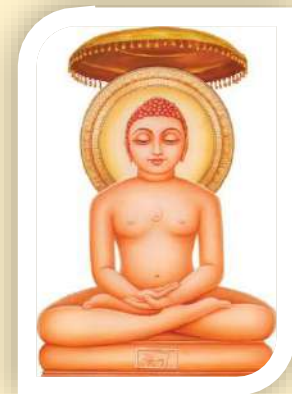
Prime Minister extended greetings on Bhagwan Mahavir Janma Kalyanak, highlighting his teachings of truth, non-violence, compassion, equality, and their continued relevance in modern society.

Key Facts

1. Celebrates the **birth of Lord Mahavira**, the 24th Tirthankara of Jainism.
2. Observed on **Chaitra Shukla Trayodashi (March–April)**.
3. Emphasizes principles of **Ahimsa (non-violence)**, **Satya (truth)**, and **Aparigraha (non-possession)**.
4. Lord Mahavira promoted **equality, compassion, and ethical living**.
5. Celebrated with **processions (Rath Yatra)**, **prayers**, and **charitable activities**.
6. Jain temples conduct **religious discourses and rituals**.

Static Information

1. **Lord Mahavira (599–527 BCE)**
 - a. Born in **Kundagrama (Vaishali, Bihar)**.
 - b. Renounced worldly life at age **30** and attained **Kevala Jnana (omniscience)**.
2. **Jainism**
 - a. One of the **ancient Indian religions**.
 - b. Based on **Three Jewels (Triratna)**: Right Faith, Right Knowledge, Right Conduct.
3. **Five Great Vows (Mahavratas)**
 1. **Ahimsa (non-violence)**
 2. **Satya (truth)**
 3. **Asteya (non-stealing)**
 4. **Brahmacharya (celibacy)**
 5. **Aparigraha (non-possession)**
4. **Tirthankaras**
 - a. Spiritual teachers who guide souls to liberation.
 - b. Mahavira is the **24th and last Tirthankara**.



Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Bhagwan Mahavir is the 24th Tirthankara of Jainism.
2. The principle of Ahimsa is central to Jain philosophy.
3. Mahavir Janma Kalyanak is celebrated on Kartik Purnima.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Source

PIB (Press Information Bureau)

Nalanda University Convocation 2026

News

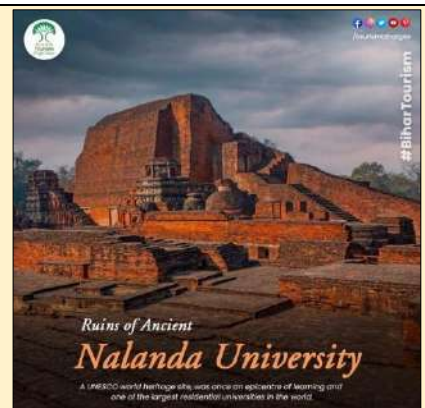
President Droupadi Murmu addressed the **convocation ceremony of Nalanda University, emphasizing its role in fostering global dialogue**, learning, and contributing to India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047.

Key Facts

1. Convocation held at **Nalanda University, Rajgir (Bihar)**.
2. President highlighted **ancient Nalanda as a global center of learning and debate**.
3. Over **half of graduating students are international** from 30+ countries.
4. Emphasized **dialogue, inclusivity, and knowledge-sharing traditions**.
5. Revival of Nalanda reflects **international cooperation and shared values**.
6. University plays a role in **India's development vision (Viksit Bharat 2047)**.
7. Symbolizes **continuity of India's ancient educational heritage**.

Static Information

1. **Ancient Nalanda University**
 - a. Established in **5th century CE (Gupta period)**.
 - b. Located in present-day **Bihar**.
 - c. One of the **world's earliest residential universities**.
2. **Features**
 - a. Attracted students from **China, Korea, Japan, Tibet, Central Asia**.
 - b. Renowned scholars: **Xuanzang (Hsuan Tsang), Yijing**.
 - c. Specialized in **Buddhist studies, philosophy, medicine, astronomy**.
3. **Decline**
 - a. Destroyed in **12th century CE** by invaders (Bakhtiyar Khilji).
4. **Modern Nalanda University**
 - a. Re-established in **2010 through Nalanda University Act**.
 - b. An **international university** with multiple partner countries.



Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Nalanda University was established during the Gupta period.
2. It was primarily a center for maritime trade studies.
3. The modern Nalanda University was established through an Act of Parliament.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Source: PIB (Press Information Bureau)

PM E-DRIVE Scheme

News

Government extended subsidies under PM E-DRIVE scheme for electric two-wheelers till July 2026 and for electric rickshaws and carts till March 2028 to boost EV adoption.

Key Facts

- Launched in October 2024; effective from 1 October 2024.
- Aims to accelerate EV adoption and build charging infrastructure.
- Provides incentives for e-2W, e-3W, e-ambulances, e-trucks.
- Includes grants for e-buses and nationwide charging network.
- Focus on advanced battery technology and domestic manufacturing ecosystem.
- Encourages states to offer tax waivers, toll concessions, permit relaxations.
- Implemented via Project Implementation and Sanctioning Committee (PISC).
- EVs must comply with Central Motor Vehicle Rules (CMVR).

Static Information

1. PM E-DRIVE (Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement)
2. Flagship scheme of Ministry of Heavy Industries.
3. Targets clean mobility and reduced carbon emissions.

Key Components

1. Demand incentives for EV buyers.
2. Capital support for charging stations and e-buses.
3. IEC activities and project management support.
4. Institutional Framework
5. PISC chaired by Secretary, Heavy Industries.
6. Responsible for monitoring, approvals, and policy adjustments.
7. Significance
8. Supports India's goals under National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP).
9. Contributes to energy security and climate commitments.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. PM E-DRIVE scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Heavy Industries.
2. The scheme provides incentives only for electric cars and excludes two-wheelers.
3. States are encouraged to provide additional fiscal incentives under the scheme.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS)

News

At the 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) to CMS, forty new migratory species were added to the protected list, strengthening global conservation efforts for endangered migratory animals.

Key Facts

- Also known as the **Bonn Convention**.
- An international treaty under **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**.
- Signed in **1979 at Bonn, Germany**.
- COP is the **decision-making body** of CMS.
- Focuses on **conservation and sustainable use of migratory species**.
- Covers **terrestrial, aquatic, and avian migratory species**.
- Appendix I: **Endangered migratory species with strict protection**.
- Appendix II: Species with **unfavourable conservation status requiring cooperation**.



Static Information

1. Objective

- To conserve migratory species **throughout their migratory range**.
- Encourages **international cooperation among range countries**.

2. Legal Instruments

- Includes **Agreements (legally binding)** and **Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)**.

3. Conference of Parties (COP)

- Reviews implementation and **updates appendices and conservation measures**.

4. Significance

- Addresses challenges like **habitat loss, climate change, and overexploitation**.
- Promotes **ecosystem-based conservation approaches**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

- The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species is also known as the Bonn Convention.
- It was signed in 1979 under the aegis of UNEP.
- Appendix II includes only endangered species facing extinction.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 1 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Source: PIB / UNEP

20 Cities Towards Zero Waste Initiative

News

Varkala (Kerala) has been selected in the inaugural “20 Cities Towards Zero Waste” initiative aimed at promoting sustainable waste management and circular economy practices globally.

Key Facts

1. Initiative led by **UN Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Zero Waste**.
2. Supported by **UN-Habitat and UNEP**.
3. Recognizes cities adopting **innovative waste reduction strategies**.
4. Promotes **circular economy and sustainable urban systems**.
5. Encourages **knowledge sharing and best practices among cities**.
6. Aims to **accelerate transition towards zero waste models**.
7. Focus on **inclusive, resilient, and environmentally sustainable cities**.

Static Information

1. **Zero Waste Concept**
 - a. Focuses on **minimizing waste generation and maximizing reuse/recycling**.
 - b. Promotes **circular economy over linear consumption model**.
2. **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**
 - a. Established in **1972** after Stockholm Conference.
 - b. Headquarters: **Nairobi, Kenya**.
 - c. Leading global authority on environmental issues.
3. **Functions of UNEP**
 - a. Supports **international environmental treaties (CBD, CITES, Minamata)**.
 - b. Publishes reports like **Emissions Gap Report and Global Environment Outlook**.
 - c. Provides **technical and financial assistance to developing countries**.
4. **UN-Habitat**
 - a. Focuses on **sustainable urban development and human settlements**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The “20 Cities Towards Zero Waste” initiative is led by UNEP alone.
2. The initiative promotes circular economy and sustainable urban systems.
3. UNEP is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: UNEP

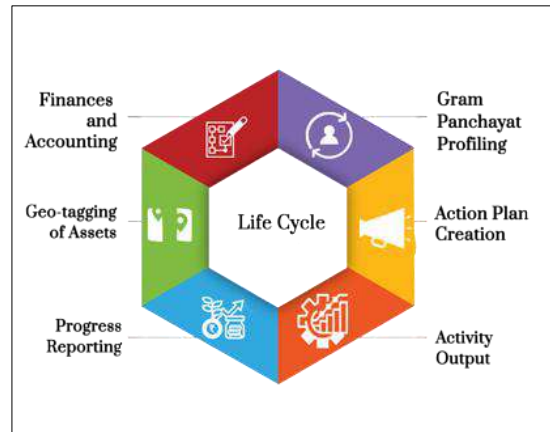
e-GramSwaraj Portal

News

India's Gram Panchayats have processed over ₹3 lakh crore cumulatively through the eGramSwaraj portal, marking a significant leap in digital governance and transparency in Panchayati Raj institutions.

Key Facts

1. Launched in 2020 as an e-governance platform for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).
2. Developed under the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project.
3. Integrated with Public Financial Management System (PFMS) for real-time payments.
4. Covers planning, budgeting, accounting, monitoring, and asset management on a single platform.
5. Enables preparation and online submission of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GDPs).
6. Supports decentralized planning and work-based accounting.
7. Enhances transparency, accountability, and efficient fund utilization.



Static Information

1. Ministry: Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR).
2. e-Panchayat is a Mission Mode Project under Digital India.
3. PFMS is a web-based financial management application for tracking fund flow.
4. Gram Panchayat is the basic unit of local self-government under Part IX of the Constitution.
5. GDP is prepared annually for village-level development planning.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding eGramSwaraj Portal:

1. It is integrated with PFMS for real-time financial transactions.
2. It is limited only to accounting functions of Panchayats.
3. It enables preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans online.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Source: PIB

Bio-Bitumen

News

CSIR recently organised a technology transfer event in New Delhi to promote large-scale industry adoption of bio-bitumen produced from lignocellulosic biomass and agricultural residues.

Key Facts

- Bio-bitumen is a non-petroleum-based alternative derived from renewable resources.
- Produced using biomass such as agricultural waste, plant-based oils, or organic materials.
- Developed through specialized processing to mimic conventional bitumen properties.
- Reduces carbon emissions and dependence on imported crude oil.
- Derived from lignocellulosic biomass (farm residues).
- Contains fewer toxic substances and heavy metals compared to conventional bitumen.
- Suitable for applications like road construction, roofing, and waterproofing.



Static Information

1. Conventional bitumen is a by-product of crude oil refining.
2. Lignocellulosic biomass includes plant dry matter such as straw, husk, and wood.
3. CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) is India's premier R&D organization.
4. Bio-based materials are key to achieving climate goals and circular economy.
5. Road sector is a major consumer of bitumen in infrastructure development.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Bio-bitumen:

1. It is derived from renewable biomass sources.
2. It increases dependence on petroleum imports.
3. It has lower carbon emissions compared to conventional bitumen.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Source: PIB

Defence Exports of India

News

India's defence exports reached a record ₹38,424 crore in FY 2025–26, registering a 62.8% increase over the previous fiscal, highlighting rapid growth in indigenous defence manufacturing.

Key Facts

1. Defence exports rose to ₹38,424 crore in FY 2025–26.
2. Recorded a significant growth of 62.8% over the previous year.
3. DPSUs' exports increased by 151%, showing strong public sector contribution.
4. Private sector contribution also grew by around 14%.
5. Export growth driven by policy reforms and ease of doing business.
6. India is emerging as a global defence manufacturing hub.
7. Export basket includes weapons, systems, and defence equipment.

Static Information

1. Department of Defence Production functions under the Ministry of Defence.
2. Defence exports are promoted through initiatives like 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.
3. DPSUs: Defence Public Sector Undertakings (e.g., HAL, BEL).
4. India has set targets to increase defence exports significantly in coming years.
5. Strategic importance: reduces import dependence and boosts foreign exchange earnings.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding India's defence exports:

1. Defence Public Sector Undertakings recorded higher growth than the private sector.
2. Defence exports contribute to reducing India's import dependence.
3. India has already become the world's largest defence exporter.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Source: PIB

India's Higher Education Expansion & Teacher Shortage

News

Despite rapid expansion in colleges and rising enrolments, India's higher education sector faces a shortage of teachers and persistent inequities, raising concerns over quality and accessibility.

Key Facts.

1. The student-teacher ratio worsened, exceeding recommended norms in many regions.
2. Regional disparities persist, with fewer colleges in northern and eastern states.
3. Higher-income students prefer professional courses; lower-income opt for humanities.
4. Cost of professional courses (engineering/medicine) is significantly higher.
5. Private sector has driven much of the recent expansion in higher education.

Static Information

1. GER measures enrolment in higher education among the 18–23 age group.
2. Recommended student-teacher ratio: 15:1 to 25:1 (varies by regulator).
3. AISHE (All India Survey on Higher Education) provides annual data.

4. Higher education governed by bodies like UGC and AICTE.
5. Equity in education is linked to inclusive growth and demographic dividend.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding higher education in India:

1. Gross Enrolment Ratio has increased significantly in the last decade.
2. Expansion of colleges has been matched by proportional increase in faculty.
3. Students from higher-income households are more likely to pursue professional courses.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Source: The Hindu

Global Energy Transition & India's Strategic Concerns

News

Amid global energy shocks and transition away from fossil fuels, India must carefully manage its shift to clean energy to avoid new dependencies on critical minerals and foreign supply chains.

Key Facts

1. Global energy shocks historically linked to events like oil crises and wars.
2. Current disruptions involve both oil and natural gas supply chains.
3. Electric vehicles are reducing oil demand gradually worldwide.
4. Transition may weaken the dominance of the petrodollar system.
5. Critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, and nickel are geographically concentrated.
6. China dominates processing and manufacturing in clean energy supply chains.
7. Energy transition risks shifting dependence from oil to mineral-rich countries.

Static Information

1. Petrodollar system: Oil trade historically conducted in US dollars.
2. International Energy Agency (IEA) monitors global energy trends.
3. Critical minerals are essential for renewable technologies like batteries and EVs.
4. Lithium Triangle: Chile, Argentina, Bolivia (major lithium reserves).
5. Cobalt production heavily concentrated in Democratic Republic of Congo.
6. Energy security involves reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy supply.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding global energy transition:

1. Critical minerals like lithium and cobalt are essential for renewable technologies.
2. Energy transition eliminates all forms of geopolitical dependence.
3. China has a dominant role in processing and manufacturing of clean energy materials.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Source: The Hindu

Amaravati as Sole Capital of Andhra Pradesh

News

Lok Sabha passed the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, granting statutory status to Amaravati as the sole capital of Andhra Pradesh, ending uncertainty over the State's capital issue.

Key Facts

- Bill recognises Amaravati as sole and permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh.
- Passed in Lok Sabha by voice vote after debate.
- Provides statutory backing with effect from June 2, 2024.
- Reverses earlier proposal of three-capital model (Visakhapatnam, Amaravati, Kurnool).
- Aims to ensure administrative clarity and stability.
- Supported by major opposition party; some regional opposition noted.
- Linked to Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation framework.

Static Information

1. Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 created Telangana and residuary Andhra Pradesh.
2. Hyderabad served as joint capital for 10 years (till 2024).
3. Amaravati planned as a greenfield capital city on Krishna River.
4. Three-capital concept: executive (Visakhapatnam), legislative (Amaravati), judicial (Kurnool).
5. Parliament has power to reorganise states under Article 3 of the Constitution.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Amaravati has been given statutory status as the sole capital of Andhra Pradesh.
2. Parliament derives power to reorganise states under Article 3 of the Constitution.
3. Hyderabad continues as permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh after 2024.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Source: The Hindu

Ammonium Nitrate

News

A leasing agreement was signed between Bharat Coal Gasification and Chemicals Ltd (BCGCL) and Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) for a coal-to-ammonium nitrate project at Lakhanpur, Odisha.

Key Facts

1. Ammonium nitrate (NH_4NO_3) is a white crystalline solid produced in large industrial quantities.
2. It is a salt formed from ammonia and nitric acid.
3. Highly soluble in water and decomposes on heating to produce nitrous oxide.
4. Has a melting point of around 170°C .
5. Widely used as a high-nitrogen fertilizer in agriculture.
6. Acts as an oxidizing agent and key ingredient in commercial explosives.
7. Major component of slurry explosives used in mining.
8. In India, mixtures with over 45% ammonium nitrate are classified as explosives.

Static Information

1. Regulated under Explosives Rules (amended 2021).
2. District Magistrate can permit storage up to 30 metric tonnes.
3. Larger quantities require approval from Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO).
4. PESO regulates manufacture, storage, transport, and usage.
5. Associated with industrial hazards due to explosive nature under certain conditions.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Ammonium Nitrate:

1. It is formed from ammonia and nitric acid.
2. It is insoluble in water and chemically inert.
3. It is widely used in fertilizers and explosives.
4. In India, mixtures containing more than 45% ammonium nitrate are classified as explosives.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1, 3 and 4 only

Source: PIB

YUVIKA Programme

News

The Union Minister of State for Science & Technology highlighted government efforts to promote scientific temper among youth through ISRO's Yuva Vigyani Karyakram (YUVIKA) initiative.

Key Facts

1. YUVIKA is an awareness and learning programme of ISRO.
2. Aims to impart basic knowledge of space technology and applications.

3. Targets school students with preference to those from rural areas.
4. Encourages interest in STEM education and careers.
5. Three students from each State/UT are selected annually.
6. Selection based on Class 8 academic performance and extracurricular activities.
7. Special weightage given to rural students; younger candidates preferred in tie cases.
8. Conducted as a two-week residential programme at ISRO centres.

Static Information

1. Full form: Yuva Vigyani Karyakram.
2. Launched by ISRO to build future space scientists.
3. Includes lectures by scientists, lab visits, and interactive sessions.
4. Conducted across various ISRO centres in India.
5. Focus on early exposure to space science for school students.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding YUVIKA Programme:

1. It is an initiative of ISRO to promote space science awareness among students.
2. Only urban students are eligible for participation.
3. It is a short-term residential programme conducted at ISRO centres.
4. Selection is based partly on academic performance and extracurricular activities.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1, 3 and 4 only

Source: PIB

Deputy Leader in Rajya Sabha (Party Position)

News

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) wrote to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat to replace Raghav Chadha as deputy leader with Ashok Mittal amid reported internal differences within the party leadership

Key Facts

1. Deputy Leader is a party-appointed position in Parliament, not a constitutional post.
2. AAP nominated Ashok Mittal to replace Raghav Chadha in Rajya Sabha.
3. The change reflects internal party dynamics and leadership decisions.
4. Appointment/removal is communicated to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat.
5. Role involves coordinating party strategy and floor management in the House.
6. Deputy Leader assists the Leader of the party in legislative business.

Static Information

1. Rajya Sabha is the Upper House of Parliament (Article 80).
2. Party positions like Leader, Deputy Leader, and Whip are governed by parliamentary conventions.
3. Recognition of party leaders is done by the Chairman of Rajya Sabha.
4. Leader of the House is usually a senior minister nominated by the government.



5. Floor coordination is essential for passing bills and debates.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Deputy Leader in Rajya Sabha is a constitutional post defined in the Constitution.
2. Political parties appoint their Deputy Leader in Parliament.
3. The Deputy Leader assists in floor coordination and legislative strategy.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: The Hindu Newspaper

Governor Bound by Cabinet's Advice

News

A High Court ruled that the Governor is bound by the advice of the State Cabinet while exercising powers under Article 161, reaffirming Supreme Court precedents on limited discretionary powers.

Key Facts

1. Governor cannot act independently under Article 161 (pardoning power).
2. Must act on aid and advice of the State Council of Ministers.
3. Based on Supreme Court rulings like Shamsher Singh (1974).
4. Reaffirmed in Maru Ram case (1980) and later judgments.
5. Discretionary powers of Governor are limited and not absolute.
6. Court termed contrary interpretation as *per incuriam* (legally incorrect).
7. Related to remission/release decisions in criminal cases.

Static Information

1. Article 161: Governor's power to grant pardon, reprieve, remission, etc.
2. Article 163: Governor acts on aid and advice of Council of Ministers.
3. Shamsher Singh vs State of Punjab (1974): Established aid and advice principle.
4. Maru Ram vs Union of India (1980): Clarified pardoning powers.
5. "Per incuriam" refers to judgments given in ignorance of law or precedent.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Governor can exercise powers under Article 161 entirely at his discretion.
2. The Governor is generally bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.
3. The term *per incuriam* refers to a judgment passed without considering relevant law.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: The Hindu Newspaper

President's Rule (Article 356)

News

Following violence in West Bengal's Malda district, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee accused the BJP of attempting to impose President's Rule, while the Election Commission ordered an NIA probe.

Key Facts

1. President's Rule refers to central rule in a state under Article 356.
2. Imposed when constitutional machinery in a state fails.
3. Governor reports to the President recommending such action.
4. Parliament must approve the proclamation within two months.
5. During President's Rule, state executive powers shift to the Centre.
6. State Legislative Assembly may be suspended or dissolved.
7. Can be extended up to 3 years with conditions.

Static Information

1. Article 356 is part of emergency provisions in the Constitution.
2. Based on recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission, its misuse has been curtailed.
3. S.R. Bommai case (1994) laid down strict guidelines for imposition.
4. Judicial review of President's Rule is allowed.
5. Related Article 355: Duty of Union to protect states against external aggression and internal disturbance.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding President's Rule:

1. It can be imposed only after approval by the Supreme Court.
2. It must be approved by Parliament within two months.
3. The State Legislative Assembly is always dissolved immediately after its imposition.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 only

Source: The Hindu Newspaper

Artemis II Mission & Artemis Accords

News

NASA's Artemis II mission launch reaffirmed U.S. commitment to lunar exploration, advancing plans for human return to the Moon and strengthening international partnerships under the Artemis Accords framework.

Key Facts

1. Artemis II is NASA's crewed mission around the Moon.

2. Aims to enable future human landing missions under Artemis programme.
3. Part of a broader U.S.-led lunar exploration initiative.
4. Artemis Accords promote peaceful, transparent use of outer space.
5. Multiple countries and private players are partners in the programme.
6. Focus includes lunar bases, resource utilization, and deep-space missions.
7. India signed Artemis Accords in 2023.
8. Competes with China-led International Lunar Research Station initiative.

Static Information

1. Artemis programme is NASA's successor to Apollo missions.
2. Objective: Return humans to Moon and eventually reach Mars.
3. Artemis I (2022): Uncrewed test flight of Orion spacecraft.
4. Artemis II: First crewed mission under the programme.
5. Artemis III: Planned human landing on Moon.
6. Gaganyaan: India's human spaceflight mission.
7. Cislunar space refers to region between Earth and Moon.

Practice Question**Q1. Consider the following statements:**

1. Artemis II is a crewed mission intended to orbit the Moon.
2. Artemis Accords aim to regulate peaceful and cooperative use of outer space.
3. India is not a signatory to the Artemis Accords.

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

Source: The Hindu Newspaper

Student Notes

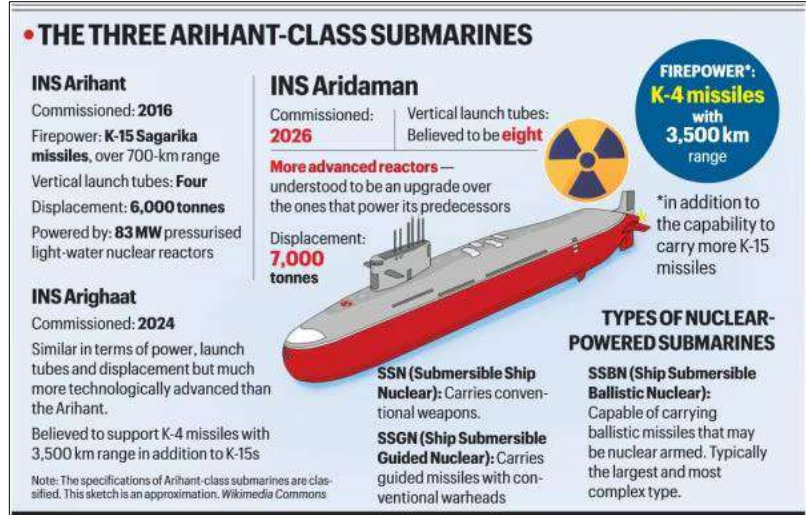
India's Third Nuclear Submarine – INS Aridaman

News

India inducted its third nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), INS Aridaman, strengthening sea-based nuclear deterrence and completing operationalisation of India's nuclear triad.

Key Facts

1. INS Aridaman is a **7,000-tonne SSBN** with **8 vertical launch tubes**.
2. Can carry **K-15 (700 km)** and **K-4 (3,500 km) ballistic missiles**.
3. More advanced than **INS Arihant (2016)** and **INS Arighaat (2024)**.
4. Powered by **83 MW pressurised light-water nuclear reactor**.
5. Enhances India's **second-strike capability**.
6. India now operates **three Arihant-class SSBNs**.
7. A fourth submarine is under construction with enhanced capabilities.



Static Information

1. **Nuclear Triad:** Ability to launch nuclear weapons from **land, air, and sea**.
2. **SSBN (Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear):** Carries nuclear ballistic missiles; key for deterrence.
3. **SSN (Attack submarine):** Nuclear-powered but carries conventional weapons.
4. India follows **"No First Use" (NFU)** nuclear doctrine.
5. **Arihant-class submarines** are indigenously developed with support from Russia.
6. Submarines ensure **stealth, survivability, and assured retaliation**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. INS Aridaman is a nuclear-powered attack submarine (SSN).
2. It is capable of carrying K-4 ballistic missiles.
3. Nuclear triad refers to launching nuclear weapons only from land and sea.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 only

Source: The Indian Express

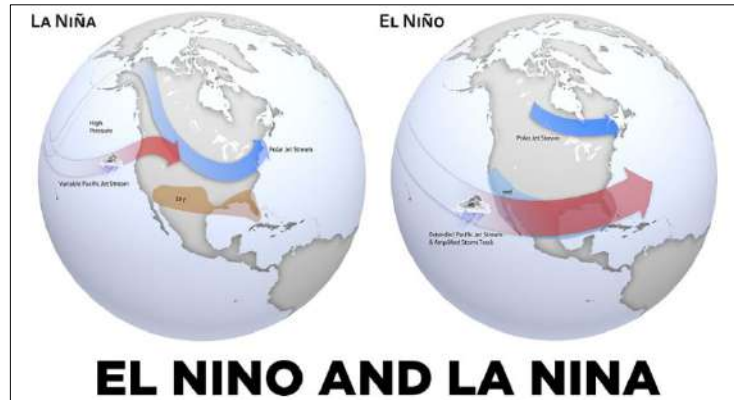
Oil Shock, El Niño & Inflation in India

News

Rising crude oil prices due to West Asia tensions and potential El Niño conditions may push India's inflation beyond RBI's comfort zone in 2026–27.

Key Facts

- Inflation depends mainly on **crude oil prices** and **monsoon performance**.
- RBI's **inflation target: 4% ($\pm 2\%$)**.
- Higher oil prices increase **transport and production costs**.
- **El Niño** leads to **poor rainfall**, affecting agriculture and food prices.
- Extreme El Niño + high oil prices can push inflation **above 6%**.
- Moderate El Niño may still keep inflation within RBI tolerance.
- Global conflicts can disrupt oil supply via **Strait of Hormuz**.



Practice Question

Q1. With reference to inflation in India, consider the following statements:

1. El Niño is associated with higher rainfall in India.
2. Increase in crude oil prices can lead to cost-push inflation.
3. RBI's inflation target band is 2%–6%.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: The Indian Express

Student Notes

Burkina Faso – Humanitarian Assistance by India

News

India recently sent 1,000 metric tonnes of rice to Burkina Faso as humanitarian aid, strengthening bilateral relations and supporting food security in the West African nation.

Key Facts

- Burkina Faso is a **landlocked country in West Africa**.
- Shares borders with **Mali, Niger, Benin, Togo, Ghana, and Ivory Coast**.
- Capital city: **Ouagadougou**.
- Northern region forms part of the **Sahel**, prone to drought.
- Major rivers: **Black Volta, White Volta, Red Volta**.
- Highest peak: **Mount Tenakourou**.
- Rich in minerals like **gold, manganese, zinc, and limestone**.



Static Information

1. The **Sahel region** is a semi-arid zone between Sahara and savannah.
2. Burkina Faso faces **food insecurity and political instability**.
3. Economy largely dependent on **agriculture and mining (gold)**.
4. Volta River system is crucial for **West African hydrology**.
5. India provides aid under its **South-South cooperation policy**.



Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Burkina Faso:

1. It is a coastal country in West Africa.
2. It lies in the Sahel region.
3. Volta rivers originate and flow entirely within Burkina Faso.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 only

Source: News on Air

SAMPANN Platform

News

The Goa government and Cochin Port Authority onboarded the SAMPANN platform to modernize pension disbursement, improving efficiency, transparency, and digital management of pension services.

Key Facts

1. **SAMPANN (System for Accounting and Management of Pension).**
2. Developed by the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT).**
3. Managed by **Controller General of Communication Accounts (CGCA).**
4. Launched on **29 December 2018.**
5. Provides **direct credit of pension** to beneficiaries' bank accounts.
6. Ensures **end-to-end digital pension processing.**
7. Reduces delays and eliminates intermediaries.

Static Information

1. It is a **cloud-based digital platform** for pension management.
2. Offers **single-window system** for sanction, authorization, and payment.
3. Includes **online grievance redressal mechanism.**
4. Enables **real-time tracking of pension status.**
5. Promotes **transparency, accountability, and ease of governance.**
6. Part of India's broader **Digital Governance** initiatives.

Practice Question

Q1. With reference to the SAMPANN platform, consider the following statements:

1. It is developed by the Ministry of Finance.
2. It provides end-to-end digital pension management.
3. It eliminates intermediaries in pension disbursement.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: PIB

Multi-Hazard Early Warning Decision Support System (MH-EWDSS)

News

India launched the Multi-Hazard Early Warning Decision Support System to enhance real-time weather forecasting and disaster risk reduction under Mission Mausam, improving preparedness and response capabilities.

Key Facts

1. Developed by the **Indian Meteorological Department (IMD).**
2. Part of **Mission Mausam** initiative.
3. Launched in **January 2024.**
4. Uses **GIS-based tools** for real-time weather data analysis.
5. Operates under **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).**

6. Enables **real-time dissemination of warnings**.
7. Improves accuracy using **advanced forecasting models**.

Practice Question

Q1. With reference to the Multi-Hazard Early Warning Decision Support System, consider the following statements:

1. It is developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
2. It uses Geographic Information System (GIS)-based tools.
3. It is part of Mission Mausam.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: PIB

Static Information

1. It is a **digital forecasting and decision-support platform**.
2. Integrates **weather data collection, analysis, and dissemination**.
3. Enhances **multi-hazard preparedness** (cyclones, floods, heatwaves).
4. Automates over **90% of weather data processing**.
5. Uses over **95% of numerical weather prediction inputs**.
6. Increases forecast lead time from **5 to 7 days**.
7. Supports **disaster management authorities** in planning and response.

Student Notes

FAO Food Price Index Rises Amid Global Tensions

Source: DD News

News

The Food and Agriculture Organization Food Price Index increased in March 2026, driven by rising energy costs linked to escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

Key Facts

1. Tracks global food price trends monthly
2. Based on a basket of major food commodities
3. Includes five commodity groups
4. Weighted by export shares
5. Base year: 2014–16

Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements about FAO Food Price Index:

1. It measures annual changes in food prices.
2. It includes five commodity groups.
3. It uses export share weights.

Which of the above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) All of the above

Static Concepts

1. It measures **monthly changes in international food prices**.
2. Comprises indices of **cereals, vegetable oils, dairy, meat, and sugar**.
3. Calculated as a **weighted average based on global export shares**.
4. Useful indicator for **global inflation and food security trends**.

About FAO

1. A **specialized agency of the United Nations** working on hunger eradication.
2. Objective: Ensure **food security and improved nutrition globally**.
3. Members: **195 (194 countries + EU)**
4. Works in **130+ countries**
5. Headquarters: **Rome, Italy**
6. Key reports: SOFI, SOFO, SOFIA, SOCO

Blackbuck Reintroduction in Barnawapara

Source: TOI

News

Blackbucks have been reintroduced into their natural habitat in the Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary, aiming to restore ecological balance in grassland ecosystems.

Key Facts

1. Located in Chhattisgarh
2. Area: ~245 sq km
3. Tropical dry deciduous forest
4. Water source: Tributaries of Mahanadi
5. Rich biodiversity

Static Concepts

1. Situated in **Mahasamund district of Chhattisgarh**.

2. Named after **Bar and Nawapara forest villages**.
3. Rivers: **Balamdehi (west) and Jonk (northeast)**.
4. Vegetation: **Tropical dry deciduous forests**.

Flora

1. Dominant trees: **Teak, Sal, Bamboo, Terminalia**
2. Others: **Mahua, Semal, Ber, Tendu**

Fauna

1. Mammals: Tiger, leopard, wild boar, gaur
2. Herbivores: Chital, sambar, nilgai
3. Birds: ~150 species including parrots and peafowl

Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary is located in:

- (a) Odisha
- (b) Madhya Pradesh
- (c) Chhattisgarh
- (d) Jharkhand

Bengal Florican Faces Severe Population Decline

Source: Down To Earth

News

The population of the Bengal Florican has dropped below 1,000 globally, with fragmented habitats in alluvial grasslands threatening its survival.

Key Facts

1. Critically Endangered species
2. Grassland indicator species
3. Found in India, Nepal, Bangladesh
4. Unique courtship display (lekking)
5. Habitat under severe threat

Prelims Practice Question

Q1. With reference to Bengal Florican, consider the following statements:

1. It is a forest-dwelling bird species.
2. It exhibits lekking behaviour.
3. It is listed as Critically Endangered.

Which are correct?

- (a) 2 and 3
- (b) 1 and 2
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) All of the above

Static Concepts

1. A **bustard species** adapted to **alluvial grasslands**.
2. Found in **Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nepal Terai, and Bangladesh**.
3. Key Indian habitats:
 - Dudhwa National Park
 - Kaziranga National Park
 - Manas National Park
 - Orang National Park
 - Dibru-Saikhowa National Park

Unique Features

1. Displays **lekking behaviour** (group courtship display).
2. Shows **reverse sexual dimorphism**.
3. Male has **black plumage and ornamental feathers**.

Diet

1. Omnivorous: insects, seeds, fruits, small reptiles

Threats

1. Habitat loss due to agriculture and infrastructure
2. Grassland burning and overgrazing
3. Invasive species and river course changes

Conservation Status

1. IUCN: **Critically Endangered**
2. Protected under **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (Schedule**

CSR Initiatives Must Focus on High-Impact Projects

News

Experts at the The Hindu Deep Tech Summit 2026 stressed that CSR initiatives should shift from compliance spending to high-impact, innovation-driven projects addressing real societal challenges.

Key Facts

1. CSR should move beyond compliance-based funding to outcome-oriented social impact.
2. Emphasis on **high-impact projects** targeting pressing societal issues.
3. CSR partnerships should be based on **shared purpose**, not transactional funding.
4. Investments in incubators and social enterprises seen as **R&D within CSR ecosystem**.
5. Pilot projects help test scalability, viability, and real-world impact.
6. CSR spending on R&D may be underreported due to lack of formal data.
7. Organisations with embedded philanthropy culture support **long-term innovation**.
8. Collaboration with institutions like Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management encouraged.



Static Information

1. **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** is governed by the Companies Act 2013.
2. Applicable to companies with:
 - Net worth $\geq$ ₹500 crore, or
 - Turnover $\geq$ ₹1000 crore, or
 - Net profit $\geq$ ₹5 crore.
3. Mandates spending of **2% of average net profits** on CSR activities.
4. CSR activities include education, health, environment sustainability, and rural development.
5. India is among the first countries to **legally mandate CSR spending**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding CSR in India:

1. CSR spending is mandatory for all companies registered in India.
2. Companies must spend at least 2% of their average net profits on CSR.
3. CSR activities can include funding for research and innovation projects.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
B. 2 and 3 only
C. 1 and 3 only
D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: B. 2 and 3 only

Source: The Hindu

What TB Reveals About India's Urban Health System

News

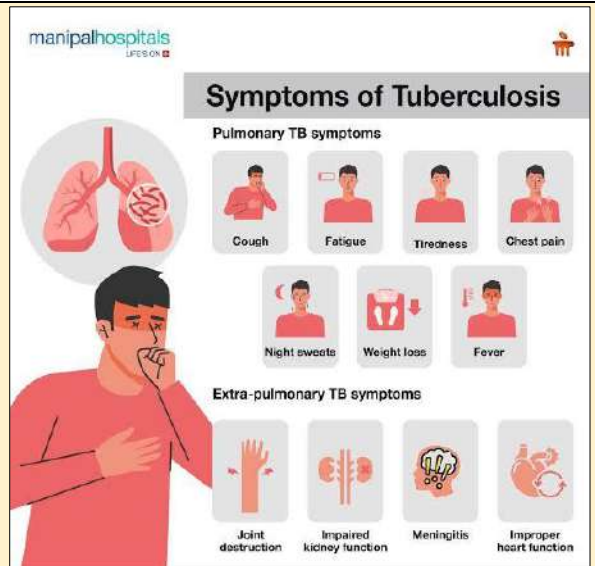
An article highlights how Tuberculosis exposes systemic gaps in India's urban healthcare, linking disease burden with poverty, migration, and unequal access to timely diagnosis and treatment.

Key Facts

1. India accounts for **nearly one-fourth of global TB cases**, the highest worldwide.
2. TB is closely linked to **malnutrition, overcrowding, and poor living conditions**.
3. Urban areas face **fragmented healthcare systems** with uneven service distribution.
4. Migrants often lack documentation, limiting access to healthcare and welfare schemes.
5. Delays in diagnosis and treatment increase **drug-resistant TB cases**.
6. Private sector dominance leads to **poor data integration** with public health systems.
7. TB acts as a **proxy indicator of overall health system effectiveness**.
8. Urban poor face barriers like informal housing, pollution, and weak social protection.

Static Information

1. TB is caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and spreads via airborne droplets.
2. India runs the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP).
3. Goal: **Eliminate TB by 2025**, ahead of global targets.
4. WHO's global strategy: World Health Organization End TB Strategy aims to end TB by 2030.
5. Key interventions:
 - Early diagnosis (e.g., CBNAAT test)
 - Free treatment under DOTS strategy
 - Nutritional support via Nikshay Poshan Yojana
6. TB is a **notifiable disease** in India.



Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Tuberculosis (TB):

1. TB is a water-borne disease caused by a virus.
2. India has set a target to eliminate TB by 2025.
3. Migrant populations are more vulnerable to TB due to poor access to healthcare.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 2 and 3 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A. 2 and 3 only

Source: The Hindu

Indian Softshell Turtle (*Nilssonia gangetica*)

News

Recently, police rescued 16 Indian Softshell Turtle during a routine check in Greater Noida, highlighting ongoing illegal wildlife trade and conservation concerns.

Key Facts

1. Also known as the **Ganges Softshell Turtle**.
2. One of the **largest freshwater turtle species** in the world.
3. Found in river systems like Indus, Ganga, Brahmaputra, Yamuna, Narmada, and Mahanadi.
4. Prefers **deep rivers, ponds, canals** with sandy or muddy bottoms.
5. Adapted for aquatic life with **flattened shell and snorkel-like snout**.
6. Omnivorous: feeds on fish, amphibians, mollusks, insects, carrion, and plants.
7. Faces threats from **poaching, illegal trade, and habitat destruction**.
8. Considered sacred in temple ponds, especially in Odisha.



Static Information

1. Scientific Name: *Nilssonia gangetica*
2. Distribution: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan
3. Conservation Status:
 - International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List: **Endangered**
4. Legal Protection:
 - Wildlife Protection Act 1972: **Schedule I** (highest protection)
5. Breeding Season: February to April
6. Plays an important role in **aquatic ecosystem balance** as a scavenger.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements about the Indian Softshell Turtle:

1. It is listed as Critically Endangered under the IUCN Red List.
2. It is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
3. It is exclusively herbivorous in nature.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 2 only
B. 1 and 3 only
C. 2 and 3 only
D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A. 2 only

Source: Indian Express

GeM Achieves ₹18.4 Lakh Crore GMV

News

Government e-Marketplace has achieved ₹18.4 lakh crore GMV, emerging as a major digital public procurement platform with rising participation of MSMEs, startups, and women-led enterprises.

Key Facts

- GeM recorded **₹18.4 lakh crore cumulative GMV**; ₹5 lakh crore achieved in FY 2025–26 alone.
- Platform promotes **transparent, efficient, and inclusive public procurement**.
- Around **68% of total orders executed by MSMEs**, contributing ~47% of GMV.
- Over **11 lakh MSMEs registered**, receiving more than 51 lakh orders.
- Strong participation from **women-led enterprises and SC/ST entrepreneurs**.
- Startups secured orders worth **₹19,000+ crore**, showing rapid growth.
- Uses **AI & ML tools** for fraud detection, anomaly tracking, and efficiency.
- States and UTs participation rising, with **~38% growth in procurement**.

Static Information

1. Launched in **2016** by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
2. GeM is an **online platform for procurement of goods and services** by government departments.
3. Aims to ensure:
 - Transparency
 - Efficiency
 - Cost-effectiveness
4. Features include:
 - e-bidding and reverse auction
 - Demand aggregation
 - Real-time analytics
5. Supports initiatives like **Digital India** and **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.
6. Encourages participation of **MSMEs, startups, and marginalized groups**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Government e-Marketplace (GeM):

1. It is an online platform for procurement by government entities.
2. It was launched by the Ministry of Finance in 2016.
3. It uses technologies like Artificial Intelligence to improve procurement efficiency.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1, 2 and 3
- D. 1 only

Answer: A. 1 and 3 only

Source: PIB

India Achieves Highest-Ever Wind Energy Addition (6.05 GW)**News**

India recorded its highest-ever annual wind energy addition of 6.05 GW in FY 2025–26, taking total installed capacity beyond 56 GW and marking strong growth in renewable energy deployment.

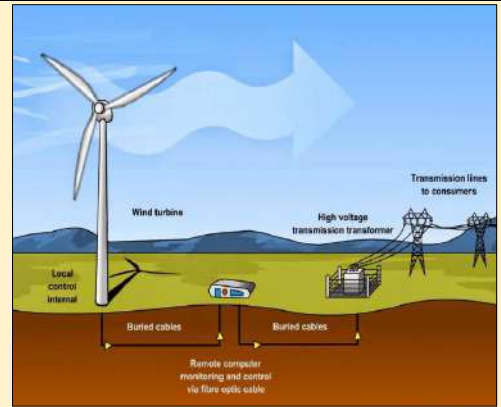
Key Facts

1. India added **6.05 GW wind capacity** in FY 2025–26 (highest ever).
2. Represents a **46% increase** over FY 2024–25.
3. Total installed wind energy capacity **exceeds 56 GW**.
4. Major contributing states: **Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra**.
5. Growth driven by **policy support, improved transmission, and project pipeline**.
6. Expansion of **wind-solar hybrid projects** and green energy open access.

7. Incentives include **waiver of ISTS charges** and concessional customs duty.
8. Competitive bidding ensures **tariff efficiency and market growth**.

Static Information

1. Wind energy is a key component of India's **renewable energy mix**.
2. Ministry: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
3. India is among the **top wind energy producers globally**.
4. National Institute of Wind Energy supports R&D and technical development.
5. Target: **500 GW non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030**.
6. Wind energy is **clean, renewable, and reduces carbon emissions**.



Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding wind energy in India:

1. India's wind energy programme started in the early 1990s.
2. Gujarat is one of the leading states in wind energy capacity.
3. Wind energy directly emits greenhouse gases during electricity generation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A. 1 and 2 only

Source: PIB

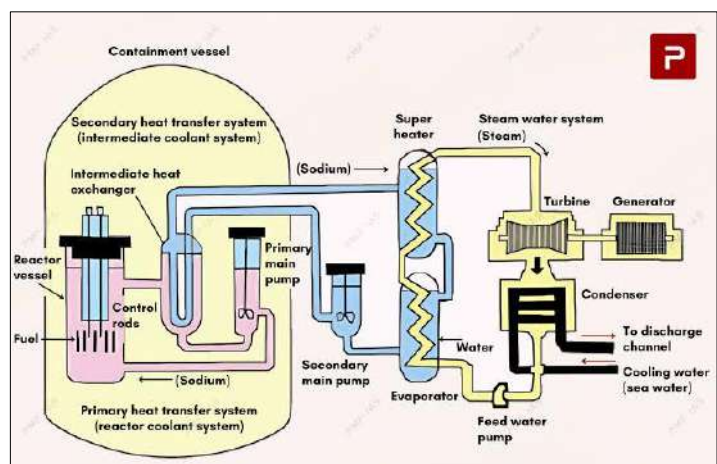
Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) Attains Criticality

News

The indigenously developed Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor at Kalpakkam has attained criticality, marking a major milestone in India's nuclear programme and advancement into its second stage.

Key Facts

1. PFBR is located at Kalpakkam.
2. Developed by Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research.
3. It is a **fast breeder reactor**, capable of producing more fuel than it consumes.
4. Uses **plutonium-based fuel** and liquid sodium as coolant.
5. Marks progress in the **second stage** of India's three-stage nuclear programme.
6. Enables better utilization of **uranium and thorium resources**.



7. Criticality means the reactor has achieved a **self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction**.
8. Paves the way for **thorium-based reactors** in the third stage.

Static Information

1. India's nuclear programme is based on a **three-stage strategy**:
 - Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) – natural uranium
 - Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs) – plutonium fuel
 - Thorium-based reactors – U-233 fuel cycle
2. India has one of the **largest thorium reserves globally**.
3. Department of Atomic Energy oversees nuclear energy development.
4. Fast breeder reactors improve **fuel efficiency and sustainability**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs):

1. They produce more fissile material than they consume.
2. They are part of the second stage of India's nuclear programme.
3. They primarily use thorium directly as fuel.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A. 1 and 2 only

Source: PIB

Student Notes

Puducherry Assembly Elections 2024: Three-Cornered Contest

News

Puducherry goes to polls on April 9 in a single phase for 30 Assembly seats, witnessing a three-cornered contest between Congress-DMK alliance, AINRC-BJP alliance, and other players.

Key Facts

1. Voting will be held in a single phase across all 30 Assembly constituencies.
2. Main contest: Congress–DMK alliance vs AINRC–BJP alliance.
3. Incumbent Chief Minister N. Rangasamy leads AINRC-BJP combine.
4. Anti-incumbency is considered weak in this election.
5. Key issues: welfare governance vs allegations of corruption.
6. BJP campaigns on CAA implementation and governance reforms.
7. Congress raises issues of corruption and governance failures.
8. Local factors and candidate selection play a significant role.

Static Information

1. Puducherry is a Union Territory with a Legislative Assembly.
2. Total Assembly seats: 30 elected + 3 nominated members.
3. Administered under Article 239A of the Constitution.
4. Lieutenant Governor holds significant executive powers.
5. Multi-party alliances are common due to fragmented political landscape.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Puducherry:

1. It has a Legislative Assembly with elected and nominated members.
2. It is governed under Article 239A of the Constitution.
3. The Lieutenant Governor has no role in administration.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: The Hindu Newspaper

Indian Crested Porcupine Feeding on Saffron Crops

News

Indian crested porcupine has recently been observed feeding on saffron corms in Kashmir, damaging crops before flowering and raising concerns among farmers about agricultural losses.

Key Facts

1. Scientific family: Hystricidae (Old World porcupines).
2. Found in rocky hills, forests, grasslands, and scrublands.
3. Distributed across South Asia, parts of the Middle East, and Central Asia.
4. Nocturnal and shelters in burrows, caves, or rocky crevices.

5. Herbivorous diet: fruits, roots, grains, and vegetation.
6. Possesses sharp quills for defense; cannot throw them.
7. Lifespan: around 18–20 years.
8. IUCN Status: Least Concern.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Indian Crested Porcupine:

1. It belongs to the family Hystricidae.
2. It can actively throw its quills at predators.
3. It is primarily herbivorous in diet.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: TOI

Static Information

1. Indian crested porcupine is one of the largest rodents in its range.
2. Found across India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and West Asia.
3. Can inhabit elevations up to ~2400 meters in the Himalayas.
4. Quills are modified hairs made of keratin used for protection.
5. Plays ecological role in soil turnover through burrowing.

Discovery of New Marine Nematode Species off Tamil Nadu Coast

News

Researchers from the Zoological Survey of India discovered two new free-living marine nematode species, *Corononema dhriti* and *Epacanthion indica*, off the Tamil Nadu coast.

Key Facts

1. Discovered by Zoological Survey of India (ZSI).
2. Species: *Corononema dhriti* and *Epacanthion indica*.
3. Found off the coast of Tamil Nadu in marine habitats.
4. *C. dhriti* is the fourth known species of its genus globally.
5. *E. indica* is a microscopic predator with specialized mandibles.
6. Nematodes belong to phylum Nematoda (roundworms).
7. Found as free-living or parasitic in diverse environments.
8. Important for nutrient cycling and sediment health.

Static Information

1. Nematodes are bilaterally symmetrical, elongated, and tapered at both ends.
2. Possess a pseudocoelom (fluid-filled body cavity).
3. Found in soil, freshwater, marine ecosystems, and extreme habitats.
4. Occur across all continents, including Antarctica.
5. Act as bio-indicators of environmental and climate changes.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding nematodes:

1. They belong to the phylum Nematoda.
2. All nematodes are parasitic in nature.

3. They possess a pseudocoelom.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 3 only

(b) 1 and 2 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

Source: IBG News

PM Pays Tribute to Guru Tegh Bahadur on Prakash Purab

News

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Guru Tegh Bahadur on his Prakash Purab, highlighting his courage, sacrifice, and commitment to truth, dignity, and protection of humanity.

Key Facts

1. Tribute paid on the occasion of Prakash Purab (birth anniversary).
2. Guru Tegh Bahadur was the ninth Sikh Guru.
3. Known for his sacrifice in defending religious freedom.
4. Remembered for courage, fearlessness, and spiritual leadership.
5. Stood firmly for truth, dignity, and faith.
6. His teachings emphasize compassion and harmony.
7. Message promotes a just and inclusive society.

Static Information

1. Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621–1675) is called “Hind Di Chadar.”
2. Martyred during Mughal rule for protecting religious rights.
3. Founded Anandpur Sahib in Punjab.
4. His hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib.
5. Prakash Purab marks the birth anniversary of Sikh Gurus.



Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Guru Tegh Bahadur was the ninth Sikh Guru.
2. Prakash Purab is celebrated as the martyrdom day of Sikh Gurus.
3. Guru Tegh Bahadur's teachings are included in Guru Granth Sahib.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 3 only

(b) 1 and 2 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

Source: PIB

Sadhana Saptah 2026: Focus on Tangible Outcomes

News

Day 7 of Sadhana Saptah 2026 highlighted outcome-oriented webinars on grassroots healthcare, startup ecosystem, agricultural innovation, and farmer income growth, involving multiple ministries and experts.

Key Facts

1. Organized under Sadhana Saptah initiative with focus on measurable outcomes.
2. Expert-led webinars scheduled on April 8, 2026.
3. Themes include community healthcare systems and startup ecosystem.
4. Sessions on last-mile delivery by Department of Posts.
5. Focus on agricultural innovation, incubation, and agri-tech leadership.
6. Emphasis on natural farming and sustainable resource management.
7. Participation from ICAR, ministries, states, and industry stakeholders.
8. Aimed at improving farmer income and rural development.

Static Information

1. Sadhana Saptah is an initiative promoting governance reforms and service delivery.
2. ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) is apex body for agricultural research.
3. Natural farming promotes low-cost, chemical-free agriculture.
4. Startup ecosystem is key driver of innovation and economic growth in India.
5. Last-mile delivery ensures access to services in remote and rural areas.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. ICAR is the apex body for agricultural research and education in India.
2. Natural farming promotes extensive use of chemical fertilizers.
3. Last-mile delivery focuses on improving access to services in remote areas.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: PIB

Student Notes 📝

CAQM imposes fine on thermal power plants in NCR

News

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) imposed ₹61.8 crore fine on six thermal power plants in NCR for failing to comply with biomass co-firing norms.

Key Facts

1. A fine was imposed on **6 thermal power plants (TPPs)** within a 300 km radius of Delhi.
2. Non-compliance with **biomass co-firing norms** triggered a penalty.
3. Plants located in **Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh**.
4. Mandatory **3% biomass co-firing** along with coal in 2024–25.
5. The deadline to deposit environmental compensation is April 15.
6. Aim: Reduce **stubble burning and air pollution in NCR**.
7. included **CAQM, CPCB, and the Central Electricity Authority**.



Static Information

- **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM):** Statutory body (2021) for air pollution control in NCR and adjoining areas.
- Works under **the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change**.
- **Biomass co-firing:** Mixing agricultural residue pellets with coal in thermal plants.
- Helps reduce **crop residue burning (stubble burning)** in north India.
- NCR includes **Delhi and parts of Haryana, UP, Rajasthan, and Punjab**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. CAQM is a statutory body for air quality management in NCR.
2. Biomass co-firing aims to increase coal consumption in thermal power plants.
3. Thermal power plants must use biomass pellets along with coal to reduce stubble burning.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Source: The Hindu

TRAI releases Draft Telecom Consumer Protection (13th Amendment) Regulations, 2026

News

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released Draft Telecom Consumer Protection (13th Amendment) Regulations, 2026, to strengthen consumer rights, service quality, and regulatory oversight in the telecom sector.

Key Facts

1. The draft amendment focuses on **consumer protection in telecom services**.
2. Issued by **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)**.
3. Aims to improve **quality of service and grievance redressal**.
4. Covers issues like **tariffs, service standards, and consumer rights**.
5. This is a component of ongoing efforts to regulate the growth and fairness of the telecom sector.
6. Public consultation is typically part of TRAI's regulatory process.

Static Information

1. **TRAI was established under the TRAI Act, 1997.**
2. Objective: regulate telecom services, including **tariff fixation and policy recommendations**.
3. Composition: **Chairperson + up to 2 full-time and 2 part-time members**.
4. Members serve for **3 years or until 65 years**, whichever is earlier.
5. **Appointments made by the central government.**
6. **TDSAT (2000)**: adjudicates telecom disputes and hears appeals against TRAI.
7. Functions include **interconnection, spectrum management, and QoS regulation**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. TRAI was established under an Act of Parliament in 1997.
2. TRAI has the power to adjudicate disputes between telecom service providers.
3. Members of TRAI are appointed by the central government.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI)

News

The Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI) has shown strong progress, attracting investments exceeding ₹9,000 crore against a committed ₹7,000 crore, boosting India's food processing sector.

Key Facts

1. Launched by the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries**.
2. Total financial outlay of **₹10,900 crore**.
3. Implementation period: **FY 2021–22 to FY 2026–27**.
4. Focus on **value addition and capacity expansion** in food processing.
5. Covers key segments like **RTC/RTE foods, processed fruits & vegetables, marine products, mozzarella cheese**.
6. Supports **branding and marketing** of Indian food products globally.
7. Encourages **innovation and organic product manufacturing** by SMEs.

**Static Information**

1. Part of a broader **PLI scheme initiative** to boost manufacturing in India.
2. Aims to create **global food manufacturing champions**.
3. Promotes **employment generation** in rural and off-farm sectors.
4. Enhances **farmers' income** through better price realization.
5. It focuses on integrating **agriculture with industry**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. PLISFPI is implemented by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
2. The scheme aims to promote branding of Indian food products globally.
3. It includes support for Ready-to-Eat and processed food segments.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: PIB

National Quantum Mission achieves 1,000 km secure communication milestone

News

India's National Quantum Mission achieved a 1,000 km quantum communication milestone using indigenous technology, marking rapid progress in secure communication and strengthening the deep-tech innovation ecosystem.

Key Facts

1. We successfully established a 1,000 km quantum communication network in just two to three years.
2. One of the **longest quantum key distribution (QKD) deployments** globally.
3. Developed using **indigenous technology** by Indian startups (e.g., QNu Labs).



- Enhances **secure communication for defence, finance, and critical infrastructure**.
- The mission expanded support to **17 startups (9 newly added)**.
- Covers areas like **quantum computing, sensing, communication, and materials**.
- This project is supported by the **Technology Development Board (TDB)** and **BIRAC** under RDI funding.

Static Information

- The National Quantum Mission (NQM)** was launched in **2023**.
- Aims to develop a **quantum technology ecosystem in India**.
- Focus areas:
 - Quantum computing
 - Quantum communication
 - Quantum sensing & metrology
- Quantum Key Distribution (QKD)**: ultra-secure communication using quantum principles.
- Supports **deep tech startups and indigenous R&D**.
- Strategic importance for **cybersecurity and next-gen technologies**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

- The National Quantum Mission focuses only on quantum computing technologies.
- Quantum Key Distribution enables highly secure communication.
- The mission supports startups in quantum and deep-tech sectors.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: PIB

Kalai-II Hydroelectric Project approved in Arunachal Pradesh**News**

The Cabinet approved a ₹14,105.83 crore investment for the 1200 MW Kalai-II Hydroelectric Project in Arunachal Pradesh to boost power generation, infrastructure, and regional development.

Key Facts

- Project capacity: **1200 MW (6 × 190 MW + 1 × 60 MW)**.
- Located in **Anjaw district, Arunachal Pradesh (Lohit Basin)**.
- Estimated completion period: **78 months**.
- Annual energy generation: **~4852.95 MU**.
- Implemented via **JV between THDC India Ltd. and state government**.
- The center will provide **₹750 crore in financial assistance** for equity support.
- The state will receive **12% free power + 1% for the Local Area Development Fund (LADF)**.

Static Information

1. **Hydropower** is a **renewable energy source** using flowing water.
2. India has significant hydropower potential in **Himalayan river systems**.
3. **THDC India Ltd**: PSU under Ministry of Power.
4. Hydropower helps in **peak load management and grid stability**.
5. Arunachal Pradesh is known for **high hydropower potential** due to steep gradients and river systems.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Hydropower is a non-renewable source of energy.
2. Arunachal Pradesh has high hydropower potential due to Himalayan rivers.
3. Hydropower projects help in peak load management of electricity.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: PIB

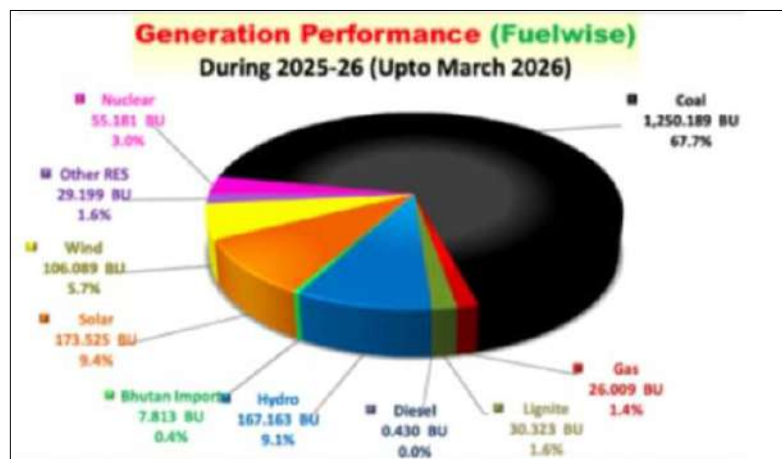
India ranks 3rd globally in renewable energy installed capacity.

News

India ranked 3rd globally in renewable energy installed capacity, surpassing Brazil, with record growth in non-fossil energy and the highest-ever renewable share in electricity generation.

Key Facts

1. India ranks **3rd globally** after **China and the USA** (IRENA data).
2. Total **non-fossil fuel capacity: ~283.46 GW** (as of March 2026).
3. Renewable energy capacity includes **solar, wind, hydro, and bioenergy**.
4. India added **55.3 GW non-fossil capacity in FY 2025–26** (highest ever).
5. Renewable sources met **51.5% of electricity demand (July 2025)**.
6. Target: **500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030** (NDC commitment).
7. Solar power is the **largest contributor**, followed by wind energy.



Static Information

1. **IRENA (International Renewable Energy Agency)**: Global body promoting renewable energy adoption.
2. **Non-fossil fuels include** solar, wind, hydro, nuclear, and biomass.
3. India's renewable push aligned with **the Paris Agreement & NDC targets**.
4. Key schemes: **the National Solar Mission, PM-KUSUM, and PLI schemes**.

5. Renewable energy helps reduce **carbon emissions and energy imports**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. India is the largest producer of renewable energy in the world.
2. Non-fossil fuel sources include nuclear energy.
3. India aims to achieve 500 GW non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: PIB

PM Mudra Yojana completes 11 years

News

Prime Minister highlighted the success of PM Mudra Yojana on its 11th anniversary, emphasizing its role in expanding access to credit and empowering entrepreneurship across India.

Key Facts

1. Launched in **2015** to provide **collateral-free loans**.
2. Aims to support **micro and small enterprises (MSEs)**.
3. Loans categorized into **Shishu, Kishor, and Tarun**.
4. Focus on **financial inclusion and entrepreneurship promotion**.
5. Beneficiaries include **youth, women (Nari Shakti), and small entrepreneurs**.
6. Strengthens **non-corporate, non-farm sector**.
7. Enhances **self-employment and income generation**.

Static Information

1. Full form: **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)**.
2. Implemented through **MUDRA (Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency Ltd.)**.
3. Loan categories:
 - **Shishu:** up to ₹50,000
 - **Kishor:** ₹50,000 – ₹5 lakh
 - **Tarun:** ₹5 lakh – ₹10 lakh
4. Supports **small businesses like shopkeepers, artisans, and MSMEs**.
5. No collateral required → promotes **ease of credit access**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. PM Mudra Yojana provides collateral-free loans to small entrepreneurs.
2. It is implemented directly by the Reserve Bank of India.
3. The scheme includes loan categories such as Shishu, Kishor, and Tarun.



Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Source: PIB

Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS)

News

The Reserve Bank of India proposed removing due diligence requirements for MSMEs onboarding on TReDS platforms to enhance ease of doing business and improve access to working capital.



Key Facts

1. TReDS is an electronic platform for financing/discounting trade receivables of MSMEs.
2. Receivables arise from corporates, PSUs, and government departments.
3. Enables MSMEs to receive early payments by discounting invoices.
4. Participants: MSME sellers, buyers (corporates/PSUs), and financiers (banks/NBFCs).
5. Only MSMEs can act as sellers; others act as buyers/financiers.
6. RBI regulates TReDS; participation is not mandatory.
7. Government mandates certain companies to register as buyers.

Static Information

1. Launched under RBI guidelines (2014).
2. Platforms: RXIL, A.TReDS, M1xchange.
3. Helps reduce delayed payments problem in MSMEs.
4. Improves liquidity and credit flow in the economy.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding TReDS:

1. Only MSMEs can participate as sellers.
2. RBI has made participation mandatory for all buyers.
3. It helps MSMEs receive early payments.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: The Hindu

NSTFDC 25th Foundation Day

News

The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation will celebrate its 25th Foundation Day on April 10, 2026, in New Delhi, with participation of tribal entrepreneurs and dignitaries.

Key Facts

1. NSTFDC is a PSU under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
2. Established in 2001.
3. Focuses on economic development of Scheduled Tribes.
4. Provides concessional finance for income-generating activities.
5. Works through State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs).
6. Promotes entrepreneurship among ST communities.
7. Felicitation of successful ST entrepreneurs planned.

Static Information

1. Ministry: Ministry of Tribal Affairs
2. Target group: Scheduled Tribes
3. Provides skill development and financial assistance
4. Plays role in inclusive growth and livelihood generation

Practice Question

Q1. With reference to NSTFDC, consider the following statements:

1. It is a statutory body.
2. It provides concessional finance to Scheduled Tribes.
3. It operates under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: PIB

India Growth Outlook (World Bank)

News

The World Bank revised India's FY27 GDP growth forecast downward to 6.6% from 7.2%, citing global uncertainties and energy market disruptions.

Key Facts

1. Growth forecast reduced due to West Asia conflict.
2. Impact on consumption and industrial activity.
3. Inflation projected at ~4.9%.
4. Net FDI inflow is estimated at ~0.6% of GDP.
5. South Asia growth is expected to slow.
6. Private sector-led growth seen as key driver.



Static Information

1. The World Bank publishes "India Development Update".
2. GDP = total value of goods and services produced.
3. Growth affected by global oil prices and geopolitical risks.
4. India among fastest-growing major economies.



United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

- **Established:** The UNFCCC was adopted in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit and entered into force on 21 March 1994.
- **Objective:** Its primary goal is to **stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations** to prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.
- **Membership:** The convention has **198 parties**, making it nearly universal.
- **Principles:** It follows the common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) principle, recognizing that developed nations should lead climate action.
- **Key Agreements:** Led to the **Kyoto Protocol (1997)** and **Paris Agreement (2015)**, shaping global climate policies.
- **Institutional Framework:** Includes the Conference of the Parties (COP), Subsidiary Bodies (SBSTA & SBI), and the UNFCCC Secretariat.
- **Annual Meetings:** The COP sessions serve as the main platform for climate negotiations and policy decisions.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. World Bank releases India Development Update.
2. GDP growth is unaffected by global conflicts.
3. Private sector investment boosts economic growth.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: The Hindu

COP33 Bid Withdrawal

News

India withdrew its bid to host COP33, drawing political criticism and raising concerns over commitment to global climate goals.

Key Facts

1. COP refers to the Conference of Parties under the UNFCCC.
2. India was expected to host COP in 2028.
3. The decision sparked debate on climate leadership.
4. No official reason cited for withdrawal.
5. COP28 held in Dubai (2023).
6. COP meetings discuss climate mitigation and adaptation.



United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change

Static Information

1. Governing body: UNFCCC
2. Paris Agreement aims to limit global warming to 1.5°C.
3. COP is the supreme decision-making body of UNFCCC.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding COP:

1. It is associated with UNFCCC.
2. It is a forum for climate negotiations.
3. It is organized by IMF annually.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: The Hindu

Arogya Van Initiative

News

The National Highways Authority of India launched the Arogya Van initiative to develop medicinal plant plantations along national highways.

Key Facts

1. Focus on planting medicinal tree species along highways.
2. Enhances biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.
3. Supports pollinators, birds, and microfauna.
4. Covers multiple states including MP, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu.
5. Priority near toll plazas, interchanges, and highways.
6. Based on agro-climatic suitability.



Static Information

1. Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
2. NHAI was established in 1988.
3. Works under National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988.
4. Promotes green highways policy.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Arogya Van focuses on medicinal plants.
2. It is implemented by the Ministry of Environment.
3. It aims to improve biodiversity along highways.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: PIB

NITI Aayog Reports on Ease of Doing R&D in India

News

NITI Aayog released two reports on improving ease of doing research and development in India, based on nationwide surveys, consultations, and inputs from scientists to strengthen the innovation ecosystem.

Key Facts

1. Two reports: *Ease of Doing Research & Development in India* and *Survey Report on Ease of Doing R&D in India*
2. Based on outreach to 400+ institutions and inputs from 850+ scientists
3. Focus on improving funding, governance, and regulatory frameworks
4. Emphasizes private sector participation in R&D
5. Highlights need for support to early-stage researchers
6. Suggests flexible institutional and policy frameworks
7. Recommends outcome-oriented and trust-based research environment



Static Information

1. NITI Aayog is the premier policy think tank of the Government of India
2. Established in 2015, replacing the Planning Commission
3. Promotes cooperative federalism and policy innovation
4. Plays key role in long-term strategic planning and reforms

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. NITI Aayog replaced the Planning Commission in 2015.
2. The reports on ease of doing R&D emphasize only government-led research initiatives.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 only

Source

PIB

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)

News

Minister of State for External Affairs highlighted ICCR's role during a community event in Yangon, Myanmar, emphasizing its contribution in strengthening India's cultural diplomacy and global cultural ties.

Key Facts

1. ICCR is an autonomous body under the Ministry of External Affairs.
2. Plays a key role in India's external cultural relations.

- Promotes Indian culture abroad through cultural centres.
- Facilitates cultural exchange with other countries.
- Administers 3000+ scholarships annually to foreign students.
- Scholarships cover about 180 countries.
- Operates through 21 different scholarship schemes.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding ICCR:

- It functions under the Ministry of Culture.
- It promotes India's cultural relations with other countries.
- It administers scholarship programmes for foreign students.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 2 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: News On Air

Static Information

- Established in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.
- Focuses on cultural diplomacy and soft power projection.
- Supports academic, cultural, and artistic exchanges.
- Some scholarship schemes funded directly by ICCR.
- Others implemented on behalf of MEA and Ministry of Ayush.
- Courses range from undergraduate to postdoctoral levels.

Skills Outcomes Fund

News

Government of India launched the Skills Outcomes Fund to promote outcomes-based skilling, aiming to improve employment opportunities for youth from low-income backgrounds through innovative financing mechanisms.

Key Facts

- First-of-its-kind outcomes-based skilling initiative in India.
- Targets youth from low-income and aspirational backgrounds.
- Mobilises public and private capital for skilling programs.
- Links funding directly to verified employment outcomes.
- Anchored by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).
- Operates under the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.
- Focuses on employer-led, demand-driven skill training.



Static Information

- Builds on Skill Impact Bond launched in 2021.

2. Encourages outcomes-based financing (OBF) model.
3. Involves partnerships with non-profits and philanthropic organisations.
4. Targets high-growth sectors like IT, BFSI, manufacturing, healthcare.
5. Also includes logistics, electronics, semiconductors, and green jobs.
6. Aims to align the skilling ecosystem with industry requirements.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Skills Outcomes Fund:

1. It is anchored by the National Skill Development Corporation.
2. It links funding to employment outcomes achieved.
3. It is implemented by the Ministry of Education.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Source: PIB

Womaniya Initiative (GeM)

News

The government highlighted the **Womaniya initiative on GeM platform to promote women entrepreneurs and SHGs by enabling direct access** to public procurement and expanding market opportunities across India.

Key Facts

1. Launched in 2019 on Government e-Marketplace (GeM).
2. Enables women entrepreneurs and SHGs to sell directly to government buyers.
3. Covers products like handicrafts, handloom, jute, coir, home décor, office furnishings.
4. Provides dedicated digital interface for women-led enterprises.
5. Simplifies registration and product listing processes.
6. Over 2.1 lakh women MSEs registered on GeM.
7. Achieved 13.7 lakh order volume in FY 2025–26.

Static Information

1. GeM is an online public procurement portal launched in 2016.
2. Operates under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
3. Based on principle: “Minimum Government, Maximum Governance”.
4. Ensures paperless, cashless, contactless procurement.
5. SHGs are informal groups (10–20 members) promoting rural women empowerment.
6. As of Feb 2026, over 10 crore women are linked to ~90 lakh SHGs.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Womaniya Initiative:

1. It is a scheme under NITI Aayog for women entrepreneurs.

2. It enables women-led enterprises to sell products through GeM.
3. It provides a dedicated digital interface for SHGs and women MSEs.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: PIB (Ministry of Commerce & Industry)

Türkiye – India Foreign Office Consultations

News

India and Türkiye held the 12th round of Foreign Office Consultations to revive bilateral relations that were strained following developments linked to the India–Pakistan conflict last year.

Key Facts

1. Türkiye is a transcontinental country spanning Asia and Europe.
2. The majority lies in the Anatolian Plateau (Western Asia).
3. A small portion located in Balkan Peninsula (Europe).
4. Borders Greece, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, Syria.
5. Nakhchivan (Azerbaijan enclave) borders Türkiye.
6. Surrounded by Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and Aegean Sea.
7. Capital: Ankara.



Static Information

1. Important rivers: Tigris, Euphrates, Kizilirmak, Sakarya.
2. Lake Van is the largest alkaline lake in the world.
3. Mountain ranges: Taurus, Pontic, Koroglu.
4. Highest peak: Mt. Ararat (16,948 ft).
5. Key straits: Bosphorus and Dardanelles (strategic waterways).
6. Rich in minerals: chromite, iron ore, coal, lignite, bauxite.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Türkiye:

1. It lies entirely in Asia.
2. Bosphorus Strait connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara.
3. Lake Van is the largest freshwater lake in the world.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 only

Source: The Hindu

Exercise DUSTLIK (India–Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise)

News

An Indian Army contingent has departed for Uzbekistan to participate in the joint military exercise DUSTLIK. The exercise aims to enhance interoperability, coordination, and counter-terrorism capabilities between the armed forces of both countries.

Facts

1. Exercise DUSTLIK is a joint military exercise between India and Uzbekistan.
2. It is conducted annually, alternately in India and Uzbekistan.
3. The current edition is being held in Uzbekistan.
4. Indian contingent comprises personnel mainly from the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles.
5. The Uzbekistan contingent includes personnel from its armed forces.
6. Focus areas include counter-terrorism operations in semi-urban environments.
7. The exercise involves joint training, tactical drills, and sharing of best practices.
8. It aims to enhance interoperability, coordination, and mutual understanding between the two armies.



Static Information

1. India-Uzbekistan Defence Cooperation

- Strengthening strategic and military ties through joint exercises and training.
- Focus on regional security and counter-terrorism cooperation.

2. Exercise DUSTLIK

- First conducted in 2019.
- Symbolizes growing defence partnership between India and Central Asia.
- Enhances joint operational capabilities and military diplomacy.

3. Uzbekistan

- Country located in Central Asia.
- Capital: Tashkent.
- Strategic importance due to proximity to Afghanistan and regional security dynamics.

MCQ

Q1. With reference to Exercise DUSTLIK, consider the following statements:

1. It is a joint military exercise between India and Uzbekistan.
2. It is conducted annually on a rotational basis between the two countries.
3. It primarily focuses on naval warfare operations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A. 1 and 2 only

Source

1. PIB (Press Information Bureau)
2. Indian Army

200th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule

News

The Prime Minister paid tribute to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule on his birth anniversary and announced the commencement of his 200th birth anniversary celebrations.

The occasion highlighted Phule's contributions to social equality, education, and women's empowerment.

Facts

1. Tribute paid on the birth anniversary of Jyotirao Phule.
2. Marks the beginning of his 200th birth anniversary celebrations.
3. Phule emphasized social justice, equality, and education for all.
4. He worked extensively for women's rights and the upliftment of marginalized communities.
5. Education was used as a tool for empowerment and social reform.
6. The Prime Minister highlighted his legacy as a guiding force for inclusive development.

Static Information

1. Jyotirao Phule (1827–1890)

- Prominent social reformer from Maharashtra.
- Pioneer of women's education in India.
- Along with Savitribai Phule, started the first girls' school in Pune (1848).

2. Key Contributions

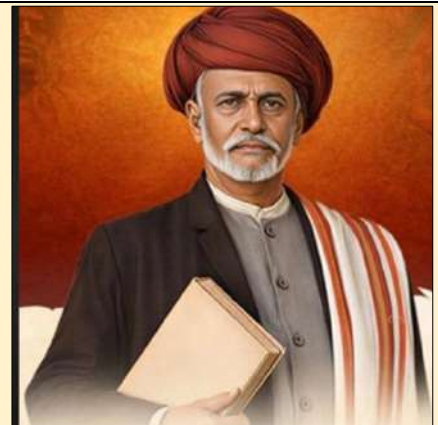
- Founded Satyashodhak Samaj in 1873 to promote equality.
- Opposed caste discrimination and worked for Dalit rights.
- Advocated widow remarriage and education for marginalized sections.

3. Important Works

- Book: *Gulamgiri* (Slavery), criticizing caste oppression.

4. Relevance Today

- His ideas influence policies related to social justice, education, and inclusive governance.



MCQ

Q1. With reference to Jyotirao Phule, consider the following statements:

1. He founded the Satyashodhak Samaj to promote social equality.
2. He was associated with the promotion of women's education in India.
3. He served as the first Governor-General of independent India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A. 1 and 2 only

Source

- PIB (Press Information Bureau)
- Government of India

Cheetah Birth at Kuno National Park

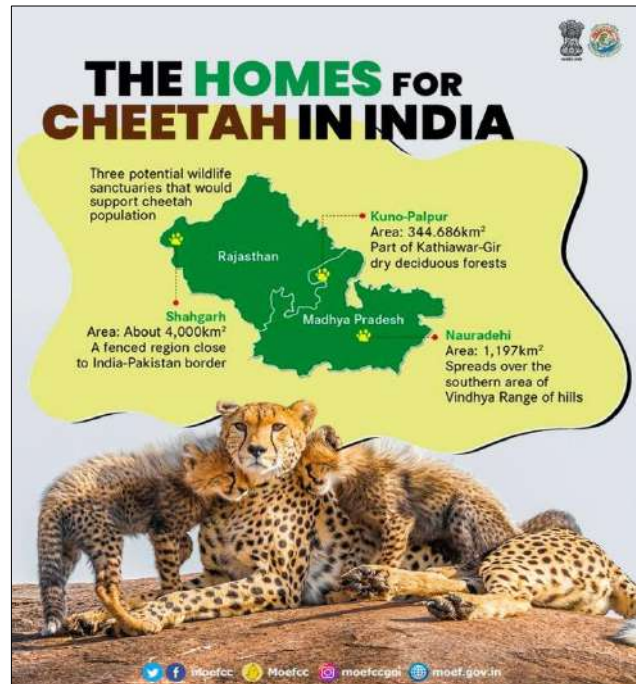
News

A female cheetah at Kuno National Park has given birth to four cubs in the wild, marking a significant milestone in India's cheetah reintroduction programme.

This is the first successful wild birth by an Indian-born cheetah, indicating adaptation to natural conditions.

Facts

1. The birth occurred at Kuno National Park.
2. The mother cheetah, Gamini, is Indian-born and around 25 months old.
3. This is the first instance of a wild birth since the cheetah reintroduction programme began in 2022.
4. Four cubs were born in natural habitat conditions, not in captivity.
5. The event reflects successful adaptation and survival of cheetahs in Indian ecosystems.
6. The cheetah reintroduction project involves translocation from African countries like Namibia and South Africa.



Static Information

1. Cheetah Reintroduction Project (India)

- Launched in 2022 to reintroduce cheetahs after extinction in India (declared extinct in 1952).
- Implemented under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- First batch of cheetahs brought from Namibia, followed by South Africa.

2. Kuno National Park

- Located in Madhya Pradesh.
- Selected as the primary site for cheetah reintroduction.
- Originally prepared as a potential habitat for Asiatic lions.

3. Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*)

- Fastest land animal.
- IUCN Status: Vulnerable.
- Subspecies introduced in India: African cheetah.

MCQ

Q1. With reference to the Cheetah Reintroduction Programme in India, consider the following statements:

1. Cheetahs were declared extinct in India in 1952.
2. Kuno National Park is the primary site for their reintroduction.
3. The introduced cheetahs belong to the Asiatic subspecies.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A. 1 and 2 only

Source

1. PIB (Press Information Bureau)
2. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

SADHANA Saptah 2026 under Mission Karmayogi

News

SĀDHANA Saptah 2026, observed under Mission Karmayogi, recorded over 3.18 crore course completions, reflecting a significant rise in capacity building and digital learning among government officials.

Frontline workers contributed nearly 80% of total participation, indicating strong grassroots engagement.



Facts

1. SĀDHANA Saptah 2026 is a National Learning Week initiative under Mission Karmayogi.
2. Over 3.18 crore course completions were recorded across departments.
3. States and Union Territories contributed nearly 80% of total learning engagement.
4. Frontline workers completed over 1.48 crore courses (~47% participation).
5. Around 46.9 lakh employees completed at least one course; ~33.44 lakh completed more than four courses.
6. Focus areas included governance, digital skills, public service delivery, and capacity building.
7. Over 1500 training institutions and multiple departments participated.
8. The initiative emphasized continuous learning, competency-driven training, and citizen-centric administration.

Static Information

1. Mission Karmayogi (National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building)

- Launched by Government of India to reform civil services training.
- Focus: Role-based, competency-driven training instead of rule-based.
- Covers all levels from frontline workers to senior officials.
- Aims to create a future-ready, citizen-centric bureaucracy.

2. iGOT Karmayogi Platform

- Digital learning platform under Mission Karmayogi.
- Provides anytime-anywhere learning for government employees.
- Hosts courses from national and international institutions.

3. SĀDHANA Sapath

- Annual learning initiative promoting continuous skill development.
- Encourages participation of civil servants in structured training programs.

MCQ

Q1. With reference to Mission Karmayogi, consider the following statements:

1. It aims to shift civil services training from rule-based to competency-driven learning.
2. It is implemented through the iGOT Karmayogi digital platform.
3. It applies only to Group A officers of the central government.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A. 1 and 2 only

Source

- PIB (Press Information Bureau)
- Government of India

Student Notes

Indus River Dolphin

News

Recent conservation efforts such as protected reserves, citizen science initiatives, and habitat protection are enhancing the survival prospects of the Indus River Dolphin in India.

These measures indicate gradual improvement in the population of this endangered freshwater species.

Facts

1. Indus River Dolphin is one of the rarest freshwater mammals in the world.
2. It is functionally blind and depends entirely on echolocation for navigation and hunting.
3. Found mainly in the Indus River system, with a small population in India's Beas River.
4. Unique behavior: swims predominantly on its side, rare among cetaceans.
5. Diet includes fish and crustaceans such as prawns, catfish, and gobies.
6. Major threats: water pollution, poaching, and habitat fragmentation due to barrages and dams.
7. Classified as Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List.



Static Information

1. Scientific Name: *Platanista minor*
2. Family: Platanistidae (river dolphins)
3. Habitat: Freshwater rivers with high turbidity
4. Distribution: Indus River (Pakistan) and Beas River (India)
5. Legal Protection in India: Schedule I under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972
6. Adaptation: Reduced eyesight; uses echolocation (biosonar)
7. Conservation Measures: Protected river stretches, anti-poaching efforts, awareness programs
8. Importance: Indicator species of river ecosystem health

MCQ

Q1. With reference to the Indus River Dolphin, consider the following statements:

1. It is a freshwater species found in river systems.
2. It relies on echolocation due to poor eyesight.
3. It is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
B. 2 and 3 only
C. 1 only
D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A. 1 and 2 only

Source

- Down To Earth (DTE)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature

IMD Forecast Projects 'Below Normal' Monsoon

News

1. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has projected a **below-normal southwest monsoon** for 2026.
2. The forecast is influenced by the presence of **El Niño conditions**, which are generally associated with weaker rainfall in India.

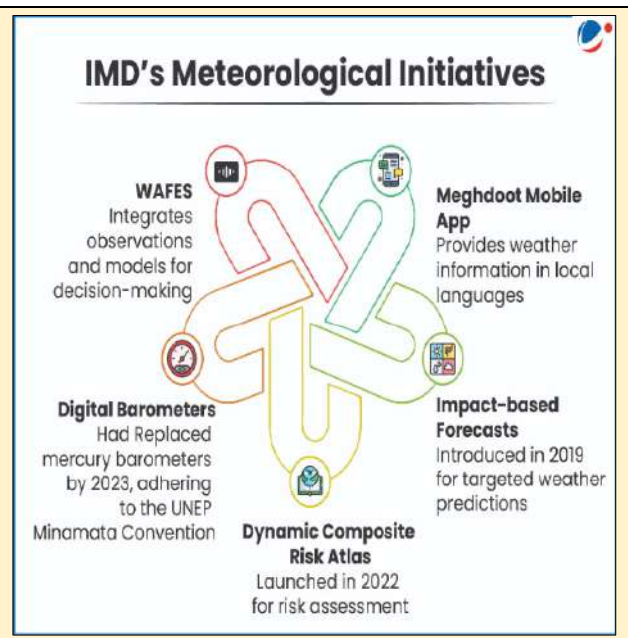
Facts

1. **El Niño Impact:**
 - Occurred 16 times since 1960; in 9 cases, it led to reduced monsoon rainfall.
2. **Counteracting Factors:**
 - **Positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)** may develop later in the monsoon season.
 - **Lower snow cover** in the Northern Hemisphere (Jan–March 2026) can enhance rainfall.

Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD):	Recent Trends:	Forecast Reliability:
➤ Refers to temperature differences between: ✓ Western Indian Ocean (near Africa) ✓ Eastern Indian Ocean (near Indonesia) ➤ A positive IOD generally brings more rainfall to India.	1. 2024 and 2025 witnessed above-normal rainfall. 2. Except 2023, India has received normal or excess rainfall since 2020.	➤ IMD's April forecasts usually hold, but deviations have occurred: ✓ 2002: Predicted normal → severe drought (~81% of LPA) ✓ 2009: Predicted near-normal → ~77% of LPA ✓ 2018: Predicted ~97% → actual ~91% (below normal)

Static Information

1. **IMD (India Meteorological Department):**
 - Nodal agency for weather forecasting in India.
2. **Monsoon Classification (based on LPA – Long Period Average):**
 - Normal: 96%–104% of LPA
 - Below Normal: 90%–96%
 - Deficient (Drought-like): < 90%
3. **El Niño:**
 - Periodic warming of central and eastern Pacific Ocean.
 - Weakens Indian monsoon circulation.
4. **IOD (Indian Ocean Dipole):**
 - Climatic phenomenon affecting rainfall variability in India.



MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. El Niño always leads to drought in India.
2. A positive Indian Ocean Dipole can offset the impact of El Niño.

3. Rainfall less than 90% of LPA is classified as deficient.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: B. 2 and 3 only

Source: The Hindu Newspaper Article on IMD Monsoon Forecast (2026)

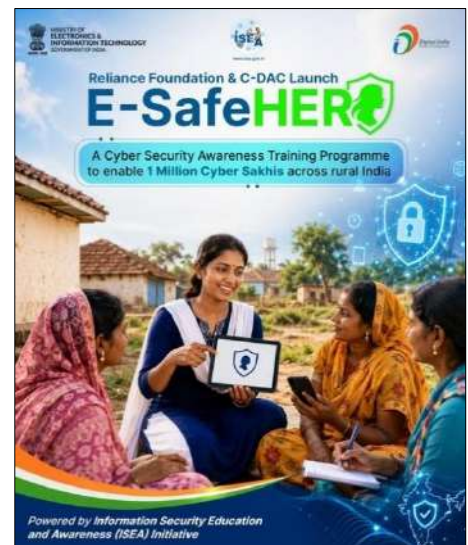
E-SAFEHER CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS PROGRAMME

News

1. The **e-SafeHER initiative** has been launched to promote **cybersecurity awareness among women in rural India**.
2. It aims to train **one million "Cyber Sakhis"** over three years through a community-based model.

Facts

1. **Launched by:**
 - Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
 - Implemented by **C-DAC Hyderabad** and **Reliance Foundation**
2. **Based on Programme:**
 - Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) Programme
3. **Objective:**
 - Build a **gender-responsive, community-led cybersecurity model**
4. **Target Group:**
 - Rural women across India
5. **Key Features:**
 - Training women as **Cyber Sakhis (digital safety ambassadors)**
 - Focus on **safe digital practices, online financial safety, and privacy**
 - Promotes **digital inclusion and empowerment**
6. **Implementation Strategy:**
 - Training through community networks and grassroots outreach
 - Integration with existing digital literacy initiatives
7. **Long-term Vision:**
 - Enable women to act as **change agents in digital ecosystems**



Static Information

1. **MeitY:**
 - Nodal ministry for IT, electronics, and digital governance in India
2. **C-DAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing):**
 - Premier R&D organization under MeitY
3. **ISEA Programme:**

- Focuses on **information security awareness, training, and education**

4. **Cyber Sakhi Concept:**

- Women trained to spread **cyber hygiene and digital literacy** at grassroots level

MCQ

Q1. With reference to the e-SafeHER initiative, consider the following statements:

1. It aims to train one million Cyber Sakhis across rural India.
2. It is implemented solely by private organizations.
3. It is part of the ISEA Programme under MeitY.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A. 1 and 3 only

Source: PIB (Press Information Bureau), Government of India

Pm Pays Homage to The Martyrs Of Jallianwala Bagh

News

1. The Prime Minister paid tribute to the martyrs of the **Jallianwala Bagh massacre** on its anniversary.
2. He highlighted their sacrifice as a symbol of courage and shared a **Sanskrit Subhashitam** emphasizing social harmony and nation-building.

Facts

1. **Tribute by PM:**

- Honoured the victims for their **sacrifice and indomitable spirit**.

2. **Message Shared:**

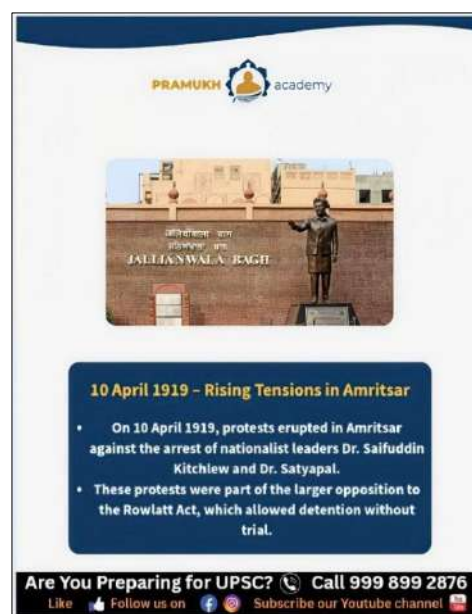
- Encouraged citizens to:
 - ✓ Promote **positive and benevolent forces** in society
 - ✓ Resist **division, injustice, and negativity**

3. **Sanskrit Subhashitam:**

- Focuses on:
 - ✓ Nation-building
 - ✓ Social responsibility
 - ✓ Ethical conduct

4. **Medium:**

- Message shared via social media platform (X)



Static Information

1. **Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (1919):**

- Took place on **13 April 1919** in Amritsar, Punjab
- British officer **General Dyer** ordered firing on a peaceful gathering
- Hundreds of unarmed civilians were killed

2. Significance:

- Marked a turning point in India's freedom struggle
- Intensified anti-colonial sentiments

3. Jallianwala Bagh Memorial:

- Located in **Amritsar, Punjab**
- Maintained as a national memorial

MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Jallianwala Bagh massacre:

1. It occurred in 1919 in Amritsar.
2. It was ordered by General Dyer.
3. It strengthened British support among Indians.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A. 1 and 2 only

Source

- PIB (Press Information Bureau), Government of India

Exercise Dustlik –

News

Recently, a contingent of the Indian Army has departed to participate in the 7th edition of Exercise Dustlik.

About Exercise Dustlik

1. Exercise Dustlik is a **joint military drill between India and Uzbekistan**.
2. It is conducted **annually**, with the venue alternating between the two countries.
3. **Participating Forces:** The exercise primarily involves a battalion from the **Indian Army's Mahar Regiment**, along with **15 personnel from the Indian Air Force**.
4. **Objective:** The main goal is to **strengthen military cooperation** and improve the ability to conduct **joint operations in semi-mountainous terrain**.
5. It also aims to develop a **common operational framework** between both nations' command and control systems for better planning and execution of joint missions.
6. **Key Activities Include:**
 - Land navigation exercises
 - Strike operations on enemy bases
 - Capturing enemy-held territories
7. **Benefits of the Exercise:**



- Sharing best practices related to **tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs)**
- Enhancing **interoperability**, coordination, and operational synergy between the two forces

Kali Tiger Reserve –

News

The Union Ministry of Environment has proposed the creation of an **Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ)** around Karnataka's Kali Tiger Reserve, covering an area of **663.32 sq km**.

About Kali Tiger Reserve

1. The reserve is situated in the **central part of Uttara Kannada (North Canara) district** in Karnataka.
2. It comprises two major protected areas:
 - **Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary (475.018 sq km)**
 - **Anshi National Park (339.866 sq km)**
 - These adjoining areas together form a **continuous protected landscape** within the ecologically significant **Western Ghats**.
3. The reserve shares its **northern boundary with Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary**, which is further linked to **Radhanagari and Koyna Wildlife Sanctuaries** in Maharashtra.
4. On the **western side**, it is connected to **five protected areas in Goa**.
5. **Terrain:** The landscape is highly varied, including **rolling hills, steep escarpments, river valleys, and plateaus**.
6. **River System:** The **Kali River**, a major water source for Uttara Kannada, flows through the reserve and gives it its name.
7. **Vegetation:** The forest cover consists of **semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests**, along with patches of **bamboo and grasslands**.
8. **Flora:** The reserve has rich plant diversity, including **teak, silver oak, eucalyptus**, and several **medicinal plants**.
9. **Fauna:**
 - Key animals include **tigers, leopards, elephants, bison, wild dogs, sambar, spotted deer, sloth bears, wild boars, Hanuman langurs, and bonnet macaques**.
 - It supports one of the **largest populations of Great Indian Hornbills** in the Western Ghats.
 - The reserve is also known for the presence of **rare black panthers**.



Vitamin D –

News

A recent study indicates that **vitamin D levels during your 30s and 40s** play a crucial role in determining **brain health and aging in later decades (60s and 70s)**.

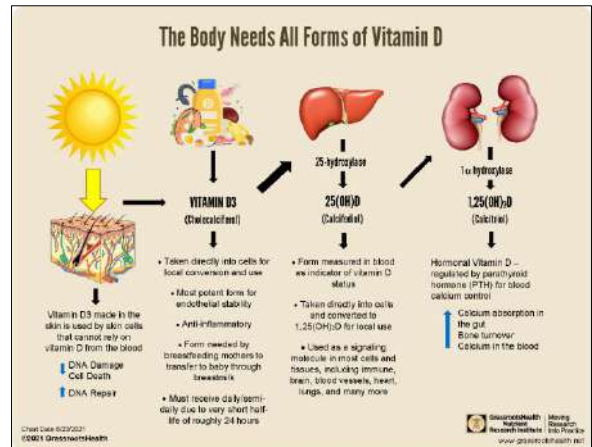
About Vitamin D

1. **Vitamin D (calciferol)** is a **fat-soluble vitamin** found naturally in a limited number of foods, added to others, and also available as a supplement.
2. The body can **produce vitamin D naturally** when the skin is exposed to **ultraviolet (UV) rays from sunlight**.

- During periods of adequate sunlight, vitamin D is **stored in body fat** and released later when sunlight exposure is insufficient.
- Only a few foods naturally contain vitamin D. Most dietary intake comes from **fortified foods** such as **milk, cereals, and yogurt**.
- Natural sources of vitamin D include **egg yolks, fatty fish, and liver**.
- The **daily requirement of vitamin D varies with age**.

Why is Vitamin D Important?

- It **enhances calcium absorption** and helps maintain proper levels of **calcium and phosphorus**, which are essential for **healthy bones and teeth**.
- A deficiency can lead to **weak, brittle, or misshapen bones**.
- Vitamin D also plays multiple roles, including:
 - Reducing **inflammation**
 - Supporting **cell growth**
 - Aiding **neuromuscular and immune functions**
 - Regulating **glucose metabolism**



Vitamin D Deficiency

- In **children**, deficiency leads to **rickets**, causing bones to become **soft, weak, deformed, and painful**.
- In **teens and adults**, it results in **osteomalacia**, which causes **bone pain and muscle weakness**.
- Deficiency is more common among:
 - Individuals with **higher melanin levels (darker skin)**
 - People who wear clothing that **limits skin exposure to sunlight**

Can Vitamin D be Harmful?

- Excessive levels of vitamin D in the blood may cause:
 - **Nausea, vomiting, muscle weakness, confusion**
 - **Loss of appetite, dehydration, frequent urination, and kidney stones**
- Extremely high levels can lead to serious complications such as:
 - **Kidney failure**
 - **Irregular heartbeat**
 - **Even death**

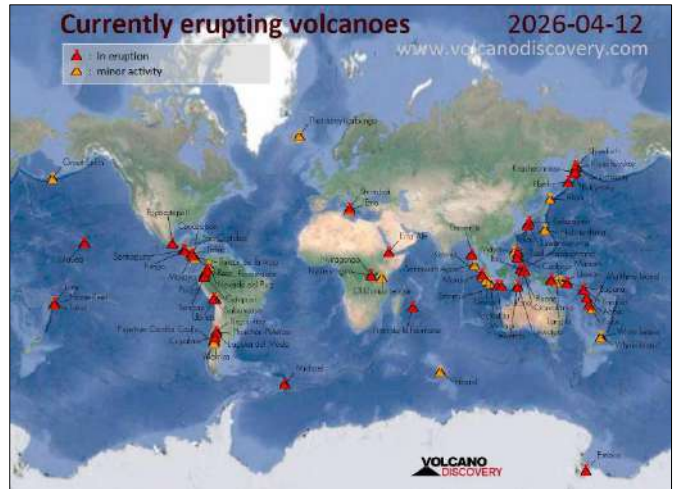
Student Notes

Sakurajima Volcano: Latest Update

Recently, Sakurajima volcano erupted, releasing massive clouds of ash that rose several kilometres into the atmosphere.

About Sakurajima Volcano

1. **Location:** Situated at the southern end of Kyushu Island, close to Kagoshima city in Japan.
2. It is among the most active volcanoes in Japan, with frequent eruptions of varying intensity.
3. Sakurajima is a **stratovolcano**, formed by layers of lava and ash.
4. It lies along a **convergent plate boundary**.
5. The volcano is **andesitic**, meaning its magma is rich in gas and highly viscous. It is located on the southern rim of the Aira caldera.
6. It consists of two main peaks: **Kitadake** (north peak) and **Minamidake** (south peak).
7. Until 1914, Sakurajima was an island. A major eruption that year deposited enough material to connect it to the Osumi Peninsula.



Key Facts about Stratovolcanoes

1. Also called **composite volcanoes**, they are tall, steep, and cone-shaped.
2. Unlike shield volcanoes, they have sharper and higher peaks.
3. They are built from alternating layers of ash and lava.
4. Their magma is thick (viscous) and contains trapped gases, leading to explosive eruptions.
5. These volcanoes are typically found at **tectonic plate boundaries**.
6. In such regions, denser oceanic plates subduct beneath continental plates.
7. The subducted plate melts, forming magma that rises through cracks to the surface.
8. Stratovolcanoes make up about **60% of the world's individual volcanoes**.

Source: The Hindu

e-SafeHER Initiative: Latest Update

Recently, C-DAC Hyderabad, a scientific body under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, in collaboration with the Reliance Foundation, launched the **e-SafeHER initiative**.

About e-SafeHER Initiative

1. It is a **cybersecurity awareness and training programme** aimed at empowering one million women in rural India.
2. The initiative focuses on enhancing **last-mile cybersecurity awareness**, especially among rural women who are increasingly using digital platforms for financial transactions, livelihoods, and essential services.
3. It is implemented under MeitY's **Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) Programme**, with C-DAC Hyderabad as the executing agency.
4. **Target & Timeline:** The programme aims to train one million "Cyber Sakhis" in rural areas over a period of three years.

Implementation Strategy

1. **C-DAC** will be responsible for developing, localizing, and continuously upgrading cybersecurity training content under the ISEA project.
2. **Reliance Foundation** will utilize its strong grassroots network and women-centric initiatives to deliver the programme through a peer-led, community-based model.
3. The initiative will initially be rolled out in **Madhya Pradesh and Odisha**, followed by phased expansion across the country.

Key Facts about Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA)

1. It is a flagship initiative of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India**.
2. Launched in **2005**, the programme is currently in its **third phase (since October 2023)**.
3. **Objective:** To develop skilled human resources in information security and promote widespread awareness of cyber hygiene and cybersecurity.
4. **Goal:** To build a safe, secure, and trusted cyberspace through capacity building and awareness.

Source: PIB

INS Dhruv:

Recently, the Indian Navy deployed its specialised missile-tracking and ocean-surveillance vessel, **INS Dhruv**, in the Arabian Sea just ahead of Pakistan's announced live-firing exercise.

About INS Dhruv

1. It is India's first **dedicated nuclear missile tracking and ocean surveillance ship**.
2. The vessel was commissioned on **10 September 2021**.
3. It has been constructed by **Hindustan Shipyard Limited** in collaboration with **DRDO** and **NTRO**.

Functions of INS Dhruv

1. It can **map the ocean floor**, aiding in submarine detection and maritime research.
2. It serves as a **strategic and highly classified asset** for tracking ballistic missiles and collecting **electronic intelligence (ELINT)**.
3. The ship provides **early warning of missile threats** and supports India's missile defence systems by analysing trajectory and performance data.
4. It is jointly operated by the **Indian Navy, NTRO, and DRDO**.

Features of INS Dhruv

1. **Displacement:** Approximately **15,000 tonnes**.
2. **Propulsion:** Powered by two diesel engines in a **CODAD configuration**, each generating about **9000 kW**.
3. **Speed:** Capable of reaching a **maximum speed of around 21 knots**.
4. Equipped with advanced **X-band and S-band AESA radars**, enabling tracking of ballistic missiles and satellites over long distances.



5. Capable of monitoring **missile re-entry vehicles**, differentiating payload signatures, and generating data for missile defence calibration, countermeasures, and strategic warning systems.

Source: DSA

MARCH TRADE DEFICIT EASES; EXPORT GROWTH MODERATE IN FY26

NEWS

India's merchandise trade deficit narrowed to around \$21 billion in March 2026.

Goods exports grew marginally by about 1% in FY26 despite a decline in March exports and imports, largely influenced by global trade disruptions and regional conflicts.

FACTS

1. India's **goods exports (March 2026)**: \$38.92 billion (↓ 7.4% YoY)
2. India's **imports (March 2026)**: \$59.59 billion (↓ 6.9% YoY)
3. **Trade deficit (March 2026)**: ~\$20.67–21 billion (slight improvement)
4. **FY26 total exports**: ~\$441 billion (↑ 1%)
5. **FY26 total imports**: ~\$974 billion (↑ ~6.7%)
6. **Total trade (exports + imports)**: Crossed \$860 billion
7. **Key reason for decline**:
 - West Asia geopolitical crisis
 - Supply chain disruptions
 - Increase in energy prices
8. **Sectoral performance**:
 - Labour-intensive sectors (textiles, gems & jewellery) declined sharply
 - Engineering goods showed marginal growth (~1%)
9. **Country-wise trends**:
 - Imports from UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iraq declined significantly
 - Exports to UAE and Saudi Arabia also fell sharply
 - Exports to the US declined (~20%)
10. **Major trading partner shift**:
 - China became India's largest trading partner in FY26
 - Bilateral trade with China: ~\$151.1 billion
 - Trade deficit with China widened to ~\$112.16 billion

STATIC INFORMATION

1. **Trade Deficit**: When a country's imports exceed its exports
2. **Balance of Trade (BoT)**: Difference between exports and imports of goods
3. **Current Account Deficit (CAD)**: Broader measure including services and transfers

1. Key export sectors of India:

- Engineering goods
- Petroleum products
- Gems & jewellery
- Pharmaceuticals
- Textiles

1. Key import items:

- Crude oil
- Gold
- Electronics
- Machinery

Important organizations:

1. Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO)
2. Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC)

MCQ

Q.1 Which of the following factors contributed significantly to the decline in India's exports in March 2026?

- A. Increase in domestic demand
- B. West Asia geopolitical crisis
- C. Rise in agricultural productivity
- D. Appreciation of Indian Rupee

Answer: B. West Asia geopolitical crisis

SOURCE: Indian Express

WPI INFLATION RISES TO 38-MONTH HIGH OF 3.88%**NEWS**

India's Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation rose to 3.88% in March 2026, marking a 38-month high. The rise was driven mainly by higher fuel, power, and manufactured goods prices amid global commodity pressures and the West Asia crisis.

FACTS

1. **March 2025:** 2.25%
2. Inflation has **increased for 5 consecutive months**
3. **Key drivers:**
 - Surge in **fuel and power prices**
 - Increase in **manufactured product prices**
 - Global commodity price rise due to geopolitical tensions
4. **Fuel & Power inflation:**
 - Rose to **1.05% in March**
 - Compared to **-3.78% (deflation) in February**
5. **Food prices:**
 - Showed some softening, but impact offset by rising core inflation
6. **Core inflation trend:**
 - Indicates **broad-based price rise beyond food items**

STATIC INFORMATION

1. **Wholesale Price Index (WPI):**
 - Measures price changes at the **wholesale/producer level**
 - Released by the **Office of Economic Adviser, Ministry of Commerce & Industry**
2. **Base Year of WPI: 2011–12 Major components of WPI:**
 - Primary Articles (weight ~22.6%)

- Fuel & Power (~13.2%)
- Manufactured Products (~64.2%)

3. WPI vs CPI:

- WPI → Producer prices
- CPI → Consumer prices (used by RBI for monetary policy)

4. Inflation types:

- **Headline inflation:** Overall price rise
- **Core inflation:** Excludes food and fuel (more stable indicator)

Context	WPI	CPI
Definition	Amounts to the average change in prices of commodities at the wholesale level.	Indicates the average change in the prices of commodities at the retail level.
Publishing office	Office of Economic Advisor (Ministry of Commerce & Industry)	National Statistical office
Commodities	Goods only	Goods and Services both
Inflation Measurement	First stage of a transaction	Final stage of a transaction
Prices paid by	Manufacturers and wholesalers	Consumers
Types of Commodities covered	Manufacturing inputs and intermediate goods like minerals, machinery basic metals, etc.	Education, communication, transportation, recreation, apparel, foods and beverages, housing and medical care
Base Year	2011-12	2012 Note: Base Year to be revised.

MCQ

Q.1 Which of the following best explains the recent rise in WPI inflation in India?

- A. Decline in fuel prices
- B. Increase in food grain production
- C. Rise in fuel, power, and manufactured goods prices
- D. Reduction in global commodity prices

Answer: C. Rise in fuel, power, and manufactured goods prices

SOURCE: Reuters

HIMACHAL DIWAS AND PRIME MINISTER'S GREETINGS

NEWS

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, extended greetings to the people of Himachal Pradesh on the occasion of Himachal Diwas (April 15).

He highlighted the state's rich cultural heritage, traditions, and the qualities of its people such as diligence, humility, and sense of duty.

FACTS

1. **Event:** Himachal Diwas celebrated on **15 April every year**
2. PM emphasized:
 - Rich traditions and cultural heritage
 - Identity as "**Devbhoomi**" (**Land of Gods**)
 - Hardworking and humble nature of people
3. The message was shared via social media platform **X (formerly Twitter)**

STATIC INFORMATION

1. Himachal Pradesh Formation:

- Formed on **15 April 1948** as a Chief Commissioner's Province
- Became a **full-fledged state on 25 January 1971**

2. Capital:

- Shimla (Summer)
- Dharamshala (Winter)

HIMACHAL PRADESH MAP



3. Geographical features:

- Located in the **Western Himalayas**
- Known for rivers: Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab

4. Nickname:

- “Devbhoomi” due to numerous temples

5. Important festivals:

- Kullu Dussehra
- Losar Festival

MCQ

Q.1 Himachal Diwas is celebrated to commemorate which of the following?

- A. Statehood of Himachal Pradesh in 1971
- B. Formation of Himachal Pradesh as a province in 1948
- C. Merger of princely states in Punjab Hills
- D. Adoption of Himachal Pradesh Constitution

Answer: B. Formation of Himachal Pradesh as a province in 1948

SOURCE

Press Information Bureau (PIB), April 15, 2026

NEW CHIEF MINISTER AND DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTERS SWORN IN BIHAR

NEWS

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, congratulated Samrat Choudhary on taking oath as the Chief Minister of Bihar.

He also congratulated Vijay Kumar Choudhary and Bijendra Prasad Yadav on being sworn in as Deputy Chief Ministers.

STATIC INFORMATION

- **Governor of a State** appoints the Chief Minister

In India, a **chief minister** is the head of government in each of the twenty-eight states and three union territories. They are responsible for leading the state government, overseeing governance, and implementing policies. The chief minister is appointed by the governor, who invites the party with the majority in the state legislative assembly to form the government.

1. Chief Minister is usually:
 - Leader of the majority party/coalition in State Assembly
2. **Council of Ministers:**
 - Headed by Chief Minister
 - Collectively responsible to Legislative Assembly
3. **Bihar:**
 - Capital: Patna
 - Legislature: Bicameral (Legislative Assembly + Legislative Council)
4. **Articles related to State Executive:**
 - Article 163: Council of Ministers to aid and advise Governor
 - Article 164: Appointment of Chief Minister and Ministers

MCQ

Q.1 Who appoints the Chief Minister of a state in India?

- A. President of India
- B. Prime Minister
- C. Governor
- D. Chief Justice of High Court

Answer: C. Governor

SOURCE: Press Information Bureau (PIB),

Tibetan Antelope (Chiru)

News

A court in New Delhi has convicted an art gallery owner for attempting to illegally export Shahtoosh shawls, which are made from the hair of the Tibetan antelope.

Facts

1. The Tibetan antelope (Chiru) is a medium-sized antelope species.
2. **Physical Features:**
 - Males are larger than females.
 - Males have horns and black leg stripes, which females lack.
 - Their fur consists of long guard hair and a soft, silky undercoat.
3. **Habitat:**
 - Found in alpine regions, montane valleys, and cold steppe areas with sparse vegetation.
4. **Distribution:**
 - Primarily found in China (Tibet, Xinjiang, Qinghai).
 - Small populations exist in Changthang region of Ladakh, India.
5. **Migration:**
 - A migratory species, traveling up to 400 km between seasonal habitats.
6. **Diet:**
 - Herbivorous; feeds on grasses, herbs, shrubs, and sedges.

Static Information**IUCN Status:** Near Threatened

1. **CITES:** Appendix I
2. **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I

What are Shahtoosh Shawls?

1. Made from the fine underfur of the Tibetan antelope.
2. Known for exceptional softness and warmth.
3. Considered a luxury product.
4. Trade is banned globally since 1975 under CITES.

MCQ

Q.1 Shahtoosh shawls are obtained from which animal?

- A. Yak
- B. Tibetan Antelope
- C. Cashmere Goat
- D. Himalayan Tahr

Answer: B. Tibetan Antelope**Source: PIB****Painted Leopard Gecko –****News**

A rare nocturnal reptile, the Painted Leopard Gecko, was recently spotted at Dilimili railway station in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, drawing attention from forest authorities.

Facts

1. The Painted Leopard Gecko is a **colourful terrestrial gecko species**.
2. **Scientific Name:** *Eublepharis pictus*
3. **Taxonomy:**
 - Belongs to the genus *Eublepharis* in the family Eublepharidae.
 - The genus includes species distributed across North & Central America, Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and the Malayan Archipelago.
 - First described in 1827; several species are found in India.

**Habitat & Distribution**

1. Scientifically described in **2022**.
2. Found in the **Eastern Ghats** (Andhra Pradesh and Odisha).
3. The **Brahmani River** acts as a geographical barrier separating it from the East Indian Leopard Gecko.
4. Prefers **dry evergreen forests** mixed with scrub and meadows.

Key Features

1. Length: About **11.7 cm (4.6 inches)**.
2. Colour: Typically **brown and yellow**.
3. Tail: Distinct with **black and white bands**.
4. Has **large, pointed scales**.
5. **Behaviour:**
 - Strictly **nocturnal**.
 - Actively forages after dusk.
 - Uses tongue (licking surfaces) as a sensory tool.
 - Hides during the day in burrows, under rocks, or dense vegetation.

MCQ**Q. Painted Leopard Gecko (*Eublepharis pictus*) was recently discovered in which region?**

- A. Western Ghats
- B. Eastern Ghats
- C. Himalayas
- D. Thar Desert

Answer: B. Eastern Ghats

Source: ETVB

Have Ratified Ilo Treaties On Forced Labour: India On Ustr Probe Charges

News

1. India has responded to the U.S. (USTR) investigations under Section 301 regarding “forced labour” and “structural excess capacity.”
2. India defended its position, stating that its legal framework aligns with International Labour Organization (ILO) standards and that trade surplus is a natural outcome of global trade dynamics.

Facts

1. **ILO Compliance:**
 - India has ratified:
 - ✓ Forced Labour Convention, 1930
 - ✓ Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957
2. **India's Argument:**
 - Trade surplus arises naturally from international trade.
 - India's economy is largely **domestic demand-driven**.
 - Merchandise export-to-GDP ratio is around **12%**, indicating limited export dependence.
3. **Against USTR Claims:**
 - India rejected the claim of “structural excess capacity” in manufacturing.
 - It argued that sector-specific surpluses do not imply systemic overcapacity.
4. **Trade Data:**
 - Indian goods account for only **3.1% of total U.S. imports**.
 - India's share is relatively small compared to other major trading partners.
5. **U.S. Position:**
 - USTR claims that excess manufacturing capacity harms U.S. efforts to reshore supply chains and generate domestic employment.



Static Information

1. **Section 301 (U.S. Trade Act of 1974):**
 - Allows the U.S. to investigate and act against unfair trade practices by other countries.
2. **International Labour Organization (ILO):**
 - A UN agency that sets international labour standards.
 - Focus areas: labour rights, decent work, social protection.

The ILO is a United Nations specialized agency dedicated to promoting social justice, labor rights, and decent work worldwide.

Overview

The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** is a UN agency established in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles, originally as part of the League of Nations, and became the first UN specialized agency in 1946. Its mission is to advance **social and economic justice** by setting international labor standards, promoting human and labor rights, and fostering decent work conditions globally. The ILO was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1969** for its contributions to peace through social justice.

MCQ

Q.1 Which of the following conventions related to forced labour has India ratified?

1. Forced Labour Convention, 1930
2. Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957
3. Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951

Options:

- 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

Source

- The Indian Express, April 16

FIRST-EVER ASSESSMENT OF BAT CONSERVATION FLAGS THREATS AND DATA GAPS IN INDIA

News

- India's first national assessment of bat conservation, *State of India's Bats (2024–25)*, highlights serious threats and major data gaps.
- The report stresses the need for urgent research and conservation measures due to ecological importance and rising threats to bat species.

Facts

- 1. Bat Diversity in India:**
 - Around **135 bat species** recorded.
 - **16 species** are **endemic** to India.
- 2. Conservation Status:**
 - **7 species** are listed as threatened by IUCN.
 - **35 species** are either **data deficient or not assessed**.
- 3. Key Threats:**
 - Urbanisation and deforestation
 - Land-use changes
 - Climate change
 - Mining and hunting (e.g., Khasian leaf-nosed bat in Meghalaya)

- Infrastructure development (including renewable energy projects)

4. Data Gaps:

- Lack of scientific research and ecological data
- Difficulty in obtaining research permits

5. Ecological Importance of Bats:

- Pollination of plants
- Seed dispersal
- Natural pest control (reducing crop damage)
- Soil nutrient enrichment through droppings

6. Health Dimension:

- Bats are linked to **zoonotic diseases**, but evidence suggests spillovers occur either directly or via intermediate hosts.
- COVID-19 increased stigma against bats despite their ecological benefits.

MCQ**Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding bats in India:**

1. All bat species in India have been assessed by IUCN.
2. Bats contribute to pollination and pest control.
3. Some bat species in India are endemic.

Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: B. 2 and 3 only

Source: The Indian Express

Student Notes

CAQM INVOKES GRAP STAGE-I IN DELHI-NCR AS AIR QUALITY FALLS TO 'POOR' CATEGORY

News

1. The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has invoked **Stage-I of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** across Delhi-NCR.
2. This step was taken after the Air Quality Index (AQI) entered the '**Poor**' category (201–300) due to unfavorable meteorological conditions.

Facts

1. **Reason for Activation:**
 - Rising AQI levels (around 226)
 - Unfavorable weather conditions (low wind speed, stagnant air)
2. **Forecast:**
 - AQI likely to remain in the '**Poor**' category in the coming days as per IMD and IITM projections.
3. **GRAP Stage-I Measures (**
 - Strict dust control at **construction and demolition (C&D) sites**
 - Mandatory registration of projects on monitoring portals
 - Regular removal of **municipal solid waste and C&D waste**
 - **Water sprinkling and anti-smog guns** for dust suppression
 - Ban on **open burning of biomass and waste**
 - Enforcement of **PUC (Pollution Under Control) norms** for vehicles
 - Action against **polluting industries and brick kilns**
 - Ensuring use of **clean fuels** in industries and eateries
 - Regulation of **diesel generator (DG) sets**
 - Increased **public transport services** and traffic management
4. **Governance:**
 - Measures implemented by agencies like CPCB, DPCC, and state pollution control boards.



Static Information

1. Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM):

- Statutory body formed in 2021 for air quality management in Delhi-NCR and nearby areas.

2. GRAP (Graded Response Action Plan):

- A set of **graded, emergency measures** implemented based on AQI levels.

AQI Categories in India:

1. IMD (India Meteorological Department):

- Provides weather forecasts affecting pollution dispersion.

SMART AIR AQI (Air Quality Index)  India			
Breather	Air Quality	AQI	PM2.5 (µg/m3)
	Good	0-50	0-30
	Satisfactory	51-100	30-60
	Moderate	101-200	60-90
	Poor	201-300	90-120
	Very poor	301-400	120-250
	Severe	401-500	>250

2. IITM (Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology): Provides air quality forecasting (SAFAR system).

MCQ

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding GRAP:

1. It is implemented only when AQI reaches 'Severe' category.
2. It includes graded measures based on pollution levels.
3. It is applicable only to Delhi city.

Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: B. 2 only

Source

- PIB / CAQM Release (April 2026)

FEDERAL CHANCELLOR OF AUSTRIA CALLS ON PRESIDENT OF INDIA

News

1. The Federal Chancellor of Austria, Christian Stocker, called on the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, at Rashtrapati Bhavan on April 16, 2026.
2. The visit aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and expanding cooperation in emerging sectors.

Facts

1. Diplomatic Relations:

- India and Austria share friendly relations based on democracy and rule of law.
- 2024 marked **75 years of diplomatic relations** between the two countries.

2. Recent Developments:

- Visit follows progress in the **India–EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** negotiations.
- Narendra Modi's earlier visit to Austria boosted ties.

3. Areas of Cooperation:

- Innovation and technology
- Renewable and clean energy
- Green hydrogen
- Water and waste management
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Semiconductors

4. Economic Opportunities:

- Austrian companies see strong investment potential in India.
- Focus on **knowledge-based economies** and innovation-driven growth.

5. Startup Collaboration:

- "India–Austria Start-up Bridge" (launched in 2024) is enhancing cooperation in startups.



6. Outcome:

- Both sides agreed to deepen ties in **trade, investment, science, and technology**.

Static Information

1. Austria:

- Capital: Vienna
- Located in Central Europe
- Member of the European Union (EU)

2. India–EU Relations:

- Focus on trade, climate action, digital cooperation, and connectivity.

3. Free Trade Agreement (FTA):

- A pact between countries to reduce or eliminate trade barriers like tariffs.

4. Green Hydrogen:

- Hydrogen produced using renewable energy; key for clean energy transition.

MCQ

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding India–Austria relations:

1. Austria is a member of the European Union.
2. India–Austria Start-up Bridge was launched in 2024.
3. Austria is located in Northern Europe.

Options:

- 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

Source

- PIB Release, April 16, 2026

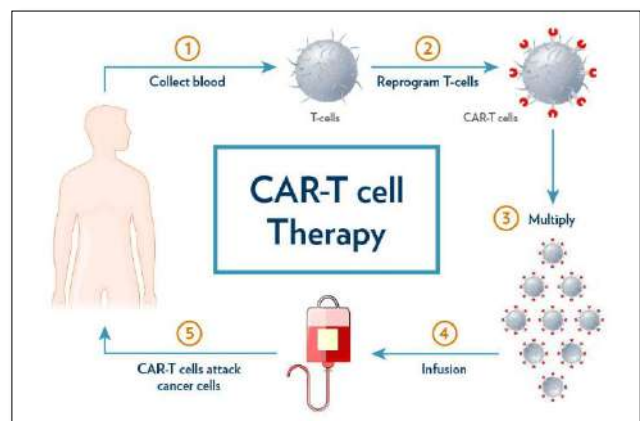
CAR-T Cell Therapy

Latest Development

For the first time, researchers have successfully applied an advanced cell therapy known as CAR-T to treat a patient suffering from three severe autoimmune diseases that had not responded to years of conventional treatment.

What is CAR-T Cell Therapy?

1. CAR-T (Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell) therapy is a type of **immunotherapy**.
2. It works by **modifying a patient's own immune cells** so they can better identify and destroy disease-causing cells, especially cancer.



3. It is mainly used for **specific blood cancers**, particularly when standard treatments fail or the disease returns.

How CAR-T Therapy Works

1. T cells (a type of white blood cell) are **extracted from the patient's blood**.
2. These cells are crucial for immunity as they can **detect and attack harmful cells**, including cancer cells.
3. In the laboratory, T cells are **genetically modified** to produce special receptors called CARs.
4. These modified cells (CAR-T cells) are **multiplied in large numbers** and then **infused back into the patient's bloodstream**.
5. CARs enable T cells to **bind to specific antigens** on cancer cells.
6. This binding **activates the T cells**, allowing them to destroy cancer cells.
7. The destruction of cancer cells can further **stimulate immune responses**.
8. CAR-T cells can also **continue multiplying in the body**, providing long-term effects.

Effectiveness

1. In some cases, CAR-T therapy can **completely cure certain blood cancers**.
2. In others, it helps **extend the patient's life**.

Diseases Treated

CAR-T therapy is primarily used for cancers affecting blood cells, including:

1. B-cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL)
2. Diffuse Large B-cell Lymphoma
3. Follicular Lymphoma
4. High-grade B-cell Lymphoma
5. Mantle Cell Lymphoma
6. Multiple Myeloma
7. Primary Mediastinal Large B-cell Lymphoma

Side Effects

1. **Severe immune reaction** leading to inflammation and possible organ damage (observed in some patients, including rare fatalities).
2. **Low red blood cell count (Anemia)** causing fatigue and weakness.
3. **Thrombocytopenia** (low platelet count), increasing the risk of bleeding.
4. **Neutropenia** (low neutrophil count), raising the risk of infections.

Water Hyacinth

Latest News

The quick reappearance of water hyacinth in the Mula-Mutha River, shortly after recent clean-up efforts, has raised concerns about the absence of a sustainable, long-term solution.

About Water Hyacinth

1. Water hyacinth is a **free-floating aquatic plant** belonging to the pickerelweed family.
2. Its scientific name is **Eichhornia crassipes**.
3. It originates from **tropical South America** but is now found on all continents except Antarctica.
4. It is considered one of the **most problematic aquatic weeds** due to its rapid and aggressive growth.

5. The plant thrives in **tropical, subtropical, and warm temperate climates**, especially in **nutrient-rich, slow-moving or still freshwater bodies**.
6. Under ideal conditions, it can **double its biomass within five days**.
7. It forms **thick mats on water surfaces**, which:
 - Degrade water quality
 - Disrupt water flow
 - Increase sediment accumulation
8. It negatively impacts ecosystems by:
 - **Outcompeting native aquatic species**
 - Destroying habitats
 - Blocking irrigation channels
9. Cutting the plant does not eliminate it, as it reproduces through **fragmentation**.
10. Additionally, each plant can produce **thousands of seeds annually**.
11. The plant size ranges from **a few inches to over three feet**.
12. It has **distinct lavender flowers** and **rounded, leathery leaves** attached to spongy stalks.
13. It was introduced into **India during British rule** as an ornamental plant.



Uses

1. Used as a **biofertilizer** in organic farming.
2. Known for its **attractive purple flowers**, giving it ornamental value.
3. Its fibrous stems are processed into products like:
 - Handbags
 - Baskets
 - Table mats
 - Decorative items
4. It is useful in **phytoremediation**, as it can absorb **toxic substances and heavy metals** from water.

Key Facts about Mula-Mutha River

1. The Mula and Mutha rivers are important water bodies flowing through **Pune city**.
2. Both rivers originate from the **Sahyadri ranges**.
3. The **Mula River** begins at **Mulshi Dam (Mulshi Lake)**, while the **Mutha River** originates from **Panshet Dam via Khadakwasla Dam**.
4. They merge within Pune to form the **Mula-Mutha River**, which later joins the **Bhima River**.

Student Notes 📝

RED SEA LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AND GEOGRAPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE

NEWS

Iran has warned that it may block trade through the Red Sea if the ongoing US naval blockade continues. This raises concerns over global trade disruption as the Red Sea is a vital maritime route connecting Europe and Asia.

FACTS

1. The **Red Sea** is a **semi-enclosed inlet of the Indian Ocean** located between **Africa and Asia**
2. Connected to:
 - **Arabian Sea & Indian Ocean** via **Gulf of Aden** and **Bab el-Mandeb Strait**
 - **Mediterranean Sea** via **Suez Canal**
3. Northern part divided by **Sinai Peninsula** into:
 - Gulf of Aqaba
 - Gulf of Suez



Bordering Countries:

1. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti

Geographical Features:

1. Lies in a **rift (fault depression)** between **Arabian Plate** and **African Plate**
2. Known for **high salinity** and **warm waters**
3. Red coloration due to **algal blooms**

Economic Importance:

- One of the **busiest global shipping routes**
- Critical for **oil and trade movement between Europe and Asia**

Natural Resources:

1. Petroleum deposits
2. Evaporites
3. Sulfur
4. Phosphates
5. Heavy metals

Important Islands:

1. Tiran Island (near Gulf of Aqaba)
2. Shadwan Island (near Gulf of Suez)

MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements about the Red Sea:

1. It connects directly to the Mediterranean Sea through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.
2. It lies between the African and Arabian tectonic plates.

STATIC INFORMATION

1. **Strategic chokepoint:** Bab el-Mandeb Strait
2. **Major Canal:** Suez Canal (connects Red Sea to Mediterranean)
3. Plays a key role in **global energy security and supply chains**

3. It is an important global maritime trade route.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a) 2 and 3 only

(b) 1 and 2 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

SOURCE

NDTV News Report

PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF MONUMENTS IN INDIA

NEWS

The Government of India has highlighted its comprehensive approach toward the protection and conservation of monuments, focusing on strengthened institutional mechanisms, legal frameworks, and use of modern technology for preservation of cultural heritage.

FACTS

1. **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** protects **3,686 centrally protected monuments**

2. Conservation efforts supported by:

- Scientific restoration techniques
- Digitization and national heritage databases

3. India now has **44 UNESCO World Heritage Sites**, including the recent addition of the **Maratha Military Landscapes**

Government Approach:

1. Integration of heritage conservation with:

- Tourism development
- Local livelihoods
- Cultural diplomacy

2. Focus on both **tangible and intangible heritage**

Tangible Heritage:

1. Includes monuments, structures, sites of historical importance
2. Examples: Taj Mahal, Sanchi Stupa, temples

Intangible Heritage:

1. Includes traditions, rituals, performing arts, oral traditions
2. Examples: Yoga, Vedic chanting, Buddhist chanting of Ladakh

STATIC INFORMATION

Legal Framework:

1. **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**

- Provides for declaration and protection of monuments of national importance
- Regulates construction in protected areas

Constitutional Provisions:

1. **Article 49**

- Duty of the State to protect monuments of national importance

2. **Article 51A(f)**

- Fundamental duty of citizens to preserve rich heritage

Seventh Schedule (Division of Powers):

1. **Union List (Entry 67):** Monuments of national importance
2. **State List (Entry 12):** Other monuments

International Framework:

1. **UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003**

MCQ

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding heritage conservation in India:

1. ASI is responsible for all monuments in India.
2. Article 49 deals with protection of monuments of national importance.
3. Intangible heritage includes traditions and cultural practices.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

SOURCE

Press Information Bureau (PIB)

CABINET APPROVES CONTINUATION OF PMGSY-III TILL MARCH 2028

NEWS

The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana–III (PMGSY-III) beyond March 2025 up to March 2028. The decision aims to complete rural road connectivity projects and enhance access to key economic and social infrastructure.

FACTS

1. Scheme: **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana–III (PMGSY-III)**
2. Extension: From **March 2025 to March 2028**
3. Objective:

- Consolidation of **Through Routes and Major Rural Links**
- Connecting rural areas to:
 - Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs)
 - Higher Secondary Schools
 - Hospitals

4. Revised Outlay: **₹83,977 crore**
(increased from ₹80,250 crore)

STATIC INFORMATION

1. **Launch of PMGSY:** 2000
2. **Ministry:** Ministry of Rural Development
3. **Phases:**
 - PMGSY-I: Basic rural connectivity
 - PMGSY-II: Upgradation of rural roads
 - PMGSY-III: Consolidation of rural road networks

Additional Approvals:

1. Timeline extended till:
 - **March 2028:** For roads & bridges in plain and hilly areas
 - **March 2029:** For bridges in hilly areas
2. Previously sanctioned but unawarded works can now be tendered
3. **161 Long Span Bridges (LSBs)** worth ₹1,961 crore approved for sanction

Benefits:

1. Boost to **rural economy and trade**
2. Improved **market access** for farm and non-farm products
3. Reduction in **transportation time and costs**

4. Better access to **education and healthcare**
5. Increased **employment opportunities**
6. Supports **inclusive development** and **Viksit Bharat 2047 vision**

MCQ

Q3. With reference to PMGSY-III, consider the following statements:

1. It focuses on constructing new rural roads only.
2. It aims to connect rural areas with agricultural markets and essential services.
3. The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Urban Development.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 only

SOURCE

Press Information Bureau (PIB)

Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) –

Recently, the Union Ministry of Agriculture approved procurement of 20 lakh metric tonnes of potatoes under the **Market Intervention Scheme (MIS)**.

About MIS

1. MIS operates as a sub-component of Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA).
2. It is activated upon the request of State/UT governments for procuring **perishable crops** like tomato, onion, and potato, which are **not covered under MSP**.
3. **Objective:** To protect farmers from distress sales during periods of excess production when prices drop sharply.
4. **Cost Sharing:** Losses are shared between Centre and States in a **50:50 ratio** (75:25 for North-Eastern States).
5. **Implementation:** Managed by the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.



Conditions for Implementation

1. Market prices must decline by **at least 10%** compared to the previous normal year.
2. Procurement is capped at **25% of total production**.

MCQ –

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS):

1. It covers only those crops which are not included under Minimum Support Price (MSP).
2. It is implemented automatically by the Central Government without State request.
3. The procurement quantity under MIS is limited to a fixed percentage of total production.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

International Air Transport Association (IATA) –

According to a recent assessment by the International Air Transport Association, countries like India, the U.S., Brazil, and European nations are expected to lead in **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)** feedstock production by 2050.

About IATA

1. IATA is a **global trade association of airlines**, representing both passenger and cargo carriers.
2. Established in **1945 in Havana, Cuba**, it succeeded an earlier body formed in 1919.
3. Its core purpose is to **promote cooperation among airlines** and ensure safe, efficient, and sustainable air transport.
4. While regulation is handled by bodies like International Civil Aviation Organization, IATA focuses on **industry standards and best practices**.

Key Functions

1. Standardization of global aviation processes and documentation.
2. Development of technical rules for transporting goods, especially hazardous and perishable items.
3. Facilitating financial systems for global airline operations.

Other Facts

1. Membership: Around **350 airlines across 120+ countries**, accounting for ~82% of global air traffic.
2. Headquarters: **Montreal, Canada**.

MCQ –

Q2. With reference to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), consider the following statements:

1. It is a regulatory body under the United Nations.
2. It develops operational standards widely followed by airlines globally.
3. It was established before the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

IMD issued a yellow alert for three days in Delhi,

NEWS

IMD issued a yellow alert for three days in Delhi, forecasting rising temperatures up to 43–44°C and possible heatwave-like conditions, with gradual temperature increase expected in coming days.

KEY FACTS

1. Alert issued by **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**.
2. **Yellow alert** indicates caution due to rising temperatures.
3. Maximum recorded temperature: **38.8°C (1.1°C above normal)**.
4. Minimum temperature: **20.5°C (2.2°C below normal)**.
5. Temperature expected to rise by **2–3°C gradually**.
6. Heatwave-like conditions likely at **isolated places in Delhi**.
7. Forecast period: **Next 3–5 days**.

STATIC INFORMATION

1. **IMD** is India's principal agency for weather forecasting (Ministry of Earth Sciences).
2. **Heatwave criteria (Plains):** $\geq 40^{\circ}\text{C} + 4.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ above normal OR $\geq 45^{\circ}\text{C}$ absolute.
3. **Colour-coded warnings:**
 - Green: No action
 - Yellow: Be aware
 - Orange: Be prepared
 - Red: Take action
4. Heatwaves more frequent due to **climate change** and urban heat island effect.



Practice Question

Q3. With reference to heatwave conditions in India, consider the following statements:

1. Heatwave is declared when temperature exceeds 40°C in plains.
2. IMD uses colour-coded alerts including yellow, orange, and red.
3. Urban heat island effect can intensify heatwave impacts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: D) 1, 2 and 3

Source: the Hindu

India-Africa Summit

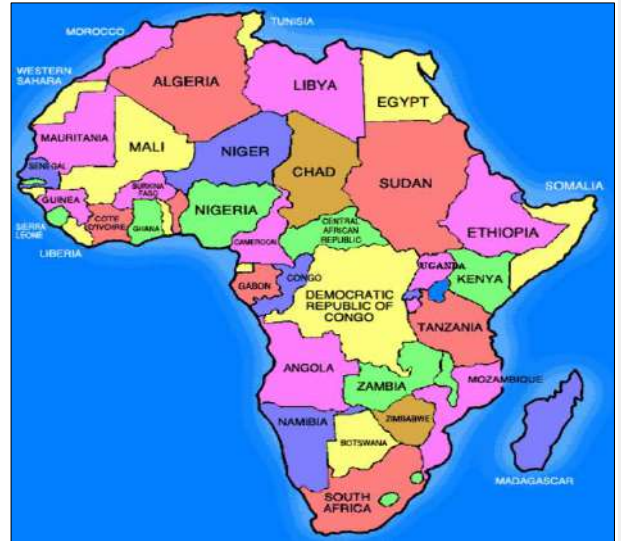
NEWS

India-Africa Summit to be held in May 2026 will focus on development cooperation, expanding diplomatic, economic, and strategic engagement, and reviewing India's growing footprint and partnerships across African nations.

KEY FACTS

1. Fourth **India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)** planned after the last held in **2015**.

2. India expanding engagement in:
 - Development cooperation
 - Defence
 - Capacity building
3. Additional dimension: **China factor in Africa.**
4. Focus on **private investment**, not just grants/aid.
5. Emphasis on **supply chain diversification** amid global disruptions.
6. India has **limited project implementation capacity** currently.
7. Key project: **IT Madras campus in Zanzibar (Tanzania).**
8. India has committed **Line of Credit** to African nations.
9. Africa has received **~43 diplomatic visits since 2018.**



STATIC INFORMATION

1. **India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)** started in **2008**.
2. Platform for political, economic, and development cooperation.
3. Three summits held: **2008 (India), 2011 (Addis Ababa), 2015 (New Delhi).**
4. Africa is key for:
 - Energy security
 - Critical minerals
 - Maritime security (Indian Ocean)
5. India's engagement tools:
 - Lines of Credit (EXIM Bank)
 - Capacity building (ITEC Programme)
 - Pan-African e-Network

Practice Question

Q4. With reference to India-Africa relations, consider the following statements:

1. India-Africa Forum Summit was first held in 2008.
2. India provides Lines of Credit to African countries through EXIM Bank.
3. All India-Africa Summits have been held in Africa.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 2 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A) 1 and 2 only

Source: The Hindu – India-Africa Summit 2026 analysis.

NBWL has ordered a study by WII on grazing communities' dependence on forests inside national parks,

NEWS

NBWL has ordered a study by WII on grazing communities' dependence on forests inside national parks, amid concerns over livelihood rights, conservation challenges, and legal issues related to pastoralist movements.

KEY FACTS

1. Directive issued by **Union Environment Ministry**.
2. Study to be conducted by **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)**.
3. Ordered by **Standing Committee of NBWL**.
4. Focus:
 - Nature & extent of grazing dependence
 - Ecological and legal impacts
5. Pastoral communities include:
 - **Gujjars, Bakarwals, Bhotiya, Van Gujjars, Maldharis, Rabaris, Raikas, Dhangars, Gollas, Gaddis, Changpas, Kurubas**
6. Estimated **1.3 million pastoralists** across India.
7. Grazing spread across:
 - **Himalayas, Terai, Western Ghats**
8. Seasonal migration creates **jurisdictional and administrative challenges**.
9. Linked to **UN Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD)**.
10. Study report to be submitted under **DPR** funded by **CAMPA**.

STATIC INFORMATION

1. **NBWL:** Statutory body under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972; chaired by PM.
2. **Protected Areas:** National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves.
3. Grazing generally **restricted/prohibited in National Parks**.
4. **Forest Rights Act, 2006** recognizes traditional rights of forest dwellers.
5. **CAMPA Fund:** For afforestation and forest conservation.
6. Pastoralism = **seasonal livestock movement (transhumance)**.

Practice Question

Q5. With reference to grazing rights in India, consider the following statements:

1. Grazing is completely prohibited in all forest areas.
2. Forest Rights Act, 2006 recognizes certain traditional grazing rights.
3. NBWL is a statutory body under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A) 2 and 3 only B) 1 only
C) 1 and 2 only D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A) 2 and 3 only

Source: The Hindu – NBWL directive on grazing communities study.

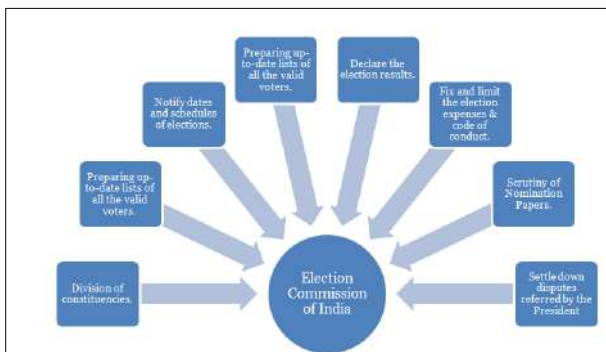
Student Notes 📝

Opposition moves motion in Rajya Sabha seeking removal of Chief Election Commissioner

Source: *The Hindu*

Key News

1. Opposition parties have submitted a motion in the **Rajya Sabha seeking removal of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), alleging partisan conduct.** The notice invokes constitutional provisions and relevant laws governing removal of Election Commissioners.
2. The motion requires acceptance by the Chairman of Rajya Sabha, following which an inquiry process may begin.
3. Allegations include **asymmetrical enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and institutional bias.**
4. The development raises concerns regarding the independence and neutrality of the Election Commission of India (ECI).



Key Data / Facts

1. **Constitutional Provision:** Article 324 (Election Commission)
2. **Removal of CEC:** Same manner as a Supreme Court judge (impeachment)
3. **Relevant Law:** Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023
4. **Authority Involved:** Rajya Sabha Chairman (Vice-President of India)

Static Introduction

Election Commission of India (ECI)

1. Established under Article 324 of the Constitution
2. Autonomous constitutional body responsible for:
 - Conduct of elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, President & Vice-President

Composition

1. Consists of:

- Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)
- Two Election Commissioners (ECs)

Removal Process

1. **CEC: Removed like a Supreme Court judge (special majority in Parliament)**
2. **ECs: Removed on recommendation of the CEC**

Model Code of Conduct (MCC)

1. Set of guidelines issued by ECI for political parties and candidates
2. Ensures free and fair elections
3. Not legally enforceable but has strong moral authority

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Election Commission of India:

1. The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed in the same manner as a judge of the Supreme Court.
2. Election Commissioners can be removed by the President without any recommendation.
3. The Election Commission is a constitutional body established under Article 324.
4. The Model Code of Conduct is legally enforceable under statutory law.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

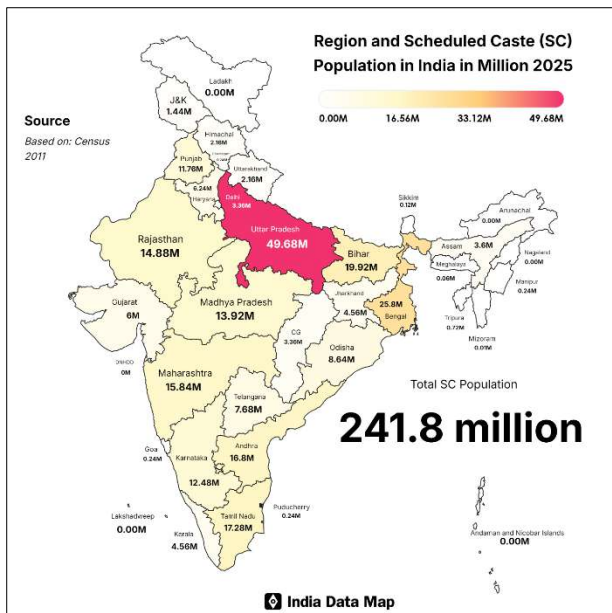
Correct Answer:

(a) 1 and 3 only

Explanation:

1. **Statement 1 : Correct** – removal process same as SC judge.
2. **Statement 2 : ECs can be removed only on recommendation of the CEC.**
3. **Statement 3 : ECI is a constitutional body under Article 324.**
4. **Statement 4 : MCC is not legally enforceable, only advisory.**

Karnataka Cabinet approves internal reservation for SCs within quota



Source: *The Indian Express*

Key News

The Karnataka Cabinet has approved **internal reservation within the Scheduled Castes (SC) quota**. The existing **15% SC reservation** will be sub-classified into different categories. The decision allocates **5.25% each to 'left' and 'right' SC groups**, and **4.5% to other communities**.

1. The move aims to ensure **equitable distribution of benefits among sub-castes**.
2. The proposal is subject to **final approval by the Supreme Court**, as similar policies are under judicial scrutiny.

Major Key Data / Facts:

1. **Total SC Reservation (Karnataka): 15%**
2. **Internal Distribution:**
 - Left SCs: 5.25%
 - Right SCs: 5.25%
 - Others: 4.5%
3. **Basis:** Address intra-caste disparities
4. **Legal Status:** Subject to Supreme Court verdict

Static Introduction

Reservation in India – Constitutional Basis

1. **Article 15(4):** Special provisions for socially and educationally backward classes
2. **Article 16(4):** Reservation in public employment
3. **Article 341:** President notifies Scheduled Castes

Sub-classification within SCs

1. Refers to dividing SC quota among sub-groups to ensure **fair benefit distribution**
2. Based on argument that:
 - Some sub-castes are **more backward than others**
3. Issue pending before the **Supreme Court (Davinder Singh case)**

Key Judicial Developments

1. **E.V. Chinnaiah Case (2004):** Initially opposed sub-classification
2. **State of Punjab vs Davinder Singh (2020):** Allowed reconsideration by larger bench

Debate on Internal Reservation

1. **Pros:**
 - Targets most marginalized groups
 - Reduces dominance of advanced sub-castes
2. **Cons:**
 - May fragment SC unity
 - Legal and constitutional challenges

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding reservation in India:

1. Article 341 empowers the President to notify Scheduled Castes.
2. Sub-classification within SCs has been completely settled and approved by the Supreme Court.
3. Article 16(4) allows reservation in public employment.
4. Internal reservation aims to address inequality within reserved categories.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

(a) 1, 3 and 4 only

Explanation (Expert Level):

1. Statement 1 : President notifies SC list under Article 341.
2. Statement 2 : Issue is **still pending before SC Constitution Bench**.
3. Statement 3 : Article 16(4) enables reservation in jobs.
4. Statement 4 : Objective is equitable distribution within SCs.

Net FDI hits 45-month high in February 2026, reversing six-month slump

Source: *The Hindu (Economy)*

Key News

India's **net Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** surged to a **45-month high in February 2026**, breaking a six-month declining trend. Net FDI turned positive with **inflows exceeding outflows by \$4.6 billion**, as per RBI data.

1. The rise was driven by **higher gross inflows and a sharp decline in outward remittances**.
2. India continues to remain an **attractive destination for greenfield investments**.

3. However, global data shows a **decline in greenfield project announcements**, indicating external uncertainties.

Major Key Data / Facts:

1. **Net FDI (Feb 2026):** +\$4.6 billion
2. **Gross FDI:** ~\$9 billion (61.6% growth, 7-month high)
3. **Outward FDI decline:** ~30% fall in Feb 2026
4. **Top Source Countries:** Singapore, USA, Mauritius, Japan, Netherlands

Static Introduction

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

1. Investment by a foreign entity in **long-term assets/business in another country**
2. Includes:
 - **Greenfield investment:** New projects
 - **Brownfield investment:** Acquisition/merger

Net FDI vs Gross FDI

1. **Gross FDI:** Total inflows into the country
2. **Net FDI:** Gross inflows – outflows (repatriation + outward investment)

Importance of FDI for India

1. Brings:
 - **Capital investment**
 - **Technology transfer**
 - **Employment generation**
2. Helps reduce **Current Account Deficit (CAD)**

Determinants of FDI

Factors	Foreign portfolio investment	Foreign direct investment
Definition	Foreign financial assets investment • Stocks • Bonds • Securities	Foreign business investment with • Management • Operations
Type of investment	Indirect investment	Direct investment
Purpose	Exploit market chances for diversity investment portfolio	Commercial operations in overseas country
Nature of investment	Short-term investment	Long-term investment commitment
Return on investment	Dividends • Interest	Profits are generated through • Operations • Direct ownership
Risk	High level	Stable
Impact on economy	• Limited direct impact on • Financial market • Liquidity	• Employment • Technology transfer • Economic growth
Regulatory considerations	• Regulating capital flows • Investor behavior	• Specific regulations • Government approvals

1. Policy stability
2. Ease of doing business
3. Market size and growth potential

4. Global economic conditions

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):

1. Net FDI is calculated as gross inflows minus outflows.
2. Greenfield investment refers to acquisition of existing companies.
3. FDI contributes to technology transfer and employment generation.
4. A decline in outward FDI increases net FDI.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

(a) 1, 3 and 4 only

Explanation (Expert Level):

1. Statement 1 : Net FDI = inflows – outflows.
2. Statement 2 : Greenfield = **new investment**, not acquisition.
3. Statement 3 : FDI boosts **technology & jobs**.
4. Statement 4 : Lower outflows → higher net FDI.

Rajnath Singh to attend SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting 2026 in Bishkek

Source: *The Hindu*

Key News

India's Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** will attend the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meeting** in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan). The meeting will bring together defence ministers of **SCO member states** to discuss regional and global security issues.

1. Key agenda items include **terrorism, extremism, and evolving geopolitical challenges**.

2. India is expected to hold **bilateral meetings** with participating countries to enhance defence cooperation.
3. The visit underscores India's engagement in **Eurasian security architecture**.

Major Key Data / Facts:

1. **Event:** SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting
2. **Location:** Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
3. **Participants:** Defence ministers of SCO member countries
4. **Focus Areas:** Terrorism, regional security, defence cooperation

Static Introduction

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

1. Established in **2001**
2. Members: **India, China, Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran**
3. Focus areas:
 - Regional security
 - Counter-terrorism
 - Economic cooperation

India's Role in SCO

1. Became a **full member in 2017**
2. Participates in:
 - **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)**
 - Defence and security dialogues
3. Balances relations with **Central Asia, Russia, and China**

Strategic Importance

1. SCO region covers:
 - **~40% of world population**
 - Significant share of global energy resources
2. Important for:
 - **Counter-terrorism cooperation**
 - Stability in Afghanistan region

Which countries want to join SCO

● SCO member states ● SCO dialogue partners ● SCO observer states



Defence Diplomacy of India

- Enhances:
 - Strategic partnerships
 - Military cooperation and interoperability
- Aligns with India's multi-alignment foreign policy

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):

- India became a full member of SCO in 2017.
- SCO has a dedicated anti-terror body known as RATS.
- All SCO member countries are part of NATO.
- Iran is a member of the SCO.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1, 2 and 4 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2, 3 and 4 only
- 1, 2, 3 and 4

Correct Answer:

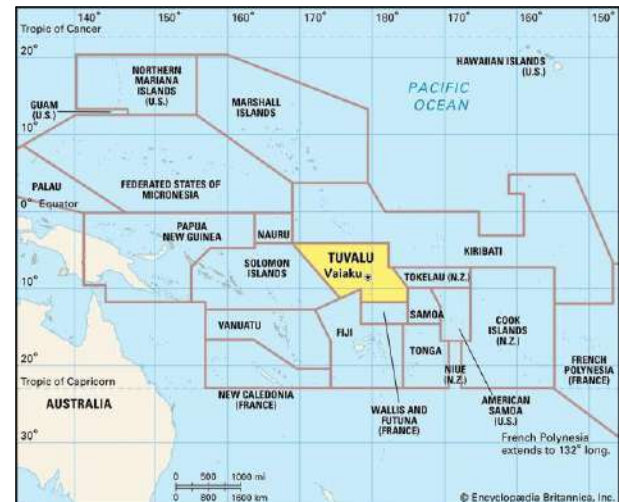
(a) 1, 2 and 4 only

Explanation (Expert Level):

- Statement 1 : India joined SCO as full member in **2017**.

- Statement 2 : **RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure)** is SCO's security arm.
- Statement 3 : SCO members are **not part of NATO**.
- Statement 4 : **Iran became a full member (2023)**.

Tuvalu – In News



The Pacific island nation Tuvalu is facing an **existential threat from rising sea levels**, with projections suggesting that significant portions of its territory could be submerged by the end of this century. In response, citizens and authorities are taking steps to **adapt and safeguard their future** amid intensifying climate change impacts.

About Tuvalu

- Formerly known as the **Ellice Islands**, Tuvalu is a **Polynesian island country** located in the **west-central Pacific Ocean**.
- It is the **4th smallest country in the world**, covering just **26 sq. km** of land area.
- Geographically positioned roughly **midway between Australia and Hawaii**.

Geographical Features

- Neighbouring countries:
 - **Kiribati** (north)
 - **Fiji** (south)
- Comprises **9 islands**:
 - 4 reef islands
 - 5 coral atolls

3. All islands are **extremely low-lying**, with no point exceeding **4.5 meters above sea level**, making them highly vulnerable to **sea-level rise**.

Major Islands

1. **Nanumea**
2. **Niutao**
3. **Nui/Niulakita**

Capital

1. **Funafuti Atoll** – also the most populous region

Climate

1. **Tropical**, generally **hot and humid**
2. **No rivers**

Demography & Language

1. One of the **least populated countries in the world** (after Vatican City).
2. Main language: **Tuvaluan**
3. **English** is widely spoken

Currency

1. Uses the **Tuvaluan Dollar**, linked to the **Australian Dollar**

Political System

1. Gained independence from the United Kingdom in **1978**
2. Functions as a **parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy**
3. Part of the **Commonwealth Realm**, with King Charles III as the head of state
4. Represented locally by a **Governor-General**
5. Unique feature: **No formal political parties**; the Prime Minister is elected from the legislature

Economy

1. Predominantly **subsistence-based**, with agriculture and fishing
2. Supported by:
 - **Remittances** from overseas workers
 - Export of **copra**
 - Revenue from **postage stamps** and fishing licenses
3. Heavily dependent on **imports** for food, fuel, and manufactured goods

Key Concern: Climate Change

1. Rising sea levels threaten **habitability and sovereignty**
2. Increased risks of:
 - Coastal erosion
 - Saltwater intrusion
 - Loss of freshwater sources
3. Tuvalu is a key voice in **global climate negotiations**, highlighting the plight of **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**

Honey Badger – In News



The **Dewas Forest Department** has recently confirmed the presence of the elusive **Honey Badger** within the Kheoni Wildlife Sanctuary, highlighting the rich biodiversity of the region.

About Honey Badger

Honey Badger, also known as the **Ratel**, is a small but extremely **fearless and powerful** mammal.

Classification

1. Belongs to the **weasel family (Mustelidae)**
2. Scientific Name: *Mellivora capensis*

Habitat & Distribution

1. Has a **wide geographical range**, extending across:
 - **Sub-Saharan Africa**
 - **Western Asia to southern Morocco**
 - **Arabian Peninsula, Iran, Central & Western Asia**
 - **Indian subcontinent**

Habitat Preferences

- Commonly found in:
 - **Dry and arid regions**
 - Also inhabits **forests and grasslands**
- Lives in **burrows** dug using strong forelimbs

Key Features

- Size:**
 - Height: up to ~30 cm
 - Body length: 61–76 cm
- Sexual Dimorphism:**
 - Males are generally larger than females

Physical Traits

- Thick, loose skin that helps it **escape predators**
- Poor eyesight but **strong sense of smell**
- Distinct coloration:
 - **Greyish-white upper body**
 - **Black lower body**
- Nocturnal** in nature

Adaptations

- Powerful **claws (~4 cm)** and strong teeth
- Can break tough materials like shells
- Produces a **foul-smelling secretion** for defense (like skunks)

Feeding Behaviour

- Omnivorous diet**, including:
 - Birds
 - Reptiles
 - Rodents
 - Insects
 - Fruits
- Known for its **aggressive hunting style**
- Capable of taking on animals much larger than itself

Conservation Status

- IUCN Red List:** Least Concern
- However, faces localized threats like:
 - Habitat degradation
 - Human-wildlife conflict

Key Facts: Kheoni Wildlife Sanctuary

- Located in **Dewas district, Madhya Pradesh**
- Covers an area of about **132 sq. km**

- Connected to **Ratapani Tiger Reserve** via forest corridors

Flora

- Dominated by **dry deciduous forests**
- Major species: teak, tendu, bamboo

Fauna

- Jackals, palm civets
- Leopard, sloth bear
- Hyena, nilgai
- Rich bird diversity

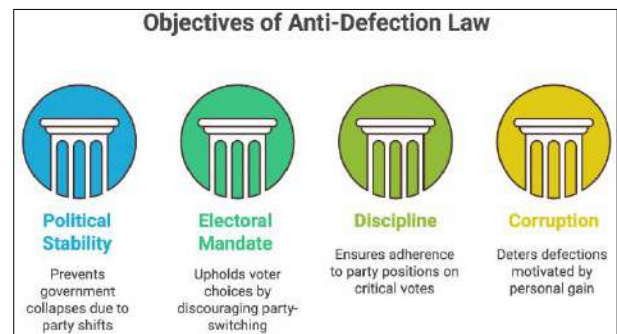
Significance of the Sighting

- Indicates **healthy ecosystem and prey availability**
- Highlights importance of **lesser-known species conservation**

Strengthens need for **corridor-based wildlife management**

AAP seeks disqualification of seven MPs under anti-defection law

Source: *The Hindu*



Key News

The **Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)** has petitioned the **Rajya Sabha Chairman** seeking disqualification of **seven MPs** who allegedly defected to another party. The plea is based on provisions of the **Anti-Defection Law (Tenth Schedule)**.

- AAP argues that the MPs' actions constitute a **betrayal of electoral mandate**.
- The Chairman has been requested to take an **expedited decision** on the matter.

3. The case highlights ongoing debates over **party switching and legislative ethics**.

Major Key Data / Facts

1. **Law Invoked:** Tenth Schedule (Anti-Defection Law)
2. **Decision Authority:** Chairman of Rajya Sabha (Vice-President)
3. **Ground:** Voluntarily giving up party membership
4. **Exception Clause:** Merger provision (2/3rd members)

Static Introduction

Anti-Defection Law (Tenth Schedule)

1. Added by **52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985**
2. Strengthened by **91st Amendment Act, 2003**
3. Objective: Prevent **political defections and instability**

Grounds for Disqualification

1. Voluntarily giving up membership of a political party
2. Voting/abstaining against party whip without permission

Exception – Merger Clause

1. If **2/3rd members of a legislature party** agree to merge with another party → no disqualification

Decision Authority

1. **Speaker (Lok Sabha) / Chairman (Rajya Sabha)** decides
2. Subject to **judicial review (Kihoto Hollohan case, 1992)**

Issues & Criticism

1. Delay in decisions by presiding officers
2. Weakening of **legislative independence**
3. Encourages **political opportunism**

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

- Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Anti-Defection Law:**

1. It was introduced through the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act.
2. The Speaker/Chairman's decision is completely immune from judicial review.
3. A merger is valid if at least two-thirds of members agree.
4. Voting against party whip can lead to disqualification.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

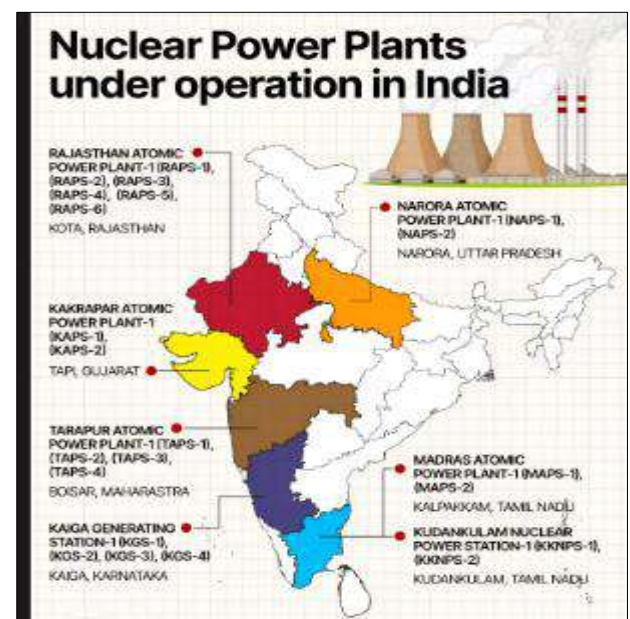
(a) 1, 3 and 4 only

Explanation

1. Statement 1: Correct – introduced by 52nd Amendment (1985).
2. Statement 2: Subject to **judicial review (Kihoto Hollohan case)**.
3. Statement 3: 2/3rd rule for valid merger.
4. Statement 4: Violation of whip leads to disqualification.

PM Modi highlights India's progress in nuclear and wind energy; emphasizes Census 2027 participation

Source: *The Hindu*



Key News

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** praised India's achievements in **nuclear and wind energy sectors**, citing major capacity expansion. He highlighted the **Kakrapar Atomic Power Project** as a milestone in India's indigenous nuclear capability.

1. India has now become the **4th largest country in wind energy capacity globally**.
2. The PM also stressed the importance of **Census 2027**, calling it crucial for governance and planning.
3. Emphasis was laid on **digital, secure, and participatory data collection**.

Major Key Data / Facts:

1. **Wind Energy Rank:** 4th globally
2. **Kakrapar Project:** Indigenous nuclear reactor milestone
3. **Census 2027:** First digital census in India
4. **Energy Mix:** Growing share of renewable and nuclear energy

Static Introduction

Nuclear Energy in India

1. Managed by **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)**
2. Based on **three-stage nuclear programme**:
 - Stage 1: Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs)
 - Stage 2: Fast Breeder Reactors
 - Stage 3: Thorium-based reactors

Wind Energy in India

1. India is among top global producers of **renewable energy**
2. Major states:
 - Tamil Nadu
 - Gujarat
 - Karnataka
3. Supports India's **Net Zero 2070 target**

Census in India

1. Conducted under **Census Act, 1948**
2. Conducted every **10 years**
3. Provides data for:

- Policy planning
- Resource allocation
- Delimitation of constituencies

Importance of Energy Transition

1. Reduces dependence on fossil fuels
2. Helps in **climate change mitigation**
3. Promotes **sustainable development (SDGs)**

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding energy and census in India:

1. India's nuclear energy programme is based on a three-stage strategy.
2. India is the largest producer of wind energy in the world.
3. Census in India is conducted under the Census Act, 1948.
4. Renewable energy contributes to climate change mitigation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

(a) 1, 3 and 4 only

Explanation

1. Statement 1: India follows a **three-stage nuclear programme**.
2. Statement 2: India is **not the largest**, but among top (4th).
3. Statement 3: Census governed by **Census Act, 1948**.
4. Statement 4: Renewable energy reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

**Centre-Ladakh talks to resume:
focus on political representation
and safeguards**

Source: *The Hindu*

Key News

Talks between the **Central Government and Ladakh-based groups** are set to resume next month. A **High-Powered Committee (HPC)** has been constituted to address concerns of the region.

1. Key demands include **greater political representation, constitutional safeguards, and autonomy**.
2. The dialogue process resumed after a pause following protests and tensions in Ladakh.
3. The move signals a renewed effort toward **inclusive governance and regional stability**.

Major Key Data / Facts:

1. **Region Status:** Union Territory (since 2019) without legislature
2. **Committee:** High-Powered Committee (HPC) led by Ministry of Home Affairs
3. **Key Demands:** Statehood, Sixth Schedule status, job and land protection
4. **Context:** Formed after reorganization of J&K under 2019 Act

Static Introduction

Ladakh – Administrative Status

1. Became a **Union Territory in 2019** after bifurcation of Jammu & Kashmir
2. Governed by **Lieutenant Governor (LG)**
3. No legislative assembly (unlike Delhi & Puducherry)

Sixth Schedule (Autonomous Councils)

Fifth and Sixth Schedule		
Feature	Fifth Schedule	Sixth Schedule
 Applicability	Applies to certain tribal areas in any states of India. (Currently in 10 states)	Applies to the tribal areas in the four northeastern states of India.
 Administration	Tribes Advisory Councils (TAC)	District Councils or Regional Councils
 Administrative power	TAC being the creation of the Legislative Assembly of the States has limited powers which are mostly executive.	Extensive powers, including executive, legislative and judicial powers, all derived from the Constitution.
 Emphasizes	More on protection of tribal rights	More on self-governance.
 PESA Act 1996	Applicable	Not applicable

1. Applies to tribal areas in **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram**
 2. Provides:
 - Autonomous District Councils
 - Legislative and financial powers
- Demand in Ladakh: Protection of **tribal identity, land, and culture**

Article 370 & Reorganization

1. **Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019**
2. Created two UTs:
 - J&K (with legislature)
 - Ladakh (without legislature)

Issues in Ladakh

1. Lack of:
 - **Political representation**
 - Constitutional safeguards
2. Concerns over:
 - **Land rights**
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Cultural identity

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding Ladakh and Sixth Schedule:

1. Ladakh is a Union Territory with a legislative assembly.
2. The Sixth Schedule provides for Autonomous District Councils.
3. The Sixth Schedule currently applies to tribal areas of all Union Territories.
4. The Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 created Ladakh as a separate UT.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

(a) 2 and 4 only

Explanation (Expert Level):

1. Statement 1: Ladakh **does not have a legislature**.

2. Statement 2: Sixth Schedule provides **Autonomous District Councils**.
3. Statement 3: Applies only to select **Northeast states**, not all UTs.
4. Statement 4: Created by **J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019**.

Small Hydro Power Development Scheme: Boosting Clean Energy & Regional Growth

Source: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) – Government Document

Key News:

The government is promoting **Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme** to enhance clean energy capacity. The scheme targets **~1500 MW additional capacity** with focus on **hilly and North-Eastern regions**.

1. It aims to improve **project viability through financial incentives and infrastructure support**.
2. SHP is a **reliable renewable energy source**, contributing to decentralized power generation.
3. The initiative aligns with India's goals of **energy transition and sustainable development**.

Major Key Data / Facts:

1. **Total Potential (India):** ~21,133 MW
2. **Installed SHP Capacity:** ~5,171 MW
3. **Target (Scheme):** ~1500 MW additional capacity
4. **Employment Generation:** ~51 lakh person-days

Static Introduction

Small Hydro Power (SHP)

1. Refers to hydroelectric projects with capacity up to **25 MW**
2. Classified as **renewable energy source**
3. Ideal for:
 - Remote and hilly regions

4. Decentralized energy systems

Small Hydro Power (SHP)

Small Hydro Power (SHP) is hydro plant with power under 10 MW as defined by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO):

Pico	5 kW & below
Micro	100 kW & below
Mini	2000 kW & below
Small	25000 kW & below
Medium	100,000 kW & below
Large	above 100,000 kW

P = Power plant

Advantages of SHP

1. Low environmental impact compared to large dams
2. No large-scale displacement
3. Reliable and consistent energy generation

Institutional Framework

1. **MNRE:** Nodal ministry for SHP projects
2. **State Governments:** Implementation and site allocation
3. Financial incentives provided for:
 - North-East states
 - Border regions

Strategic Importance

1. Enhances:
 - **Energy security**
 - Rural electrification
 - Regional development
2. Supports India's **Net Zero and renewable targets**

UPSC Prelims Practice Question:

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding **Small Hydro Power (SHP) in India:**

1. SHP projects are defined as hydro projects up to 25 MW capacity.
2. SHP is classified as a renewable energy source.
3. SHP projects are primarily managed by the Ministry of Power.
4. SHP contributes to decentralized power generation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

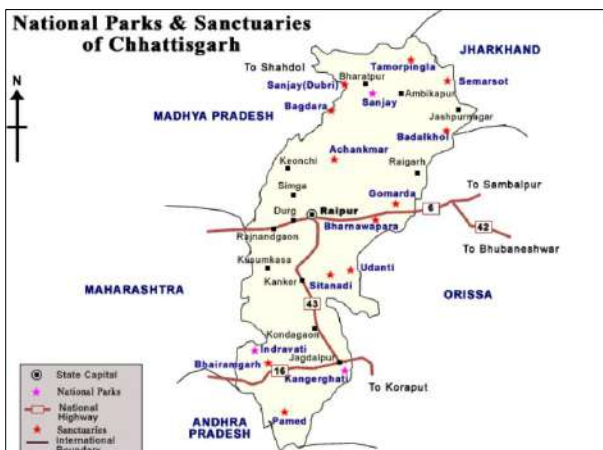
Correct Answer:

(a) 1, 2 and 4 only

Explanation (Expert Level):

1. Statement 1: SHP defined as ≤ 25 MW capacity.
2. Statement 2: Considered renewable energy.
3. Statement 3: Managed by **MNRE**, not Ministry of Power.
4. Statement 4: Supports decentralized electricity generation.

Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary – In News



The **Chhattisgarh** government is planning to launch a **new jungle safari** in the Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary, aiming to promote eco-tourism while showcasing the region's rich biodiversity.

About Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary

1. Located in **Kawardha district**, Chhattisgarh.
2. Formerly known as **Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary**.
3. Lies within the **Maikal range of the Satpura hills**, a biodiversity-rich region of central India.

Ecological Importance

1. Part of the **Kanha–Achanakmar Corridor**, connecting:

- Kanha National Park
 - Achanakmar Wildlife Sanctuary
2. This corridor is crucial for **wildlife movement and genetic exchange**, especially for large mammals like tigers.

Cultural Significance

1. Named after the famous **Bhoramdeo Temple**, located within the sanctuary.
2. The temple:
 - Dates back to the **7th–11th century** (Nagvanshi dynasty)
 - Dedicated to **Lord Shiva**
 - Often called the “**Khajuraho of Chhattisgarh**” due to its intricate carvings

Physical Features

1. Terrain marked by:
 - **Undulating hills**
 - **Dense forests**
 - Numerous **streams and water sources**
2. Region inhabited by tribal communities such as:
 - **Baiga**
 - **Gond**
 - **Kanwar tribes**

Rivers

1. Origin of:
 - **Fen River**
 - **Sankari River**

Vegetation

1. Comprises:
 - **Tropical moist deciduous forests**
 - **Dry deciduous forests**

Flora

1. Dominant species:
 - **Sal**
 - **Tendu**
 - **Bijja (Bija)**
 - **Nijri trees**

Fauna

1. Supports diverse wildlife, including:
 - **Tiger**
 - **Leopard**

- **Sloth Bear**
- Various species of **deer and birds**

About Gond Tribe

Gond Tribe is one of the **largest tribal (Adivasi) communities in India**, belonging to the **Dravidian ethno-linguistic group**.



Distribution

1. Major populations are found in:
 - **Madhya Pradesh**
 - **Chhattisgarh**
 - **Maharashtra**
 - **Andhra Pradesh**
 - **Odisha**
2. Smaller populations are also present in:
 - Uttar Pradesh
 - Telangana
 - Bihar
 - Karnataka
 - Jharkhand
 - West Bengal
 - Gujarat

Sub-Groups

The Gond community is broadly divided into four major groups:

1. **Raj Gonds**
2. **Madia Gonds**
3. **Dhruve Gonds**
4. **Khatulwar Gonds**

Language

1. Majority speak **Gondi**, an **unwritten language** of the Dravidian family.

2. Many also use regional languages such as:

- Hindi
- Marathi
- Telugu
- (depending on geographical location)

Economy

1. Primarily dependent on:
 - **Agriculture**
 - **Animal husbandry**
2. Also rely on:
 - **Forest produce and wild plants** for food and livelihood

Beliefs & Traditions

Religion

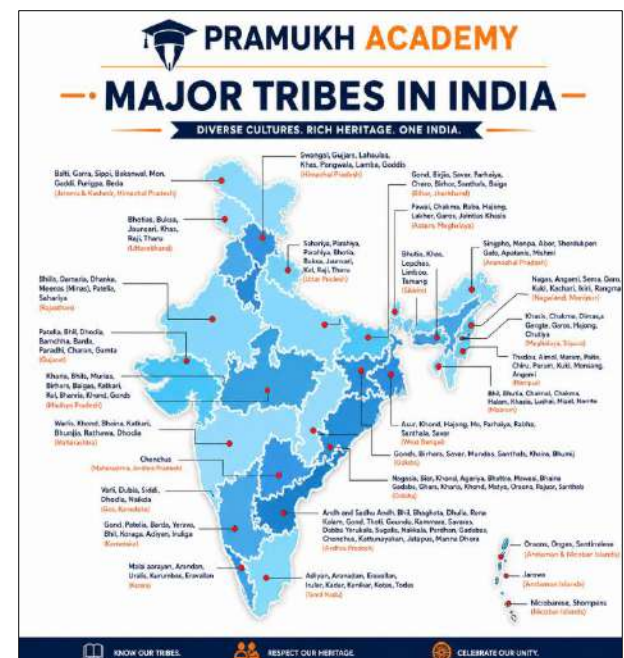
1. Centered around:
 - **Clan and village deities**
 - **Ancestor worship**

Festivals

1. Important festivals include:
 - **Keslapur Jathra**
 - **Madai Festival**

These festivals reflect their deep connection with **nature, forests, and community life**.

Significance



1. Represents India's **rich tribal diversity and indigenous knowledge systems**

2. Plays a crucial role in **forest conservation and sustainable living practices**
3. Current mobilization highlights issues of:
 - **Environmental protection**
 - **Tribal rights and identity**

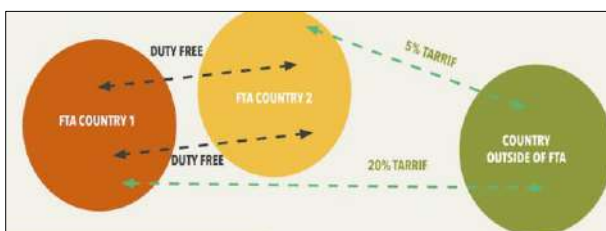
India–New Zealand sign ‘historic’ Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

Source: *The Hindu*

Key News:

India and New Zealand have signed a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** aimed at boosting **trade, investment, and economic cooperation**. The agreement will be implemented after **ratification by New Zealand’s Parliament**.

1. New Zealand will **eliminate tariffs on all imports from India**, while India will reduce tariffs on **around 95% of imports** from New Zealand.
2. The FTA is expected to strengthen **people-to-people ties and strategic partnership**.
3. It reflects a convergence of **shared values, trust, and economic ambitions** between the two countries.



Major Key Data / Facts

1. **Tariff Reduction (India):** ~95% of imports from New Zealand
2. **New Zealand:** Eliminates tariffs on all Indian goods
3. **Sensitive Sectors Excluded:** Dairy, agricultural products, certain metals
4. **Timeline:** Implementation after NZ Parliament ratification

Static Introduction

Free Trade Agreement (FTA) –

1. An agreement between countries to **reduce or eliminate tariffs and trade barriers**
2. Covers:
 - Goods
 - Services
 - Investment
3. Types:
 - Bilateral (India–NZ)
 - Multilateral (WTO frameworks)



India’s Trade Policy Framework

1. Guided by **Foreign Trade Policy (FTP)**
2. Focus on:
 - Export promotion
 - Market diversification
3. India has FTAs with:
 - ASEAN
 - UAE (CEPA)
 - Australia (ECTA)

Benefits of FTA

1. Increased **trade volume and exports**
2. **Technology transfer and investment flows**
3. Integration into **global value chains**

Challenges in FTAs

1. Impact on **domestic industries (e.g., dairy sector)**
2. Trade deficit concerns
3. Need for **rules of origin and safeguards**

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Free Trade Agreements (FTAs):

1. FTAs aim to eliminate or reduce tariffs between participating countries.

2. FTAs always include all sectors without exception.
3. FTAs can promote foreign investment and trade flows.
4. Rules of origin are important in FTAs to prevent misuse.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

(a) 1, 3 and 4 only

Explanation

1. Statement 1 : Core objective of FTAs is tariff reduction.
2. Statement 2 : Sensitive sectors are often excluded.
3. Statement 3 : FTAs boost trade and investment flows.
4. Statement 4 : Rules of origin prevent trade diversion/misuse.

Bihar mandates 'Vande Mataram' in educational institutions

Source: PTI / The Hindu (Reported News)

Key News:

The Bihar government has made it mandatory for educational institutions to begin the day with the national song 'Vande Mataram'. The directive will be implemented following a General Administration Department order dated April 26.

1. The move aligns with efforts to promote patriotism and national values among students.
2. A similar protocol will be followed in government programs and official events.
3. Instructions have been issued to all administrative heads for uniform implementation across the state.

Static Introduction

National Song vs National Anthem

1. **National Anthem:** *Jana Gana Mana* (written by Rabindranath Tagore)
2. **National Song:** *Vande Mataram* (written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in *Anandamath*)
3. Both hold significant cultural and historical importance

Constitutional & Legal Position

1. No explicit constitutional provision mandating singing of national song
2. **Article 51A(a):** Fundamental duty to respect national symbols
3. Supreme Court has upheld:
 - Respect is mandatory
 - Compulsion may be subject to fundamental rights (freedom of expression & religion)

Historical Context

1. 'Vande Mataram' played a key role in India's freedom struggle
2. Adopted as the national song in 1950

Debate & Issues

1. **Support:** Promotes patriotism and unity
2. **Concerns:**
 - Religious sensitivities
 - Freedom of expression (Article 19)
3. Balancing constitutional values and cultural practices is crucial

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding national symbols in India:

1. 'Vande Mataram' is the National Anthem of India.
2. The Constitution explicitly mandates singing of the national song in institutions.
3. Respecting national symbols is a Fundamental Duty under Article 51A.
4. 'Jana Gana Mana' was written by Rabindranath Tagore.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

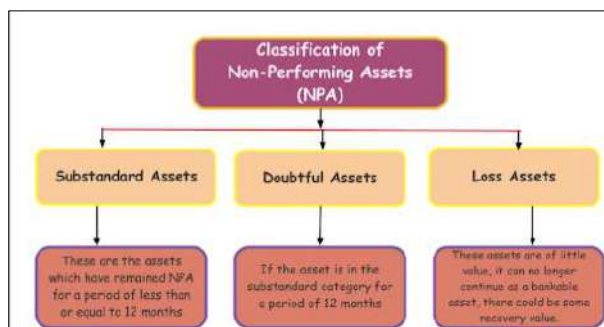
(a) 3 and 4 only

Explanation

1. Statement 1 : 'Vande Mataram' is **National Song**, not anthem.
2. Statement 2 : No constitutional mandate for singing national song.
3. Statement 3 : Article 51A includes respect for national symbols.
4. Statement 4 : Written by **Rabindranath Tagore**.

RBI tightens NPA classification norms to align with global standards

Source: *The Hindu (Economy)*



Key News:

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has revised norms for **classification and provisioning of bad loans (NPAs)**. From **April 1, 2027**, if one loan of a borrower turns NPA, **all loans of that borrower will be classified as NPAs**.

1. The move aims to align India's banking system with **globally accepted prudential standards**.
2. NPAs will now be treated as a **"standard asset" only upon full clearance of overdue principal and interest**.
3. Banks are also required to adopt **automated systems for early identification of stress**.

Static Introduction):

Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)

1. A loan is classified as NPA if **interest or principal remains overdue for more than 90 days**
2. Categories:
 - Substandard
 - Doubtful
 - Loss assets

RBI's Role

1. RBI acts as:
 - **Monetary authority**
 - **Banking regulator**
2. Issues guidelines on:
 - Asset classification
 - Capital adequacy
 - Risk management

Basel Norms

1. International banking standards issued by the **Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS)**
2. Focus on:
 - Capital adequacy
 - Risk management
 - Transparency

Importance of NPA Reforms

1. Strengthens:
 - **Financial stability**
 - Banking sector health
2. Prevents:
 - Evergreening of loans
 - Hidden stressed assets

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding Non-Performing Assets (NPAs):

1. A loan is classified as NPA if it remains overdue for more than 90 days.
2. RBI is responsible for regulating banking sector norms in India.
3. Basel norms are related to environmental protection standards.
4. Higher NPAs weaken the banking system.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

(a) 1, 2 and 4 only

Explanation :

1. Statement 1 : NPA defined as **>90 days overdue**.
2. Statement 2 : RBI regulates banking system.
3. Statement 3 : Basel norms relate to **banking regulation**, not environment.
4. Statement 4 : High NPAs reduce bank profitability and stability.

‘New Delhi Declaration’ proposed at global summit on conservation of big cats

Source: *The Indian Express*

Key News:

India is set to host an **international summit on big cat conservation**, where a “**New Delhi Declaration**” may be adopted. The summit is being organized under the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** initiative.

1. The declaration aims to promote **habitat conservation, international cooperation, and wildlife protection**.
2. It will focus on tackling threats like **poaching, illegal wildlife trade, and climate change**.
3. India is positioning itself as a **global leader in wildlife conservation diplomacy**.

Major Key Data / Facts:

1. **Platform:** International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)
2. **Big Cats Covered:** Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Puma, Jaguar

3. **Global Presence:** Found across ~95 countries

4. **Launch of IBCA:** 2023 (by India)

Static Introduction

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

1. Launched by India in **2023**
2. Objective:
 - Conservation of **seven major big cat species**
 - Promote **global cooperation and knowledge sharing**
3. Headquarters proposed in **India**

Big Cat Species	IUCN Status	CITES Status	Wildlife Protection Act
 Tiger <i>Panthera tigris</i>	Endangered	Appendix I	Schedule I
 Lion <i>Panthera leo</i>	Vulnerable	Appendix I	Schedule I
 Leopard <i>Panthera pardus</i>	Vulnerable	Appendix I	Schedule I
 Snow Leopard <i>Panthera uncia</i>	Vulnerable	Appendix I	Schedule I
 Cheetah <i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>	Vulnerable	Appendix I	Schedule I
 Jaguar <i>Panthera onca</i>	Near Threatened	Appendix I	Not Found in India
 Puma <i>Puma concolor</i>	Least Concern	Appendix I	Not Found in India

Key Conservation Challenges

1. **Habitat loss & fragmentation**
2. **Illegal wildlife trade**
3. **Human-wildlife conflict**
4. **Climate change impacts**

India's Role in Wildlife Conservation

1. **Project Tiger (1973)** – flagship programme
2. **Project Elephant**
3. Recent initiatives:
 - **Cheetah reintroduction (Kuno National Park)**
4. India hosts **~70% of world's tiger population**

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding big cat conservation:

1. The International Big Cat Alliance was launched by India.
2. Big cats are found only in Asia and Africa.
3. Project Tiger was launched in 1973.
4. Snow leopard is classified as Critically Endangered by IUCN.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

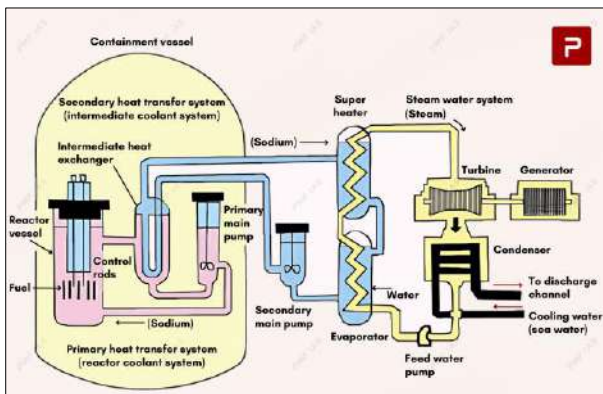
Correct Answer:

(a) 1 and 3 only

Explanation Statement 1 : IBCA launched by India in 2023.

1. Statement 2 : Big cats also found in **Americas (jaguar, puma)**.
2. Statement 3 : Project Tiger launched in 1973.
3. Statement 4 : Snow leopard is **Vulnerable**, not critically endangered.

India achieves milestone in nuclear programme with Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)



Source: PIB (Press Information Bureau), Government of India

Key News:

India has achieved a major milestone with the **Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)** attaining criticality. With this, India is set to become the **second country after Russia** to operate a commercial-scale fast breeder reactor.

1. PFBR marks progress in the **second stage of India's three-stage nuclear programme**.

2. The government also plans to deploy **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) by 2033** under the Nuclear Mission.
3. The development strengthens India's **energy security and long-term thorium utilization strategy**.

Major Key Data / Facts:

1. **Reactor Type:** Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)
2. **Location:** Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu
3. **Programme Stage:** Second stage of 3-stage nuclear programme
4. **Future Plan:** 5 Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) by 2033

Static Introduction

India's Three-Stage Nuclear Programme

1. Designed by **Homi J. Bhabha**
2. **Stage 1:** Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) using uranium
3. **Stage 2:** Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs) using plutonium
4. **Stage 3:** Thorium-based reactors (India has large thorium reserves)

Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR)

1. Produces more fissile material than it consumes
2. Uses:
 - Plutonium as fuel
 - Liquid sodium as coolant
3. Key for **efficient fuel utilization and energy security**

Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)

1. Smaller, factory-built nuclear reactors
2. Advantages:
 - Lower cost
 - Flexible deployment
 - Suitable for remote areas

Importance for India

1. Reduces dependence on **fossil fuels**
2. Supports **Net Zero commitments**

3. Enhances **strategic autonomy in energy sector**

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding India's nuclear energy programme:

1. The second stage of India's nuclear programme involves Fast Breeder Reactors.
2. Fast Breeder Reactors produce more fuel than they consume.
3. India has abundant uranium reserves but limited thorium reserves.
4. Small Modular Reactors are large-scale nuclear power plants.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

(a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation

1. Statement 1 : Stage 2 involves **Fast Breeder Reactors**.
2. Statement 2 : FBRs generate more fissile material.
3. Statement 3 : India has **limited uranium but abundant thorium**.
4. Statement 4 : SMRs are **small, modular**, not large-scale plants.

Recently, the Prime Minister encouraged citizens to explore the **Abhilekh Patal Portal** to gain deeper insights into **India's historical records and archival heritage**.

Abhilekh Patal Portal

About Abhilekh Patal Portal

Abhilekh Patal Portal is a **comprehensive digital platform** that provides access to archival records maintained by the National Archives of India.

Key Features

1. Acts as a **digital repository** curated by the National Archives of India (NAI).
2. Hosts **over 7 million digitized records**, offering a vast collection of historical material.
3. Enables **easy and remote access** to archival documents for researchers and the general public.
4. Aims to preserve and promote India's **documentary heritage through digitization**.

Types of Records Available

The portal provides access to a wide variety of archival materials, including:

1. **Public records** transferred from government ministries and departments
2. **Private papers** of notable personalities
3. **Reference materials** such as:
 - Photographs
 - Maps
 - Microfilms
 - Rare documents
4. Digitized **government files and archival collections** maintained by NAI

National Archives of India (NAI)

National Archives of India

Background

1. Established in **1891 in Kolkata** as the *Imperial Record Department*
2. It is the **largest archival repository in South Asia**

Functions

1. Custodian of **non-current records of the Government of India**
2. Preserves valuable documents for:
 - Researchers
 - Scholars
 - Administrators

Collections Include

1. Public records
2. Private papers
3. Oriental records

4. Cartographic records and microfilms

Headquarters & Offices

1. **Headquarters:** New Delhi
2. **Regional Offices:** Bhopal
3. **Record Centres:** Bhubaneswar, Jaipur, Puducherry

Administrative Control

1. Works under the **Ministry of Culture, Government of India**

Significance

1. Promotes **digital access to historical knowledge**
2. Supports **research, governance, and education**
3. Preserves fragile documents through **digitization**
4. Enhances public engagement with **India's archival legacy**

Industrial output growth slows to 5-month low of 4.1% in March

Source: *The Hindu (Economy)*

Key News:

India's **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** growth slowed to **4.1% in March 2026**, marking a five-month low. The slowdown was driven by **weak performance in construction and consumer-centric sectors**.

Key issues:

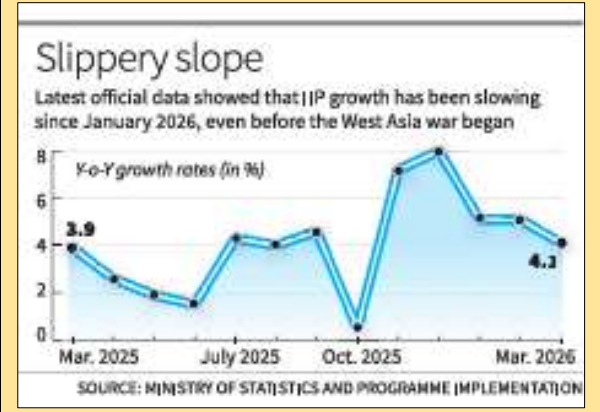
1. Manufacturing growth moderated, reflecting **rising input costs and subdued demand**.
2. The trend indicates early signs of **economic slowdown amid global uncertainties**.
3. However, sectors like **capital goods and infrastructure** showed relative resilience.

Major Key Data / Facts

1. **IIP Growth (March 2026):** 4.1%
2. **Cause of Slowdown:** Construction contraction & weak consumer demand

3. **Manufacturing Sector:** Moderation in growth

4. **Capital Goods:** Strong growth (~14.6%)



Static Introduction

Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

1. Measures **short-term changes in industrial output**
2. Released monthly by **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**
3. Base Year: **2011-12**

Core Industries in IIP	
New Series (Base year 2011-12)	Weight %
Coal	10.33
Crude Oil	8.98
Natural Gas	6.88
Refinery Products	28.04
Fertilizers	2.63
Steel	17.92
Cement	5.37
Electricity	19.85
Total	100

Components of IIP

1. **Primary Sector Weights:**

- Manufacturing (~77%)
- Mining
- Electricity

Importance of IIP

1. Indicator of:
 - **Economic growth**
 - Industrial performance
2. Used for:
 - Policy decisions by RBI and government

Factors Affecting Industrial Growth

1. Demand conditions
2. Input costs (energy, raw materials)
3. Global economic trends
4. Government policies

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding

Index of Industrial Production (IIP):

1. IIP is released by the Reserve Bank of India.
2. Manufacturing sector has the highest weight in IIP.
3. IIP is used as an indicator of industrial performance.
4. Electricity is one of the components of IIP.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

(a) 2, 3 and 4 only

Explanation (

1. Statement 1: IIP is released by **MoSPI**, not RBI.
2. Statement 2: Manufacturing has the **highest weight (~77%)**.
3. Statement 3: It indicates industrial performance.
4. Statement 4: Electricity is a component.

UAE announces exit from OPEC group

Source: The Hindu



Key News:

The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has announced its decision to **exit the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**. The move follows **long-standing disagreements over production quotas** and output restrictions.

Key issues:

1. UAE stated it will continue to act responsibly in oil markets but pursue **independent production strategies**.
2. Tensions with **Saudi Arabia** over quota allocations have contributed to the decision.
3. The exit may impact **global oil supply dynamics and pricing mechanisms**.

Major Key Data / Facts

1. **Organization:** OPEC (founded 1960)
2. **Key Issue:** Production quota disputes
3. **Major Player:** Saudi Arabia (largest producer in OPEC)
4. **Impact:** Potential shift in global oil supply balance

Static Introduction

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

1. Established in **1960 (Baghdad)**
2. Members include:
 - Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Venezuela, UAE (earlier)
3. Objective:
 - **Coordinate petroleum policies**
 - **Stabilize oil prices**

OPEC+ Group

1. Expanded group including **Russia and other non-OPEC producers**
2. Works on:
 - Production cuts or increases
 - Market stabilization

Importance of OPEC

1. Controls a large share of:
 - **Global oil reserves (~70%)**
 - Significant oil production
2. Influences:

➤ **Global crude oil prices**

Impact on India

1. India is a major oil importer (~85% dependence)
2. Changes in OPEC dynamics affect:
 - **Import bill**
 - **Inflation**
 - **Current Account Deficit**

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding OPEC:

1. OPEC was established in 1960.
2. OPEC includes only Asian countries.
3. OPEC+ includes non-OPEC countries like Russia.
4. India is a member of OPEC.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

(a) 1 and 3 only

Explanation (Expert Level):

1. Statement 1: OPEC founded in **1960**.
2. Statement 2: Includes countries from **Africa & South America also**.
3. Statement 3: OPEC+ includes **Russia and others**.
4. Statement 4: India is **not a member**, only an importer.

Leader of Opposition meets Nicobarese community; raises concerns over Great Nicobar project

Source: *The Hindu*

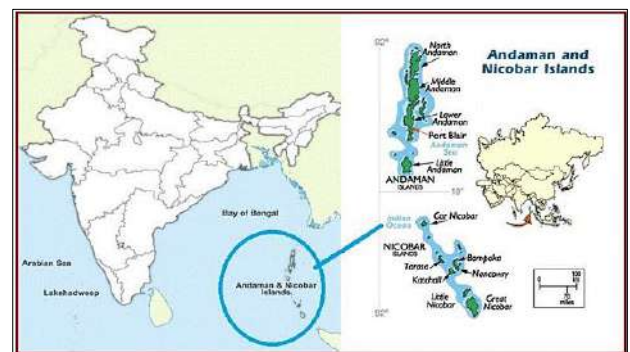
Key News

Leader of Opposition **Rahul Gandhi** visited **Great Nicobar Island** and interacted with the **Nicobarese tribal community**. He assured support to their

concerns regarding the proposed **₹72,000 crore infrastructure project**.

Key issues:

1. The community raised issues related to **displacement, environmental impact, and livelihood threats**.
2. The project aims to develop **tourism and strategic infrastructure** on the island.
3. The issue highlights tensions between **development and tribal rights protection**.



Major Key Data / Facts

1. **Location:** Great Nicobar Island (Andaman & Nicobar Islands)
2. **Project Value:** ₹72,000 crore
3. **Key Concern:** Tribal displacement & ecological impact
4. **Community:** Nicobarese (Scheduled Tribe)

Static Introduction

Great Nicobar Island Project

1. Mega infrastructure project including:
 - **Transshipment port (Galathea Bay)**
 - **International airport**
 - **Township and tourism facilities**
2. Strategic importance:
 - **Near Malacca Strait (global trade route)**

Key Facts About the Nicobarese Tribe:

1. **Geographical Location:** The Nicobarese inhabit the Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal, which are part of India's Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Nicobar group includes 19 islands, with major ones such as Car Nicobar, Kamorta

Island, Nancowry Island, and Great Nicobar Island. These islands feature a mix of hilly and flat landscapes, with Great Nicobar being the largest and southernmost.

2. **Ethnic Identity:** The Nicobarese are part of the Mongoloid ethnic group and have a population exceeding 27,000.
3. **Internal Classification:** Although not divided into formal tribes, they are organized into six territorial groups: Car Nicobar, Chowra, Teressa (with Bompoka), Central Group, Southern Group, and the Shompen—an inland community residing in Great Nicobar.
4. **Social Structure:** Their society follows a patriarchal joint family system known as *Tuhet*. Under this system, property such as land, coconut plantations, and livestock (especially pigs) is owned collectively rather than individually.

Tribal Rights Framework

1. **Article 244 & Fifth/Sixth Schedule** (tribal protections)
2. **Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA)**
3. **Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956 (ANPATR)**

Environmental Concerns

1. Region is:
 - Biodiversity hotspot
 - Habitat of endangered species
2. Risks:
 - Deforestation
 - Coastal ecosystem damage
 - Impact on indigenous communities

Development vs Conservation Debate

1. **Pros:**
 - Economic growth
 - Strategic advantage
2. **Cons:**
 - Ecological damage
 - Violation of tribal rights

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding Great Nicobar Island and tribal protection:

1. Great Nicobar Island is located near the Malacca Strait.
2. The Nicobarese are classified as a Scheduled Tribe.
3. Forest Rights Act, 2006 applies to tribal communities.
4. The Sixth Schedule applies to Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

(a) 1, 2 and 3 only

Explanation (Expert Level):

1. Statement 1: Strategically located near **Malacca Strait**.
2. Statement 2: Nicobarese are **Scheduled Tribe**.
3. Statement 3: FRA applies to forest-dwelling communities.
4. Statement 4: Sixth Schedule applies only to **Northeast India**, not A&N Islands.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q1. Which of the following have coral reefs? (2014)

1. Andaman and Nicobar Islands
2. Gulf of Kachchh
3. Gulf of Mannar
4. Sunderbans

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (a)

Q2. Which one of the following pairs of islands is separated from each other by the 'Ten Degree Channel'? (2014)

- (a) Andaman and Nicobar
- (b) Nicobar and Sumatra
- (c) Maldives and Lakshadweep
- (d) Sumatra and Java

Ans: (a)

Q3. In which one of the following places is the Shompen tribe found? (2009)

- (a) Nilgiri Hills
- (b) Nicobar Islands
- (c) Spiti Valley
- (d) Lakshadweep Islands

Ans: (b)

PM Modi attends Sikkim's 50th Statehood Day; highlights development and organic model

Source: PIB (Press Information Bureau), Government of India



Key News:

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** participated in the **50th Statehood Day celebrations of Sikkim** in Gangtok. He highlighted Sikkim's achievements in **cleanliness, infrastructure, and connectivity**.

1. The PM praised Sikkim as a model of **organic farming and sustainable development**.
2. Focus was laid on **healthcare expansion, youth development, and sports potential** in the state.
3. The event underscored Sikkim's transformation into a **peaceful and progressive Himalayan state**.

Major Key Data / Facts

1. **Statehood Year:** 1975 (22nd state of India)
2. **Milestone:** 50 years of statehood (2025)
3. **Unique Feature:** Fully organic farming state
4. **Location:** Eastern Himalayas

Static Introduction

Sikkim – Political & Historical Background

1. Became part of India in **1975** via **36th Constitutional Amendment**
2. Earlier a **protectorate of India**
3. Capital: **Gangtok**

Organic Farming Model

1. First **fully organic state in India** (declared in 2016)
2. Banned chemical fertilizers and pesticides
3. Promotes:
 - Sustainable agriculture
 - Eco-tourism

Strategic Importance

1. Borders:
 - China (Tibet)
 - Bhutan
 - Nepal
2. Key location for:
 - **India's security and connectivity (Siliguri Corridor proximity)**

Development Indicators

1. High literacy rate
2. Strong performance in:

- Cleanliness
- Environmental conservation
- 3. Known as “**Model Himalayan State**”

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Sikkim:

1. Sikkim became a part of India through the 36th Constitutional Amendment.
2. Sikkim is the first fully organic state in India.
3. Sikkim shares borders with Bhutan and Bangladesh.
4. Gangtok is the capital of Sikkim.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer:

(a) 1, 2 and 4 only

Explanation (Expert Level):

1. Statement 1: Sikkim joined India via **36th Amendment (1975)**.
2. Statement 2: First **fully organic state**.
3. Statement 3: Does **not border Bangladesh**.
4. Statement 4: Capital is **Gangtok**.

NHRC urges states to take advance action to protect vulnerable groups from heat waves

Source: PIB (Press Information Bureau), Government of India

Key News:

The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** has asked **21 states and Delhi** to take proactive steps to mitigate the impact of heat waves. It highlighted the vulnerability of **economically weaker sections, outdoor workers, elderly, children, and homeless populations**.

1. The Commission stressed strict adherence to **NDMA guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**.
2. Rising temperatures have increased risks of **heat-related illnesses and deaths**.
3. States have been asked to submit **action taken reports** for accountability.

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) –

The National Human Rights Commission is a key institution responsible for protecting and promoting human rights in India. It works **to safeguard the fundamental rights of individuals—such as life, liberty, equality, and dignity**—by investigating violations and recommending corrective measures to the government.

Acting as a watchdog, the NHRC intervenes in cases of injustice, especially those affecting vulnerable and marginalized groups, to ensure that constitutional guarantees are upheld.

About NHRC

The NHRC is an independent statutory body established on **October 12, 1993, under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**. It functions as the guardian of rights related to life, liberty, equality, and human dignity, as guaranteed by the Constitution of India and supported by international standards such as the Paris Principles.

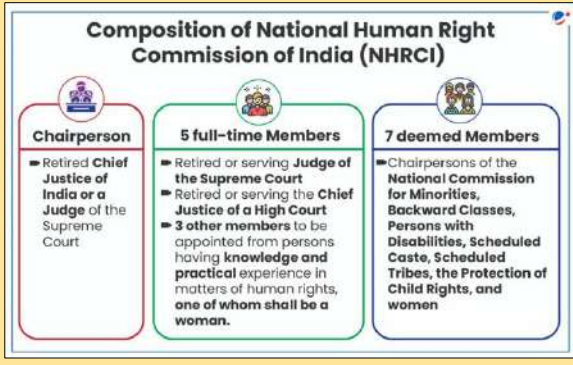
Meaning of Human Rights

According to Section 2(1)(d) of the **Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**, human rights refer to rights concerning life, liberty, equality, and dignity of the individual. These are protected by the Constitution or embodied in international agreements and are enforceable by Indian courts.

Objectives of NHRC

1. To **strengthen institutional mechanisms** for a more effective and focused approach to human rights protection.
2. To **independently investigate allegations** of abuse or excesses by public authorities.

3. To **support and enhance existing efforts** aimed at promoting and safeguarding human rights in the country.



Major Key Data / Facts

- Authority:** NHRC (statutory body under Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993)
- States Covered:** 21 states + NCT Delhi
- Guidelines:** NDMA heatwave management protocols
- Concern:** Rising heatwave-related mortality and vulnerability

Static Introduction

Heat Waves in India

- Defined by India Meteorological Department (IMD)
- Occurs when temperature exceeds:
 - 40°C (plains)
 - 30°C (hills)
- Increasing due to **climate change and urban heat island effect**

NDMA Guidelines on Heat Waves

- Early warning systems
- Public awareness campaigns
- Heat Action Plans (HAPs)
- Provision of:
 - Drinking water
 - Cooling shelters

UPSC Prelims Practice Question (Statement-Based):

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding heat waves and NHRC:

- NHRC is a constitutional body established under Article 324.
- NDMA issues guidelines for disaster management including heat waves.
- Heat waves are increasing due to climate change.
- IMD defines heat wave conditions in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 2, 3 and 4 only
- 1 and 2 only
- 1, 3 and 4 only
- 1, 2, 3 and 4

Correct Answer:

(a) 2, 3 and 4 only

Explanation:

- Statement 1: NHRC is a **statutory body**, not constitutional (Article 324 = ECI).
- Statement 2: NDMA provides disaster management guidelines.
- Statement 3: Climate change increases heatwave frequency.
- Statement 4: IMD defines heatwave criteria.

Dopamine – In News

Recent research has shown that **dopamine dysfunction in the entorhinal cortex**—a key brain region involved in memory—can directly impair **memory formation**. This finding strengthens the link between **neurochemistry and cognitive disorders**.

What is Dopamine?

Dopamine is both a **neurotransmitter (chemical messenger)** and a **hormone** produced in the brain and other parts of the body.

- It helps **transmit signals between nerve cells**.
- Plays a central role in **brain function, behavior, and body regulation**.

Key Functions of Dopamine

Brain & Behaviour

- Controls the **reward and pleasure system**

2. Released when the brain **anticipates or receives rewards**
3. Helps in:
 - **Motivation and goal-directed behavior**
 - **Focus and attention**
 - **Learning and memory formation**

Cognitive Functions

1. Enhances **decision-making and planning ability**
2. Supports **interest, curiosity, and productivity**

Physiological Functions

Dopamine also regulates several body processes:

1. **Movement control**
2. **Mood regulation**
3. **Sleep cycle**
4. **Pain perception**
5. **Heart rate and blood pressure**
6. **Kidney function and fluid balance**
7. **Blood vessel dilation and constriction**
8. **Hormonal regulation (e.g., insulin production, lactation)**

Dopamine Imbalance & Disorders

Abnormal dopamine levels are linked to several diseases:

1. **Low Dopamine Levels:**
 - Parkinson's disease
 - Depression
 - Fatigue
2. **High or Dysregulated Dopamine:**
 - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
 - Restless Legs Syndrome
 - Addiction-related disorders

Dopamine as a Hormone

Apart from brain functions, dopamine also acts as a hormone to:

1. Regulate **blood vessel activity** (dilation/constriction)
2. Control **salt balance and urine production**
3. Influence **insulin secretion**
4. Slow certain aspects of **digestion**

Biological Presence

1. Found in **humans and animals**

2. Present in both:
 - **Vertebrates**
 - **Invertebrates**

Significance of Recent Research

1. Links dopamine dysfunction with **memory impairment**
2. Highlights the role of the **entorhinal cortex in cognition**
3. May aid in understanding disorders like:
 - Alzheimer's disease
 - Cognitive decline
4. Opens pathways for **targeted neurological therapies**

Nilgiri Tahr – In News



The **Tamil Nadu Forest Department** has initiated the **third synchronised population survey** of the Nilgiri Tahr to assess its current status and strengthen conservation strategies.

About Nilgiri Tahr

The **Nilgiri Tahr**, also known as **Nilgiri Ibex** or locally as "**Varayaadu**", is a **mountain-dwelling ungulate endemic to the southern Western Ghats**. It is the **only mountain ungulate species in southern India**.

Habitat

1. Occupies **high-altitude montane grasslands** of the Western Ghats.
2. Found in the **shola-grassland ecosystem**, where:

- Rolling grasslands are interspersed with **patches of stunted evergreen forests (sholas)**
- 3. Typically occurs at elevations between **1200 and 2600 meters**.

Distribution

1. Restricted to a **~400 km stretch** of the Western Ghats across:
 - **Kerala**
 - **Tamil Nadu**
2. The Eravikulam National Park hosts the **largest and densest population** of Nilgiri Tahr.

Physical Features

1. **Stocky, goat-like animal** with:
 - Short, coarse fur
 - A bristly mane
2. **Sexual dimorphism:**
 - Males are **larger and darker** than females

3. Both sexes possess **curved horns**, which are **larger in males**

Conservation Status

1. **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
2. **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I (highest protection)

Major Threats

1. **Habitat loss** due to deforestation
2. **Competition with domestic livestock**
3. Expansion of **hydroelectric projects**
4. Spread of **monoculture plantations** (e.g., tea, eucalyptus)

Significance of the Survey

1. Helps in **accurate population estimation**
2. Assists in **policy formulation and habitat management**
3. Supports long-term conservation of **Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot**
4. Strengthens **species recovery programs**

Student Notes

Counting People is Not Counting Disaster Risk

Source: the hindu

GS Paper: GS-3 (Disaster Management)

Relevance: Disaster Risk Index, Finance Commission, Climate Change, Federal Finance

Introduction:

Odisha is one of India's most disaster-prone states, facing frequent cyclones along its long coastline. Despite significant improvements in disaster preparedness—reducing cyclone mortality to near zero—it has witnessed a decline in disaster funding under the 16th Finance Commission.

This paradox highlights a deeper issue: **disaster risk is not merely about counting population, but about measuring exposure and vulnerability.**

Key Issues

1. Faulty Measurement of Exposure

- Uses total population instead of population in hazard-prone zones
- Example: Inland vs coastal population risk differences ignored

2. Bias Towards Larger States

- Highly populated states like Uttar Pradesh receive higher scores
- Smaller but disaster-prone states get less funding

3. Misrepresentation of Vulnerability

- Uses income (NSDP) as proxy
- Ignores real vulnerabilities like housing, health access, early warning reach

4. Multiplicative Formula Distortion

- Population size dominates final DRI
- Example: Bihar and UP rank higher despite lower hazard exposure

5. Ignoring Ground Realities

- Example: Kerala floods (2018) caused massive damage but low vulnerability score
- Disaster history not adequately captured

Key Facts for Prelims

- **Disaster Risk Index (DRI)** = Hazard × Exposure × Vulnerability
- **16th Finance Commission** allocated ₹2,04,401 crore to SDRF (59.5% increase)
- Exposure currently measured by **total population (1–25 scale)**
- Vulnerability measured using **per capita NSDP (inverted)**
- IPCC defines exposure as population in hazard-prone areas.

Global Practices

1. Developed countries use **geospatial hazard mapping**
2. Risk measured based on:
 - Flood plains
 - Coastal vulnerability
 - Earthquake zones
3. Focus on **“exposed population”**, not total population
4. Integration of climate projections into funding models

Indian Policies / Committees

1. Finance Commission of India
2. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
3. India Meteorological Department
4. National Family Health Survey
5. Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council Vulnerability Atlas
6. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

Way Forward

1. **Redefine Exposure**
 - Measure population in hazard zones (coastal, flood-prone, seismic areas)
2. **Develop Composite Vulnerability Index**
 - Include housing quality, health infrastructure, livelihood dependency
3. **Use Granular Data**
 - District/block-level mapping using Census + satellite data
4. **Institutional Reform**
 - NDMA to publish annual **State Disaster Vulnerability Index**
5. **Integrate Climate Projections**
 - Align funding with future risks (cyclones, droughts, extreme rainfall)

Conclusion

India's disaster finance framework must evolve from a **headcount-based approach to a risk-based approach**. As climate change intensifies hazards, equitable and scientific allocation of funds becomes essential. A formula that counts people but ignores where and how they live cannot ensure resilience—it merely distributes resources, not justice.

Here is your UPSC-ready structured article based on the second editorial:

The West Asia Cauldron of Conflict and Its Fallout

Source: the hindu

GS Paper: GS-2 (International Relations) | GS-3 (Security & Energy)

Relevance: West Asia Conflict, Iran-Israel Tensions, Global Oil Security, Geopolitics

Introduction

West Asia is witnessing a dangerous escalation of conflict, largely driven by Benjamin Netanyahu's aggressive military strategy, supported by Donald Trump's policy stance.

The ongoing confrontation between Israel and Iran has transformed into a prolonged geopolitical crisis with global implications—ranging from energy security to regional instability.

Key Issues

1. **Prolonged Military Escalation**
 - Joint operations by U.S. and Israel have intensified the conflict
 - Risk of a long-drawn war rather than a short confrontation

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **Strait of Hormuz:** Handles ~30% of global oil trade
2. **West Asia:** Strategic region linking Europe, Asia, and Africa
3. **THAAD:** U.S. missile defense system
4. **Iran's leadership** includes Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei
5. **Conflict zones** expanding to Lebanon, Iraq, Syria

2. Iran's Strategic Resilience

- Despite leadership losses and infrastructure damage, Iran continues resistance
- Ability to retaliate through regional proxies and economic tools

3. Global Energy Crisis Risk

- Threat of blockade of Strait of Hormuz
- Could severely disrupt global oil supply chains

4. Weak Global Response

- Europe and other powers hesitant to intervene
- China and Russia likely to oppose escalation

5. Shift Toward War of Attrition

- Iran better adapted for prolonged conflict
- Air power alone insufficient for decisive victory

Global Practices

1. Modern conflicts increasingly involve:
 - Hybrid warfare (cyber + economic + proxy wars)
 - Limited direct troop deployment
2. International norms emphasize:
 - Avoidance of regime-change wars
 - Multilateral diplomacy via global institutions
3. However, current conflict shows weakening of global consensus

Indian Perspective / Policies

1. India's concerns:
 - Energy security (oil imports from West Asia)
 - Diaspora safety in Gulf region
2. Key institutions:
 - United Nations
 - Ministry of External Affairs
3. India follows:
 - Strategic neutrality
 - Diplomatic engagement with both Israel and Iran

Additional Dimension:

Conflict carries ideological dimension rooted in Shia identity

1. Historical reference: Battle of Karbala
2. External aggression may strengthen:
 - Religious solidarity
 - Political resistance within Iran and beyond

Way Forward

1. **Immediate De-escalation:** Diplomatic dialogue through UN channels
2. **Avoid Regime-Change Strategy:** History shows such interventions worsen instability
3. **Secure Energy Routes:** International cooperation to keep Strait of Hormuz open
4. **Promote Regional Diplomacy:** Involve Gulf countries for mediation

5. **India's Balanced Approach:** Maintain neutrality while safeguarding national interests

Conclusion

The West Asia conflict is not just a regional crisis but a **global geopolitical flashpoint**. A prolonged war risks economic disruption, energy insecurity, and wider instability.

A shift from military escalation to diplomatic resolution is essential, as continued aggression may push the region—and the world—towards irreversible consequences.

A Textbook, Criticism, the Court and Contempt

Source: *The Hindu* – Sriram Panchu

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- Judiciary and its role
- Freedom of speech and expression
- Constitutional provisions (Contempt of Court)

GS Paper IV

- Ethics in public life
- Institutional accountability and integrity

Introduction

The judiciary occupies a central role in upholding constitutional values and ensuring rule of law. At the same time, in a democratic society, institutions must remain open to informed and constructive criticism.

The debate surrounding criticism of judicial actions and the use of contempt powers reflects a broader constitutional tension — between protecting the authority of courts and safeguarding freedom of speech.

Key Issues

1. **Ambiguity in Criminal Contempt**

- The term “scandalising the court” is subjective and can lead to varied interpretations.

2. **Chilling Effect on Free Speech**

- Excessive use of contempt powers may discourage legitimate criticism of judicial functioning.

3. **Public Confidence vs Accountability**

- While courts must maintain authority, accountability through public scrutiny is equally important.

4. **Judicial Sensitivity to Criticism**

- Balancing dignity of the judiciary with openness to critique is a continuing challenge.

5. **Institutional Credibility**

- Trust in the judiciary depends not only on protection from criticism but also on transparency and fairness.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971** governs contempt proceedings in India.
2. Contempt is of two types:
 - **Civil contempt** – wilful disobedience of court orders
 - **Criminal contempt** – acts that scandalise or lower the authority of courts
3. The Supreme Court derives contempt powers from **Article 129**, and High Courts from **Article 215**.
4. Freedom of speech is guaranteed under **Article 19(1)(a)**, subject to reasonable restrictions.

Global Practices

United Kingdom

The offence of “scandalising the court” has largely been abolished to protect free speech.



United States	Strong protection of free speech limits the scope of contempt related to criticism.
Canada	Courts adopt a restrained approach, allowing criticism unless it poses a real risk to justice delivery.
Comparative Insight	Modern democracies increasingly favour greater tolerance for criticism , recognising that institutional legitimacy is strengthened by openness.

Indian Policies / Legal Framework

Contempt of Courts Act, 1971	Defines civil and criminal contempt and provides procedural safeguards.
Judicial Precedents	Courts have periodically clarified limits of contempt powers and emphasised restraint.
Constitutional Safeguards	Balance between Article 19(1)(a) (free speech) and reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2) .

Way Forward

- Narrow Definition of Criminal Contempt**
 - Clarify and limit the scope of “scandalising the court”.
- Encourage Constructive Criticism**
 - Recognise informed public discourse as essential for institutional improvement.
- Judicial Restraint**
 - Exercise contempt powers sparingly and proportionately.
- Strengthen Transparency**
 - Improve judicial communication and public engagement.
- Promote Legal Awareness**
 - Educate citizens about the distinction between criticism and contempt.

Conclusion

The dignity of the judiciary is best upheld not by insulating it from criticism, but by ensuring the quality, fairness, and transparency of its functioning. In a democratic framework, accountability and authority must coexist.

A balanced approach — protecting courts from malicious attacks while allowing reasoned critique — strengthens both judicial legitimacy and constitutional democracy.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Supreme Court of India derives its power to punish for contempt from Article 129 of the Constitution.
2. Criminal contempt includes wilful disobedience of court orders.
3. Freedom of speech under Article 19(1)(a) is subject to reasonable restrictions.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Correct Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — wilful disobedience falls under civil contempt.)

Mains Practice Question

Q2. “Judicial authority and freedom of expression must be balanced in a constitutional democracy.”

Discuss in the context of contempt of court laws in India. (250 words)

Student Notes 

A Textbook, Criticism, the Court and Contempt

Source: *The Hindu* – Sriram Panchu

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- Judiciary and its role
- Freedom of speech and expression
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2. Chilling Effect on Free Speech

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- While courts must maintain authority, accountability through public scrutiny is equally important.

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Way Forward

1. **Narrow Definition of Criminal Contempt**

- Clarify and limit the scope of “scandalising the court”.

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- Recognise informed public discourse as essential for institutional improvement.

3. **Judicial Restraint**

- Exercise contempt powers sparingly and proportionately.

4. **Strengthen Transparency**

- Improve judicial communication and public engagement.

5. **Promote Legal Awareness**

- Educate citizens about the distinction between criticism and contempt.

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The dignity of the judiciary is best upheld not by insulating it from criticism, but by ensuring the quality, fairness, and transparency of its functioning. In a democratic framework, accountability and authority must coexist.

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Mains Practice Question

Q2. “Judicial authority and freedom of expression must be balanced in a constitutional democracy.”

Discuss in the context of contempt of court laws in India. (250 words)

A path to peace in West Asia beyond Pakistan talks

Source: Editorial Page

GS Paper: GS Paper II

Relevance: International Relations, West Asia Conflict, Role of India & UN

Introduction:

Recent diplomatic engagements involving countries like Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye highlight attempts to address escalating tensions in West Asia. However, the complexity of the conflict—particularly involving Iran, Israel, and the United States—demands a broader, multilateral and structured peace approach beyond limited bilateral or regional talks.

Key Issues

1. **Lack of Trust Among Conflict Parties**
 - Deep mistrust between Iran, Israel, and the U.S.
 - Negotiations complicated by shifting strategic objectives.
2. **Absence of Clear War Objectives**
 - Unclear end goals (regime change, deterrence, territorial control).
 - Leads to prolonged and escalatory conflict dynamics.
3. **Limitations of Regional Mediation**
 - Pakistan-led or regional initiatives lack neutrality and enforcement capacity.
 - Competing geopolitical interests weaken consensus.
4. **Weakness of Multilateral Mechanisms**
 - UNSC often paralysed due to veto politics.
 - Difficulty in authorising peacekeeping or enforcement actions.
5. **Risk of Wider Regional Escalation**
 - Strategic chokepoints like Strait of Hormuz at risk.
 - Involvement of multiple regional and global powers increases instability.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. United Nations Security Council (UNSC): Primary body responsible for maintaining international peace and security.
2. United Nations General Assembly (UNGA): Can pass resolutions like “Uniting for Peace.”
3. Suez Crisis: Example where UNGA intervened when UNSC was blocked.
4. Strait of Hormuz: Critical global oil transit route.
5. Peacekeeping Forces: Require UNSC mandate for legitimacy.

Global Practices

Suez Crisis (1956)	UNGA used “Uniting for Peace” to bypass UNSC deadlock and deploy peacekeeping forces.
Balkan Conflicts (1990s)	Combination of NATO intervention and UN peacekeeping stabilised the region.
Lesson	Effective conflict resolution requires coordinated multilateral action with enforcement capability.

Indian Policies / Committees (Simplified)

India’s West Asia Policy	Strategic autonomy and balanced engagement with all stakeholders.
Diaspora Protection Mechanisms	Safeguarding Indian nationals in conflict zones.

Energy Security Strategy	Diversification of oil imports to reduce vulnerability.
UN Peacekeeping Role	India is one of the largest contributors to UN missions.

Way Forward

- Strengthen Multilateral Diplomacy**
 - Use UN platforms and Global South coalitions for consensus-building.
- Promote Ceasefire as Immediate Priority**
 - Focus on de-escalation before long-term political solutions.
- Revive UN Mechanisms**
 - Explore alternatives like “Uniting for Peace” in case of UNSC deadlock.
- Encourage Inclusive Mediation**
 - Involve neutral actors and regional stakeholders with credibility.
- India’s Proactive Role**
 - Act as a bridge-builder leveraging strategic neutrality and diplomatic credibility.

Conclusion

Peace in West Asia cannot be achieved through fragmented or unilateral efforts. A credible, inclusive, and multilateral framework—anchored in international legitimacy—is essential. India, with its balanced approach, can play a constructive role in shaping a stable and peaceful regional order.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

- The United Nations General Assembly can act in matters of international peace when the UNSC is deadlocked.
- The Strait of Hormuz is a key global oil transit chokepoint.
- UN peacekeeping missions can be deployed without any mandate from the UNSC.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

Mains Question

Q2. “Regional conflicts in West Asia require multilateral rather than bilateral solutions.” Examine in the context of recent geopolitical developments and suggest India’s role.

ECI transfer controversy, top court’s clarifications

Source: Editorial Page

GS Paper: GS Paper II

Relevance: Constitutional Bodies, Election Commission, Federalism, Governance

Introduction:

The recent controversy over large-scale transfers of senior officials by the Election Commission has reignited debate on the scope of its powers under Article 324. While the Constitution empowers the ECI to ensure free



and fair elections, the Supreme Court has clarified that such powers are not absolute and must operate within statutory and federal limits.

Key Issues

1. Ambiguity in ECI's Transfer Powers

- No explicit statutory provision allowing ECI to transfer senior state officials.
- Reliance on broad interpretation of Article 324 creates legal uncertainty.

2. Federal Tensions

- Transfers without state consent raise concerns over state autonomy.
- Administrative control of officers lies with state governments.

3. Risk of Administrative Paralysis

- Sudden transfers of top officials (e.g., Chief Secretary, DGP) disrupt governance.
- Affects continuity in administration during crucial periods.

4. Question of Natural Justice and Procedure

- Lack of transparent criteria or due process in declaring officials "biased."
- Raises concerns of arbitrariness.

5. Limits of Plenary Powers

- Supreme Court clarified that Article 324 powers apply only where law is silent.
- Cannot override existing statutory provisions.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. Article 324: Vests superintendence, direction, and control of elections in the ECI.
2. Election Commission of India: Constitutional body responsible for conducting elections.
3. Mohinder Singh Gill vs Chief Election Commissioner: Landmark case defining ECI's plenary powers.
4. All India Services Act, 1951: Governs

Global Practices

United Kingdom	Independent electoral bodies operate within clearly defined statutory frameworks.
United States	Election administration largely decentralised to states with strong legal safeguards.
Lesson	Electoral bodies must function within well-defined legal boundaries to ensure accountability and legitimacy.

Indian Policies / Committees

Representation of the People Act, 1950 & 1951	Governs conduct of elections.
Law Commission Reports (various)	Recommend strengthening electoral integrity.
Supreme Court Judgments	Clarify limits of ECI's powers (e.g., Mohinder Singh Gill case).

Way Forward

1. Provide Statutory Clarity

- Define ECI's powers regarding transfer/posting of officials through legislation.

2. Strengthen Federal Coordination

- Ensure consultation with state governments in administrative decisions.

3. Ensure Transparency in Decision-Making

- Establish clear criteria and procedures for transfers.

4. Balance Autonomy with Accountability

- Maintain ECI independence while ensuring adherence to rule of law.

5. Judicial Oversight and Safeguards

- Enable timely judicial review to prevent misuse of powers.

Conclusion

The ECI remains a cornerstone of India's लोकतंत्र, but its credibility depends on operating within constitutional and legal limits. Strengthening clarity, transparency, and cooperative federalism will ensure that the objective of free and fair elections is achieved without undermining institutional balance.

Prelims MCQ**Q1. Consider the following statements:**

1. Article 324 gives absolute and unlimited powers to the Election Commission of India.
2. The Election Commission can override statutory laws while conducting elections.
3. The Supreme Court has held that ECI's powers are subject to existing laws.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Mains Question

**Q2. "Article 324 provides wide powers to the Election Commission, but not unchecked authority."
Examine in light of recent controversies and judicial interpretations.**

Student Notes

Fear of the foreign — FCRA amendments are unfair in principle and procedure

Source: the hindu **GS Paper:** GS Paper II

Relevance: Governance, Civil Society, Foreign Funding Regulation, Fundamental Rights

Introduction:

The proposed amendments to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) aim to tighten control over foreign funding of NGOs and civil society organisations. While national security and transparency are legitimate concerns, excessive regulatory tightening raises questions about procedural fairness, administrative overreach, and the shrinking space for civil society in a democracy.

Key Issues

1. Procedural Arbitrariness

- Broad discretionary powers to cancel registrations without clear justification.
- Lack of transparent criteria for approval or rejection.

2. Burden of Compliance

- Extensive reporting and regulatory requirements increase operational costs.
- Smaller NGOs disproportionately affected.

3. Chilling Effect on Civil Society

- Restrictions discourage advocacy and rights-based work.
- Impacts organisations working on sensitive issues (human rights, environment).

4. Concentration of Power

- Centralised decision-making in the executive (MHA).
- Limited scope for independent oversight or appeal.

5. Concerns over Natural Justice

- Automatic suspensions or cancellations without adequate hearing.
- Weak grievance redressal mechanisms.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA):** Regulates foreign donations to individuals and organisations.
2. First enacted in **1976**, revised in **2010**, and amended in **2020**.
3. Administered by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.
4. Requires registration or prior permission for receiving foreign funds.
5. NGOs must comply with reporting, utilisation, and audit norms.

Global Practices

United States	Disclosure-based regime for foreign funding (e.g., FARA) with judicial oversight.
United Kingdom	Transparent charity regulation with independent watchdogs.
Lesson	Effective regulation balances transparency with protection of civil society autonomy.

Indian Policies / Committees

FCRA 2010 & 2020 Amendments	Tightened compliance norms, restricted sub-granting.
Supreme Court Judgments	Recognise right to association under Article 19(1)(c), subject to reasonable restrictions.

NITI Aayog NGO Darpan Portal	Aims to improve transparency and coordination.
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Way Forward

- 1. Ensure Procedural Fairness**
 - Provide clear guidelines and reasons for regulatory actions.
- 2. Strengthen Independent Oversight**
 - Introduce appellate mechanisms or independent review bodies.
- 3. Simplify Compliance Framework**
 - Reduce bureaucratic burden, especially for smaller NGOs.
- 4. Balance Security with Freedom**
 - Avoid excessive restrictions that undermine democratic participation.
- 5. Promote Transparency through Technology**
 - Use digital platforms for real-time disclosures instead of restrictive controls.

Conclusion

Regulating foreign funding is necessary for safeguarding national interests, but it must not come at the cost of weakening civil society. A balanced, transparent, and rights-respecting framework will ensure both accountability and democratic vibrancy.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act was first enacted in 1976.
2. FCRA is administered by the Ministry of Finance.
3. NGOs require registration or prior permission to receive foreign funds under FCRA.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Mains Question

Q2. "While regulating foreign contributions is necessary, excessive control can undermine democratic freedoms." Critically examine in the context of recent FCRA amendments.

Lessons unlearned — Steps to manage crowds must be taught to organisers, police personnel

Source: the hindu

GS Paper: GS Paper III

Relevance: Disaster Management, Internal Security, Public Safety

Introduction:

The recent stampede at a religious gathering highlights persistent gaps in crowd management despite past tragedies. Incidents like the Maha Kumbh stampede underline that such disasters are rarely accidental—they are failures of planning, coordination, and implementation.

Key Issues

1. Lack of Scientific Crowd Planning

- Absence of capacity assessment and flow modelling.
- Overcrowding at entry/exit points.

2. Inadequate Training of Personnel

- Police and organisers lack specialised crowd management skills.
- Limited use of simulation-based training.

3. Poor Infrastructure and Design

- Narrow pathways, blocked exits, and temporary structures.
- Lack of signage and emergency routes.

4. Failure of Real-time Monitoring

- Insufficient surveillance (CCTV, drones).
- Delayed response to early warning signs.

5. Behavioral and Communication Gaps

- Panic triggered by rumours or sudden movement.
- Lack of clear public communication systems.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **Stampede:** Sudden, uncontrolled crowd movement causing injuries/deaths due to trampling or suffocation.
2. **NDMA Guidelines:** Provide protocols for crowd management in mass gatherings.
3. **Key Risk Factors:** High density, bottlenecks, panic triggers, poor exit planning.
4. **Types of Crowds:**
 - Controlled (ticketed events)
 - Uncontrolled (religious gatherings, protests)

Global Practices

United Kingdom	Advanced crowd science models used in stadiums and public events.
Saudi Arabia (Hajj Management)	Use of AI, surveillance, and strict crowd flow regulation.
Lesson	Integration of technology, behavioural science, and strict enforcement ensures safer mass gatherings.

Indian Policies / Committees

NDMA Guidelines on Crowd Management (2014)	Emphasise planning, risk assessment, and coordination.
Police Modernisation Schemes	Aim to improve training and infrastructure.
Disaster Management Act, 2005	Provides institutional framework for disaster response.

Way Forward

1. Adopt Scientific Crowd Modelling

- Use data-driven tools for capacity planning and movement prediction.

2. Mandatory Training and Certification

- Train police and event organisers in crowd psychology and disaster response.

3. Improve Infrastructure Design

- Ensure multiple exits, wider pathways, and clear signage.
- 4. **Leverage Technology for Monitoring**
 - Use CCTV, drones, and AI-based alerts for real-time management.
- 5. **Strengthen Public Communication Systems**
 - Use announcements and digital tools to guide crowd behaviour.

Conclusion

Crowd disasters are not inevitable; they are preventable with proper planning and execution. Institutionalising best practices, training, and technology integration can transform India's approach from reactive response to proactive prevention.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Stampedes are primarily caused by intentional violence in crowds.
2. NDMA has issued guidelines for crowd management in India.
3. High crowd density and bottlenecks increase the risk of stampedes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Mains Question

Q2. "Crowd disasters in India are more a failure of governance than of circumstance." Discuss with suitable examples and suggest measures for effective crowd management.

Student Notes 📝

Transforming India's Nuclear Power Landscape

Source: *The Hindu* – Rakesh Sood

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- Government policies and interventions
- Energy diplomacy

GS Paper III

- Energy security
- Nuclear energy
- Infrastructure and industrial growth

Introduction

India's energy transition is at a critical juncture, balancing rising electricity demand with climate commitments. Nuclear power, as a low-carbon and stable energy source, is increasingly being positioned as a key component of India's long-term energy strategy. Recent policy initiatives, particularly the proposed legislative changes under the **SHANTI (Sustainable Harnessing and Advancing Nuclear Transformation for India) framework**, signal a shift towards expanding nuclear capacity with greater private sector participation and regulatory reforms.

Key Issues

1. Limited Share in Energy Mix

- Despite its potential, nuclear power contributes a small share to India's total electricity generation.

2. High Capital Costs

- Nuclear projects require large upfront investments and long gestation periods.

3. Regulatory and Legal Constraints

- Existing laws restrict private sector participation and complicate liability frameworks.

4. Public Perception and Safety Concerns

- Concerns about nuclear safety and waste management affect project acceptance.

5. Slow Project Execution

- Delays in approvals, land acquisition, and construction hinder capacity expansion.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. India's current nuclear power capacity is about **8,000+ MW** (approx.).
2. Nuclear energy contributes **~3% of India's electricity generation**.
3. India follows a **three-stage nuclear programme** based on uranium and thorium.
4. The **Atomic Energy Act, 1962** governs nuclear energy in India.
5. The **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 (CLNDA)** addresses liability issues.
6. India aims to expand non-fossil fuel capacity significantly under climate commitments.

Global Practices

France	Relies heavily on nuclear energy for electricity generation (~70%).
United States	Large nuclear fleet with increasing focus on small modular reactors (SMRs).
China	Rapidly expanding nuclear capacity as part of clean energy transition.
Comparative Insight	Countries integrating nuclear power effectively combine policy support, private investment, and technological innovation .

Indian Policies / Committees

SHANTI Initiative (Proposed)	Aims to reform nuclear energy governance, encourage private participation, and expand capacity.
Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)	Responsible for nuclear policy and programme implementation.
Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)	Ensures nuclear safety and regulatory oversight.
NPCIL (Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited)	Operates nuclear power plants in India.

Way Forward

- 1. Reform Legal Framework**
 - Amend liability laws and regulatory provisions to attract private investment.
- 2. Promote Public-Private Partnerships**
 - Encourage private sector participation in plant construction and operation.
- 3. Invest in Advanced Technologies**
 - Focus on Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and thorium-based reactors.
- 4. Strengthen Safety and Transparency**
 - Enhance regulatory independence and public communication.
- 5. Integrate with Renewable Strategy**
 - Use nuclear power as a stable baseload complement to intermittent renewable energy.

Conclusion

Nuclear energy offers India a reliable, low-carbon pathway to meet its growing energy needs while fulfilling climate commitments. However, its expansion requires careful balancing of economic, regulatory, and safety considerations.

A well-designed policy framework, backed by institutional reforms and technological innovation, can enable nuclear power to play a more significant role in India's energy future.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Atomic Energy Act, 1962 governs nuclear energy in India.
2. Nuclear power is the largest source of electricity in India.
3. India's nuclear programme includes the use of thorium as a long-term resource.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — coal remains the largest source.)

Mains Practice Question

Q2. "Nuclear energy is essential for India's clean energy transition but faces multiple structural challenges." Discuss the role of nuclear power in India's energy mix and suggest reforms for its expansion. (250 words)

The World Trade Organization Is Flailing

Source: *The Hindu* – Prabhash Ranjan

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- International organisations
- Global governance

GS Paper III

- International trade
- Economic development
- Globalisation

Introduction

The global trading system, once anchored by rules-based multilateralism under the World Trade Organization (WTO), is facing increasing stress. Recent ministerial conferences have highlighted persistent disagreements among member states, raising concerns about the WTO's ability to adapt to contemporary economic challenges. While the WTO played a crucial role in liberalising trade and resolving disputes, evolving global realities — including digital trade, protectionism, and geopolitical rivalries — are testing its institutional effectiveness.

Key Issues

- Failure of Consensus-Based Decision Making**
 - WTO decisions require consensus, making reforms slow and often ineffective.
- Stalemate on Key Issues**
 - Deadlock persists on critical areas such as e-commerce rules, agricultural subsidies, and development concerns.
- Weak Dispute Settlement System**
 - The Appellate Body crisis has undermined enforcement of trade rules.
- Rise of Protectionism**
 - Countries increasingly adopt unilateral trade measures and regional agreements.
- Limited Adaptation to New Trade Areas**
 - The WTO framework struggles to address emerging sectors like digital trade and services.

Key Facts for Prelims

- The **World Trade Organization (WTO)** was established in **1995**.
- It evolved from the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 1947**.
- The WTO has **164 member countries**.
- The **Most Favoured Nation (MFN)** principle ensures non-discriminatory trade.
- The **Ministerial Conference (MC)** is the highest decision-making body of the WTO.
- The WTO dispute settlement mechanism has faced challenges due to issues in the Appellate Body.

Global Practices

Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs)	Countries are increasingly relying on FTAs and regional agreements outside the WTO framework.
United States	Has taken unilateral trade measures and questioned WTO dispute mechanisms.
European Union	Supports multilateralism but also engages in bilateral trade agreements.
Comparative Insight	Global trade governance is shifting from multilateralism to plurilateral and regional frameworks .

Indian Policies / Position

India's WTO Approach	Supports multilateralism while safeguarding developmental interests.
Opposition to Certain Agreements	India has resisted some plurilateral initiatives due to concerns over policy space.
Trade Diversification Strategy	India is actively negotiating FTAs with major economies.

Way Forward

1. Reform WTO Decision-Making

- Introduce flexible mechanisms beyond strict consensus where necessary.

2. Revive Dispute Settlement System

- Restore functionality of the Appellate Body.

3. Address Development Concerns

- Ensure fair treatment of developing countries.

4. Incorporate Emerging Trade Issues

- Develop frameworks for digital trade and new economic sectors.

5. Balance Multilateralism and Regionalism

- Leverage both WTO and FTAs for economic growth.

Conclusion

The WTO remains a critical institution for global trade governance, but its effectiveness depends on its ability to adapt to changing economic realities. While challenges persist, abandoning multilateralism altogether could lead to fragmented and less predictable trade systems.

Reforms aimed at enhancing flexibility, inclusivity, and relevance are essential to restore confidence in the WTO framework.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The World Trade Organization was established in 1995.
2. The Most Favoured Nation (MFN) principle ensures equal treatment of all trading partners.
3. The WTO Appellate Body is currently functioning without any challenges.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: a) 1 and 2 only

(Statement 3 is incorrect — the Appellate Body faces operational challenges.)

Mains Practice Question

Q2. "The weakening of the WTO reflects the broader crisis of multilateralism in global trade." Examine the challenges faced by the WTO and suggest reforms. (250 words)

Student Notes 📝

A Disturbing Step for Rights, Dignity and Mental Health

Source: *The Hindu* – Dr. Kavita Arora

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- Fundamental Rights
- Vulnerable sections
- Government policies and legislation

GS Paper IV (Ethics)

- Human dignity
- Compassion and inclusivity
- Ethical governance

Introduction

Balancing Legal Frameworks with Human Dignity

The proposed amendments to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act have reignited debates around identity, dignity, and state intervention. While regulatory clarity is often necessary, the core concern lies in whether such provisions uphold constitutional values of autonomy, equality, and mental well-being.

The issue goes beyond legal technicalities and touches upon the fundamental question of who determines individual identity in a democratic society.

Key Issues

1. Shift from Self-Identification to Verification

- The amendment introduces institutional verification, moving away from the principle of self-identification.

2. Bureaucratic Gatekeeping

- Requirement of certification through authorities may create procedural delays and exclusion.

3. Risk to Privacy and Dignity

- External validation of identity raises concerns regarding bodily autonomy and personal dignity.

4. Mental Health Implications

- Uncertainty and scrutiny may increase stress, stigma, and psychological vulnerability among transgender persons.

5. Criminalisation Concerns

- Provisions related to “undue influence” could unintentionally affect support systems like NGOs and healthcare professionals.

Key Facts for Prelims (Static-linked, factual)

1. The **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** aims to protect rights and welfare of transgender persons.
2. The **NALSA vs Union of India** recognised transgender persons as the “third gender.”
3. The judgment upheld **self-identification of gender identity** as a fundamental right.
4. Constitutional provisions involved:
 - Article 14 – Equality before law
 - Article 15 – Non-discrimination
 - Article 19 – Freedom of expression
 - Article 21 – Right to life and dignity

Global Practices

Argentina	Recognises gender identity based on self-identification without medical requirements.
Malta	Adopts a rights-based approach with minimal state interference.
United Kingdom	Requires medical certification, reflecting a more regulated model.
Comparative Insight	Globally, there is a shift toward self-identification models , balancing legal recognition with dignity and autonomy.

Indian Policies / Committees

Transgender Persons Act, 2019	Provides legal recognition and welfare measures.
National Council for Transgender Persons	Advisory body for policy formulation.
Judicial Framework	The NALSA judgment remains the foundational constitutional interpretation on gender identity.

Way Forward

- 1. Preserve Principle of Self-Identification**
 - Ensure that legal processes do not dilute constitutional guarantees.
- 2. Simplify Administrative Procedures**
 - Avoid excessive verification layers and ensure accessibility.
- 3. Strengthen Mental Health Support**
 - Provide targeted psychological and community-based support systems.
- 4. Ensure Legal Clarity**
 - Clearly define provisions to avoid misuse or unintended consequences.
- 5. Promote Sensitisation**
 - Enhance awareness among officials, healthcare providers, and society.

Conclusion

A rights-based approach to governance requires balancing administrative efficiency with individual dignity. Policies concerning vulnerable groups must be carefully designed to avoid unintended exclusion or harm. Reforms should aim to strengthen trust between citizens and institutions, ensuring that legal frameworks uphold both constitutional morality and human compassion.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The NALSA judgment recognised the right to self-identify gender.
2. The Transgender Persons Act, 2019 completely prohibits any form of certification.
3. Article 21 includes the right to dignity.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — the Act includes certification provisions.)

Mains Practice Question

Q2. "Legal recognition of gender identity must balance administrative procedures with individual dignity and autonomy." Examine in the context of recent developments in transgender rights in India. (250 words)

Student Notes

Climate Change as a Public Health Emergency

Source

The Hindu – Dr. Naresh Trehan

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- Health sector
- Vulnerable populations

GS Paper III

- Climate change
- Environment and disaster management

Introduction

From Environmental Issue to Health Crisis

Climate change is increasingly emerging not only as an environmental challenge but as a major public health emergency. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events are intensifying disease burdens, disrupting food systems, and straining healthcare infrastructure.

In countries like India, where climatic variability intersects with high population density and infrastructural gaps, the health impacts are becoming more visible and widespread.

Key Issues

1. Rising Disease Burden

- Climate variability is expanding the spread of vector-borne and waterborne diseases into new regions.

2. Air Pollution and Health Risks

- Increased heat and emissions raise pollution levels, leading to respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses.

3. Heat Stress and Mortality

- Frequent and intense heatwaves increase cases of heatstroke and related deaths.

4. Food and Nutrition Insecurity

- Climate change disrupts agriculture, reducing food availability and nutritional quality.

5. Impact on Vulnerable Groups

- Children, elderly, and outdoor workers face disproportionate health risks.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. Climate change leads to both **direct (heatwaves, disasters)** and **indirect (diseases, malnutrition)** health impacts.
2. **Vector-borne diseases** (e.g., malaria, dengue) are climate-sensitive.
3. **PM2.5 (Particulate Matter 2.5)** can penetrate deep into lungs and bloodstream.
4. Heatwaves increase risks of **cardiovascular diseases and heatstroke**.
5. India is highly vulnerable due to **tropical climate and socio-economic factors**.

Global Practices

World Health Organization (WHO)	Recognises climate change as the biggest global health threat of the 21st century.
Europe	Implements heat action plans and early warning systems.
Australia	Focuses on climate-resilient healthcare infrastructure.
Comparative Insight	Countries integrating climate adaptation with public health planning show better resilience.

Indian Policies / Initiatives

National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)	Includes missions addressing climate adaptation.
National Health Mission (NHM)	Strengthens healthcare delivery, including climate-sensitive disease control.
Heat Action Plans	Implemented in cities like Ahmedabad to reduce heatwave mortality.

Way Forward

- 1. Integrate Climate and Health Policies**
 - Mainstream climate considerations into public health planning.
- 2. Strengthen Surveillance Systems**
 - Improve monitoring of climate-sensitive diseases.
- 3. Build Climate-Resilient Infrastructure**
 - Develop healthcare systems capable of handling climate-related stress.
- 4. Promote Public Awareness**
 - Educate communities on preventive measures.
- 5. Protect Vulnerable Populations**
 - Target interventions for high-risk groups like children and outdoor workers.

Conclusion

Recognising climate change as a public health emergency is essential for effective policy response. A proactive, integrated approach that combines environmental management with healthcare planning can reduce long-term risks.

Addressing climate change through a health lens not only improves resilience but also ensures more inclusive and sustainable development.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. PM2.5 particles can penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream.
2. Climate change has no impact on vector-borne diseases.
3. Heatwaves can increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — climate change significantly affects vector-borne diseases.)

Mains Practice Question

**Q2. "Climate change is no longer only an environmental issue but a major public health challenge."
Discuss with reference to India. (250 word**

Delimitation, women's reservation, political dynamics

Source: Editorial Page

GS Paper: GS Paper II

Relevance: Polity, Representation, Federalism, Gender Justice

Introduction

The passage of the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023 marks a significant step toward gender-inclusive representation by reserving one-third of seats for women. However, its linkage with delimitation and Census processes introduces complex questions about federal balance, demographic representation, and electoral fairness.

Key Issues

1. Delay in Implementation

- Reservation is not immediate; tied to Census and delimitation.
- Raises concerns about political intent and timing.

2. North-South Representation Divide

- Population-based delimitation may increase seats for northern States.
- Southern States fear reduced relative representation despite better development indicators.

3. Data and Census Concerns

- Use of outdated Census (2011) vs need for fresh data.
- Migration, urbanisation, and demographic shifts complicate representation.

4. Rotation of Reserved Seats

- Uncertainty over rotation mechanism may affect political continuity and accountability.
- Frequent rotation could disrupt constituency development.

5. Sub-Quota Demands

- OBC, minority women demand representation within reservation.
- Adds complexity to implementation framework.

Key Facts for Prelims

- **Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023:** Provides 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- Implementation is contingent on next Census and delimitation exercise.
- **Delimitation:** Redrawing of electoral constituency boundaries based on population.
- Last delimitation exercise conducted in **2002 (based on 2001 Census)**.
- **Delimitation Commission:** Independent body whose orders have the force of law.

Global Practices

Rwanda	Over 60% women representation through constitutional quotas.
France	Gender parity laws mandate equal representation in candidate lists.
Lesson	Gender quotas are effective when backed by clear implementation mechanisms and political consensus.

Indian Policies / Committees

Delimitation Commission Acts	Govern redrawing of constituencies.
73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendments	Provide reservation for women in local bodies.
Census Exercise	Basis for population-based representation.

Way Forward

1. Time-bound Implementation

- Decouple reservation from prolonged delays in Census/delimitation.

2. Balanced Federal Approach

- Consider alternative criteria beyond population (development indicators).

3. Clarity on Rotation Mechanism

- Ensure stability and accountability in representation.

4. Address Sub-Quota Demands

- Evolve inclusive framework for backward and minority women.

5. Transparent Delimitation Process

- Use updated data and consult stakeholders to avoid disputes.

Conclusion

Women's reservation is a transformative reform, but its success depends on careful implementation. Balancing demographic realities with federal equity and political stability will be crucial to ensuring that this reform strengthens India's democratic fabric.

Prelims MCQ**Q1. Consider the following statements:**

1. The Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023 provides reservation for women in Parliament and State Assemblies.
2. The implementation of women's reservation is independent of delimitation.
3. Delimitation Commission orders have the force of law and cannot be challenged in court.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Mains Question

Q2. "The implementation of women's reservation in India is as much a question of political design as of gender justice." Discuss in the context of delimitation and federal dynamics.

A closer look at Asim Munir's West Asia diplomacy

Source: Editorial Page

GS Paper: GS Paper II

Relevance: International Relations, West Asia, India's Foreign Policy

Introduction

Pakistan's recent diplomatic outreach under Asim Munir reflects an attempt to reposition itself amid evolving geopolitical tensions in West Asia. By engaging actors like the United States, Iran, and Gulf nations, Pakistan seeks relevance as a mediator—though structural constraints and regional complexities limit the sustainability of such efforts.

Key Issues**1. Overreach in Diplomacy**

- Pakistan attempting multiple roles: mediator, ally, and strategic partner.
- Risk of credibility loss if outcomes are not achieved.

2. Dependence on External Powers

- Diplomatic moves closely tied to U.S. and Gulf interests.
- Limited independent strategic autonomy.

3. Regional Rivalries and Contradictions

- Balancing ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia is inherently difficult.
- Conflicting alliances reduce effectiveness.

4. Domestic Constraints

- Economic instability and political challenges weaken diplomatic leverage.
- Limited capacity to sustain long-term initiatives.

5. Uncertain Geopolitical Outcomes

- Ongoing conflicts (Iran–Israel tensions, Gulf security issues) are unpredictable.
- External shocks can derail diplomatic positioning.

Key Facts for Prelims

- **Strait of Hormuz:** Critical chokepoint for global oil supply.
- **North Atlantic Treaty Organization:** Military alliance including Türkiye.
- **Pakistan–Saudi Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement:** Enhances military cooperation.
- ****Osama bin Laden killing (2011):** Turning point in US–Pakistan relations.
- **West Asia:** Region marked by geopolitical rivalries (Iran–Saudi, US involvement).

Global Practices

Oman & Qatar	Traditionally play neutral mediator roles in West Asia.
Türkiye	Combines diplomacy with strategic assertiveness.
Lesson	Effective mediation requires credibility, neutrality, and sustained institutional capacity.

Indian Policies / Committees

India's West Asia Policy	Balanced engagement with Israel, Iran, and Gulf countries.
Link West Policy	Focus on economic and strategic ties with the region.
Diaspora Diplomacy	Protection of Indian workers in Gulf countries.

Way Forward

1. **Strategic Clarity in Diplomacy:** Avoid overextension and define clear objectives.
2. **Build Institutional Capacity:** Strengthen diplomatic institutions for sustained engagement.
3. **Maintain Neutral Credibility:** Avoid alignment that undermines mediation roles.
4. **Focus on Economic Stability:** Strong domestic economy enhances foreign policy leverage.
5. **Engage in Multilateral Frameworks:** Use international platforms for legitimacy and coordination.

Conclusion

Pakistan's diplomatic activism in West Asia reflects ambition but also exposes structural limitations. Sustainable influence in the region requires consistency, credibility, and alignment between domestic strength and external strategy.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Strait of Hormuz is a critical route for global oil trade.
2. Pakistan is a member of NATO.
3. Oman and Qatar have played mediation roles in West Asia.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Mains Question

Q2. "Middle-power diplomacy in conflict regions often faces limits of credibility and capacity." Examine in the context of Pakistan's recent engagements in West Asia.

Student Notes



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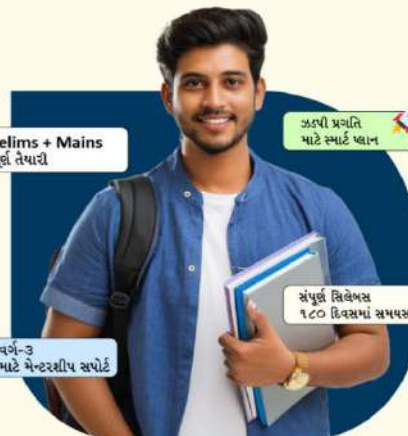


Prelims + Mains
संपूर्ण तैयारी

उत्तम प्रगति
भाटे स्मार्ट प्लान

संपूर्ण सिलेबस
१८० दिवस में समायोजित पूछें

वर्ग-उ
भाटे मेन्टरशिप सपोर्ट



The Other Side of Sport — Mastering Manufacturing

Source: *The Hindu*—Sanjeet Singh & Lakshita Mehrotra

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- Government policies and industrial development
- Institutional frameworks

GS Paper III

- Manufacturing sector, MSMEs
- Export competitiveness, Economic development

Introduction

India's growing success in sports has brought attention not only to athletes but also to the supporting ecosystem behind performance. A critical but often overlooked component is the **sports goods manufacturing sector**, which plays a significant role in enabling access to quality equipment and enhancing competitiveness.

Despite being a major producer, India's sports goods industry remains largely domestic focused, limiting its potential to become a global manufacturing hub.

Key Issues

- Fragmented Manufacturing Structure**
 - MSMEs dominate the sector, limiting scale and impacting productivity and consistency.
- Low Technological Adoption**
 - Limited use of advanced materials and precision manufacturing restricts high-end production.
- Lack of Global Branding**
 - Indian firms largely operate as contract manufacturers rather than global brands.
- Compliance and Certification Challenges**
 - High costs of international standards certification reduce export competitiveness.
- Limited Integration in Global Value Chains**
 - Indian manufacturers are not deeply integrated into global sports supply chains.

Key Facts for Prelims

- India is among the **top producers of sports goods globally**.
- Key manufacturing hubs: **Jalandhar (Punjab)** and **Meerut (Uttar Pradesh)**.
- MSMEs dominate the sector, especially in equipment like balls, bats, and accessories.
- Export competitiveness depends on **quality standards, scale, and innovation**.
- High-performance sports equipment requires **advanced materials and precision engineering**.

Global Practices

China	Dominates sports goods manufacturing with scale, cost efficiency, and global supply chain integration.
Vietnam	Emerging hub due to strong integration into global production networks.
European Countries	Focus on high-end, innovation-driven sports equipment.
Comparative Insight	Successful countries combine scale + technology + branding + supply chain integration .

Indian Policies / Initiatives

Make in India	Promotes domestic manufacturing and industrial growth.
Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme	Encourages manufacturing scale and competitiveness.
MSME Support Policies	Provide credit, subsidies, and technological assistance.

Export Promotion Measures

Include incentives and trade facilitation initiatives.

Way Forward
1. Move Up the Value Chain

- Shift from low-value goods to high-performance sports equipment.

2. Invest in Technology and R&D

- Encourage adoption of advanced materials and precision manufacturing.

3. Develop Global Brands

- Support Indian firms in building international brand identity.

4. Improve Certification Infrastructure

- Establish domestic testing and certification centers to reduce costs.

5. Integrate into Global Supply Chains

- Promote partnerships with global companies and sports organizations.

Conclusion

India's sports ambitions cannot be fully realized without strengthening its manufacturing backbone. A robust, technologically advanced, and globally integrated sports goods industry will not only support athletes but also enhance India's position in global trade.

Strategic policy support and industry innovation can transform this sector into a key driver of economic growth and global competitiveness.

Prelims MCQ
Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Jalandhar and Meerut are major centers for sports goods manufacturing in India.
2. India is already the largest exporter of high-performance sports equipment globally.
3. MSMEs play a dominant role in India's sports goods sector.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — India is not the largest exporter of high-end sports equipment.)

Mains Practice Question

Q2. "India's sports ecosystem requires strong manufacturing support to achieve global excellence." Discuss the challenges in the sports goods industry and suggest measures for its development. (250 words)

Climate Change as a Public Health Emergency

Source: *The Hindu* – Dr. Naresh Trehan

GS Paper Relevance
GS Paper II

- Health sector
- Vulnerable populations

GS Paper III

- Climate change
- Environment and disaster management

Introduction

Climate change is increasingly emerging not only as an environmental challenge but as a major public health emergency. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events are intensifying disease burdens, disrupting food systems, and straining healthcare infrastructure.

In countries like India, where climatic variability intersects with high population density and infrastructural gaps, the health impacts are becoming more visible and widespread.

Key Issues

1. Rising Disease Burden

- Climate variability is expanding the spread of vector-borne and waterborne diseases into new regions.

2. Air Pollution and Health Risks

- Increased heat and emissions raise pollution levels, leading to respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses.

3. Heat Stress and Mortality

- Frequent and intense heatwaves increase cases of heatstroke and related deaths.

4. Food and Nutrition Insecurity

- Climate change disrupts agriculture, reducing food availability and nutritional quality.

5. Impact on Vulnerable Groups

- Children, the elderly, and outdoor workers face disproportionate health risks.

Key Facts for Prelims

- Climate change leads to both **direct (heatwaves, disasters)** and **indirect (diseases, malnutrition)** health impacts.
- **Vector-borne diseases** (e.g., malaria, dengue) are climate-sensitive.
- **PM2.5 (particulate matter)** can **penetrate deeply into the lungs** and bloodstream.
- Heatwaves increase risks of **cardiovascular diseases and heatstroke**.
- India is highly vulnerable due to its **tropical climate and socio-economic factors**.

Global Practices

World Health Organization (WHO)	Recognizes climate change as the biggest global health threat of the 21st century.
Europe	Implements heat action plans and early warning systems.
Australia	Focuses on climate-resilient healthcare infrastructure.
Comparative Insight	Countries integrating climate adaptation with public health planning show better resilience.

Indian Policies / Initiatives

National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)	Includes missions addressing climate adaptation.
National Health Mission (NHM)	Strengthens healthcare delivery, including climate-sensitive disease control.
Heat Action Plans	Implemented in cities like Ahmedabad to reduce heatwave mortality.

Way Forward

1. Integrate Climate and Health Policies

- Mainstream climate considerations in public health planning.

2. Strengthen Surveillance Systems

- Improve monitoring of climate-sensitive diseases.
- 3. **Build Climate-Resilient Infrastructure**
 - Develop healthcare systems capable of handling climate-related stress.
- 4. **Promote Public Awareness**
 - Educate communities on preventive measures.
- 5. **Protect Vulnerable Populations**
 - Target interventions for high-risk groups like children and outdoor workers.

Conclusion

Recognizing climate change as a public health emergency is essential for effective policy response. A proactive, integrated approach that combines environmental management with healthcare planning can reduce long-term risks.

Addressing climate change through a health lens not only improves resilience but also ensures more inclusive and sustainable development.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. PM2.5 particles can penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream.
2. Climate change has no impact on vector-borne diseases.
3. Heatwaves can increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Correct Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — climate change significantly affects vector-borne diseases.)

Mains Practice Question

**Q2. "Climate change is no longer only an environmental issue but a major public health challenge."
Discuss with reference to India. (250 words)**

Student Notes

Making Scholarships Integral to India's Academic Culture

Source

- Newspaper: *The Hindu* (Editorial/Opinion)
- Author: Pramath Raj Sinha (Founder & Chairman, Ashoka University)

UPSC Subject Relevance

- **GS Paper I:** Education, Social empowerment
- **GS Paper II:** Governance, Welfare schemes, Inclusive education
- **GS Paper III:** Human capital, Demographic dividend
- **Essay:** Education as an equalizer, Inclusive growth

Introduction

India's ambition to increase its Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 50% hinges not only on expanding institutional capacity but also on **ensuring equitable access**. Financial constraints, lack of awareness, and socio-economic barriers continue to limit participation. Scholarships, therefore, must evolve from mere financial aid instruments into **comprehensive enablers of equity, quality, and continuity in education**.

Key Issues

- 1. Access vs Affordability Gap**
 - Example: GER increased to ~29.6%, but many students still cannot afford higher education.
- 2. High Cost & Risk Perception**
 - Example: Families hesitate to invest due to **uncertain returns on education**.
- 3. Unequal Regional Access**
 - Example: Disparities in higher education institutions across states/districts.
- 4. Limited Scholarship Coverage**
 - Example: Scholarships often **reach limited beneficiaries** and are fragmented.
- 5. Dropouts Due to Financial Constraints**
 - Example: Students discontinue studies mid-way due to lack of sustained support.
- 6. Quality vs Quantity Challenge**
 - Example: Enrolment increases, but **learning outcomes and employability remain low**.

Global Best Practices

USA	Strong endowment-based scholarship systems (Harvard, Stanford) Need-blind admissions policies
Germany	Low or no tuition fees + state-funded scholarships
UK	Income-based repayment loans + scholarships
China	Region-specific scholarships aligned with local development needs

IN Indian Committees / Policy Frameworks

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020	Emphasizes equity, inclusion, and financial support
Central Sector Scheme of Scholarships	82,000 scholarships annually for meritorious students
National Scholarship Portal (NSP)	One-stop platform for scholarship access
PM-YASASVI Scheme	Scholarships for OBC, EBC, DNT students
UGC & AICTE Initiatives	Various merit-cum-means scholarships

Way Forward

1. Shift from Aid to Ecosystem

Scholarships should include:

- Mentorship
- Academic support
- Career guidance

2. Multi-year & Continuity-based Support

- Prevent dropouts by ensuring **complete course funding**

3. Public-Private Partnerships

- Encourage corporate and philanthropic funding

4. Decentralized & Region-specific Models

- Align scholarships with **local economic needs**

5. Outcome-based Incentives

- Reward institutions with better inclusion outcomes

6. Need-sensitive Admission Systems

- Separate financial assessment from merit evaluation

7. Strengthen Awareness & Accessibility

- Improve outreach via digital platforms and schools

Conclusion

Scholarships lie at the intersection of **equity, quality, and growth** in education. For India to realize its demographic dividend, they must move from the margins to the centre of higher education policy. A robust, inclusive, and sustained scholarship ecosystem can transform not just enrolment numbers but also **social mobility and national development**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Central Sector Scheme of Scholarships provides financial assistance only to postgraduate students.
2. The National Scholarship Portal serves as a unified platform for multiple scholarship schemes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 only

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q2. "Scholarships in India must evolve from financial aid tools to instruments of systemic transformation in higher education." Discuss with reference to current challenges and suggest reforms. (250 words)

Nari Shakti: India's Defining Reform for the Next Decade

Source

- Newspaper: *The Hindu* (Editorial/Opinion)
- Author: Sangita Reddy (Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals)

UPSC Subject Relevance

- **GS Paper I:** Women empowerment, Social issues
- **GS Paper II:** Governance, Policy implementation, Inclusive development
- **GS Paper III:** Human capital, Economic growth
- **Essay:** Women-led development, Inclusive growth

Introduction

Over the past decade, India has transitioned from viewing women as beneficiaries of welfare schemes to recognizing them as **drivers of economic growth and development**. Initiatives in financial inclusion, healthcare, and social welfare have improved access and participation. However, the next phase of reform requires moving beyond access to **leadership, representation, and effective policy implementation**, making *Nari Shakti* central to India's developmental trajectory.

Key Issues

- Gap Between Access and Outcomes**
 - Example: Increased bank accounts (Jan Dhan) but **limited financial decision-making power**.
- Last-Mile Delivery Challenges**
 - Example: Welfare schemes depend on **local administrative capacity**, leading to uneven benefits.
- Low Female Labour Force Participation**
 - Example: Decline to ~37% despite economic growth.
- Underrepresentation in Leadership**
 - Example: Low presence of women in **legislatures and decision-making bodies**.
- Policy Penetration vs Policy Creation**
 - Issue is no longer policy design but **effective implementation and monitoring**.
- Socio-cultural Barriers**
 - Example: Deep-rooted norms limiting mobility, education, and leadership roles.

Global Best Practices

Nordic Countries (Sweden, Norway)	High female workforce participation through parental leave policies and gender budgeting
Rwanda	Over 60% women in parliament, strong legislative representation
USA & Europe	Focus on STEM inclusion programs for women
Bangladesh	Success in women-led microfinance (Grameen Model)

IN Indian Committees / Policy Frameworks

National Policy for Women (2016 - Draft)	Focus on economic empowerment and leadership
Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI)	Highlighted structural inequalities
NITI Aayog Initiatives	Women entrepreneurship platforms (WEP)
Recent Reform	Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (Women's Reservation Act, 2023), 33% reservation in Lok Sabha & State Assemblies

Way Forward

1. **From Access to Authority**
 - Move from welfare to **decision-making roles**
2. **Strengthen Last-Mile Governance**
 - Data-driven monitoring + local accountability
3. **Institutional Support**
 - Skill training, mentorship, leadership pipelines
4. **Enhance Female Workforce Participation**
 - Flexible work policies, childcare support
5. **Political Empowerment**
 - Effective implementation of women's reservation
6. **Outcome-based Policy Evaluation**
 - Focus on **real impact, not just coverage**
7. **Promote STEM & Innovation**
 - Leverage India's high female STEM participation

Conclusion

India stands at a critical juncture where women's empowerment can redefine its growth story. The shift from **policy intent to policy impact**, and from **participation to leadership**, will determine whether *Nari Shakti* becomes a transformative force. Empowering women is no longer a social obligation but an **economic and governance imperative**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam provides 50% reservation to women in Parliament.
2. Female labour force participation in India has consistently increased over the past decade.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) Neither 1 nor 2

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q2. "Women empowerment in India has moved from access to opportunity, but not yet to authority."
Critically examine this statement in the context of recent policy initiatives and suggest measures to ensure women-led development. (250 words)

PRASTHAN 2.0

(PRAMUKH ADMISSIONS CUM SCHOLARSHIP TEST WITH HOLISTIC APTITUDE NOTIONS)

UPSC FOUNDATION COURSE

GPSC CLASS 1-2 FOUNDATION COURSE

GPSC CLASS 3 MASTER BATCH

Entrance Exam Date: 14th JUNE



An Alternative to Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill

Source

- *The Hindu* (Editorial/Opinion)
- Author: Dinesh Abrol

UPSC Subject Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Governance, Education policy, Federalism, Regulatory bodies
- **GS Paper III:** Research & Development, Innovation ecosystem
- **Essay:** Centralization vs decentralization, Education reforms

Introduction

The proposed **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill (VBSA Bill)** seeks to restructure India's higher education governance by centralizing regulatory and funding powers. While aiming for standardization and improved research outcomes, concerns arise regarding **federal balance, institutional autonomy, and equitable development**, necessitating a more inclusive and decentralized alternative.

Key Issues

- Excessive Centralization**
 - Example: Central government gains control over **funding, accreditation, and standards**
- Erosion of Federalism**
 - Example: Limited role of State governments despite education being in the **Concurrent List**
- Threat to Institutional Autonomy**
 - Example: Universities lose decision-making power over **curriculum, research, and governance**
- Weak Stakeholder Representation**
 - Example: Bodies like State Higher Education Councils (SHECs) not adequately empowered
- Inequitable Research Funding**
 - Example: Proposed **National Research Foundation (NRF)** may favor elite institutions

Global Best Practices

United States	Decentralized system with autonomous universities Strong research funding with peer review (NSF model)
Germany	Federal structure where states (Länder) control education
China	Central guidance + regional adaptation of policies
UK	Independent regulatory bodies ensuring academic autonomy

Indian Committees / Policy Frameworks

National Education Policy 2020	Advocates light but tight regulation and institutional autonomy
University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956	Defines standards for higher education and research
State Higher Education Councils (SHECs)	Promote state-level planning and coordination
National Research Foundation (NRF)	Proposed to boost research funding and innovation

Way Forward

- Balanced Federal Structure:** Ensure **equal participation of Centre and States**

2. **Strengthen Institutional Autonomy:** Universities should control academic and research decisions
3. **Inclusive Governance Model**
Representation of:
 - Academics
 - State bodies
 - Industry stakeholders
4. **Equitable Research Funding:** Prioritize **regional and interdisciplinary needs**
5. **Decentralized Accreditation:** Empower state-level bodies with accountability

Conclusion

While the VBSA Bill aims to modernize India's higher education system, excessive centralization risks undermining **federalism, autonomy, and inclusivity**. A balanced approach that integrates **national vision with regional diversity and institutional freedom** is essential for building a robust and equitable education ecosystem.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill proposes to replace the University Grants Commission.
2. Education is exclusively a State subject under the Indian Constitution.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 only

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q2. Q. Critically examine the implications of centralization in higher education governance in India in the context of the proposed reforms.

Rebuilding Ties: India's Pragmatic Foreign Policy Approach

Source: *The Hindu* (Editorial)

UPSC Subject Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** International Relations, India's foreign policy
- **GS Paper III:** Security (counter-terrorism cooperation)
- **Essay:** Pragmatism vs idealism in foreign policy

Introduction

India's recent outreach to Pakistan and its engagement with countries like Azerbaijan and Malaysia reflects a shift towards **pragmatic diplomacy over emotional responses**. In a complex geopolitical environment, foreign policy must balance **national interest, security concerns, and regional stability**, highlighting the need for calibrated and strategic engagement.

Key Issues

1. **Strained Bilateral Relations**
 - Example: Tensions with Pakistan after incidents like **Operation Sindoor**

2. Trust Deficit in Diplomacy

- Example: Countries failing to support India on **counter-terrorism issues**

3. Geopolitical Pressures

- Example: India navigating relations with multiple nations amid global alignments

4. Emotional vs Strategic Diplomacy

- Example: Public sentiment vs long-term national interest decisions

5. Regional Instability

- Example: South Asia's fragile peace dynamics affecting policy choices

6. Economic & Diaspora Concerns

- Example: Trade disruptions and evacuation of Indian nationals during crises

Global Best Practices

United States	Maintains relations even with adversaries (e.g., diplomacy with rivals)
China	Practices strategic engagement despite conflicts
European Union	Focus on dialogue, multilateralism, and economic diplomacy

IN Indian Policy Framework

Neighbourhood First Policy	Prioritizes relations with neighboring countries
Act East Policy	Expands engagement with Southeast Asia
Strategic Autonomy Doctrine	India avoids alignment with any single bloc
Role of Diplomats like	Sibi George

Way Forward

1. Pragmatic Engagement

- Engage even with adversaries based on national interest

2. Strengthen Multilateralism

- Use forums like UN, SCO for dialogue

3. Focus on Economic Diplomacy

- Enhance trade ties alongside political relations

4. Crisis Management Mechanisms

- Institutionalize evacuation and conflict response systems

5. Balanced Approach

- Combine **security concerns with diplomatic outreach**

6. Avoid Overreaction

- Long-term strategy over short-term emotional responses

Conclusion

India's foreign policy must evolve from reactive to **strategic and interest-driven diplomacy**. Rebuilding ties, even with difficult partners, reflects maturity and realism. In a multipolar world, **pragmatism, dialogue, and strategic patience** will be key to safeguarding India's global position.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. India follows a policy of complete alignment with Western countries in its foreign relations.
2. Strategic autonomy implies that India makes independent foreign policy decisions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 only

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q2. "Pragmatism rather than idealism should guide India's foreign policy in a multipolar world."

Discuss in the context of recent diplomatic developments. (250 words)

Tapping Fisheries in Reservoirs

Source

- *The Hindu* (Editorial/Explained)
- Author: Abhilaksh Likhi (Union Secretary, Fisheries)

UPSC Subject Relevance

- **GS Paper III:** Agriculture, Fisheries, Blue Economy, Rural economy
- **GS Paper II:** Government schemes & implementation
- **Essay:** Sustainable development, Rural livelihoods

Introduction

India is one of the world's leading fish producers, yet a major untapped opportunity lies in its **reservoir fisheries**. With policy push under **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)** and initiatives like reservoir-based aquaculture, India is moving towards **sustainable, inclusive, and high-value fisheries development**, boosting both rural livelihoods and the blue economy.

Key Issues

1. Underutilization of Reservoirs

- Large water bodies remain underexploited for fisheries
- Example: Many reservoirs lack organized aquaculture systems

2. Low Productivity Levels

- Fish yield per hectare is below potential
- Example: Compared to global standards, output is limited

3. Lack of Scientific Practices

- Traditional fishing dominates over modern cage culture
- Example: Limited adoption of floating cage aquaculture

4. Weak Value Chain Infrastructure

- Gaps in storage, transport, and marketing
- Example: Lack of cold chains and processing units

5. Limited Access to Markets

- Fishermen depend on middlemen
- Example: Low price realization for fish farmers

Global Best Practices

China	Intensive aquaculture + cage farming → highest fish production globally
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Vietnam	Export-oriented fisheries with strong value chain integration
Norway	Advanced fish farming with technology + sustainability focus
Bangladesh	Community-based fisheries improving rural livelihoods

IN Indian Committees / Policy Frameworks

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)	Flagship scheme for fisheries sector development
Mission Amrit Sarovar	Enhances water bodies for productive use
National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB)	Supports infrastructure and capacity building
ICAR-CIFRI (Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute)	Research on inland fisheries productivity

Way Forward

- Promote Cage Culture Technology**
 - Increase productivity in reservoirs
- Strengthen Value Chain**
 - Cold storage, processing, transport, marketing
- Cluster-Based Development**
 - Reservoir clusters for integrated fisheries growth
- Empower Fisher Cooperatives**
 - Reduce middlemen, increase income
- Digital & Market Linkages**
 - Direct selling through online platforms

Conclusion

Reservoir fisheries offer a **low-cost, high-impact opportunity** to boost India's fish production and rural livelihoods. With the right mix of **technology, policy support, and market integration**, this sector can become a key pillar of India's **blue economy and inclusive growth story**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana aims to enhance fisheries production in India.
2. Reservoir fisheries mainly involve marine fishing activities.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 only

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q2. Reservoir fisheries hold significant potential for enhancing India's blue economy. Discuss the challenges and suggest measures for sustainable development of inland fisheries. (250 words)

Why India's Established Elite is Afraid of Taking Risks

Source

- *The Hindu* (Editorial/Opinion)
- Author: Kiran Mahasuar

UPSC Subject Relevance

- **GS Paper I:** Society (Elite behavior, social change)
- **GS Paper II:** Governance & institutional structures
- **GS Paper III:** Economy (Entrepreneurship, R&D, Innovation)
- **Essay:** Risk-taking vs stability, Innovation economy

Introduction

India today has capital, talent, and opportunity, yet a paradox exists—its **established elite prefers preserving wealth over creating new value**. Instead of risk-taking and innovation, there is a growing trend of safe investments and status quo. This shift has deep implications for **entrepreneurship, R&D, and long-term economic growth**.

Key Issues

- 1. Preference for Wealth Preservation**
 - Elite focuses on protecting assets rather than building new ventures
 - Example: Investment in real estate instead of startups
- 2. Decline in Risk-taking Culture**
 - Second/third-generation business families avoid uncertain ventures
 - Example: Running family offices instead of expanding businesses
- 3. Low Private Investment in R&D**
 - Businesses avoid long-term uncertain returns
 - Example: India spends less on R&D than China/South Korea
- 4. Short-term Profit Orientation**
 - Focus on quick returns rather than long-term innovation
 - Example: Expanding existing brands vs creating new industries
- 5. Institutional & Regulatory Constraints**
 - Complex regulations discourage experimentation
 - Example: Compliance burden affecting startups

Global Best Practices

United States	Strong startup ecosystem + venture capital culture, Failure accepted as part of success
China	High-risk, high-investment approach in manufacturing & tech
South Korea	Heavy private investment in R&D (Samsung, Hyundai)
Israel	"Startup Nation" → innovation driven by risk-taking culture

IN Indian Committees / Policy Frameworks

Startup India Initiative	Promotes entrepreneurship and innovation
National Education Policy 2020	Focus on creativity, critical thinking, innovation
Economic Survey (Various Years)	Highlights need for private investment in R&D
NITI Aayog Innovation Index	Measures and promotes innovation ecosystem

Way Forward

1. **Encourage Risk-taking Culture**
 - Normalize failure and reward innovation
2. **Boost Private R&D Investment**
 - Tax incentives, easier funding mechanisms
3. **Regulatory Reforms**
 - Simplify compliance and reduce uncertainty
4. **Promote Long-term Capital**
 - Patient capital for deep-tech and innovation
5. **Strengthen Startup Ecosystem**
 - Better incubation, mentorship, and global exposure

Conclusion

India's future growth depends not just on capital but on **how that capital is used**. If the elite continues to avoid risks, innovation will stagnate. A shift towards **entrepreneurship, R&D, and long-term thinking** is essential for India to become a truly developed economy.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Private sector investment in R&D in India is higher than in South Korea.
2. Risk-taking behavior is essential for innovation-led economic growth.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 only

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q2. "India's economic growth is increasingly constrained by a decline in risk-taking among its business elite." Critically examine the reasons and suggest measures to promote an innovation-driven economy. (250 words)

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Reclaiming Ambedkar for a Modern Andhra Pradesh

Source

- *The Hindu* (Editorial/Opinion)
- Author: Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy

UPSC Subject Relevance

- **GS Paper I:** Social justice, Role of reformers
- **GS Paper II:** Governance, Welfare schemes, Constitutional values
- **Essay:** Social justice, Inclusive development

Introduction

B. R. Ambedkar envisioned a society based on **dignity, equality, and constitutional morality**. The article argues that his legacy should not be symbolic but **actively applied in governance**, especially in sectors like education, healthcare, and social justice, as seen in Andhra Pradesh's welfare-oriented approach.

Static Information

About B. R. Ambedkar

1. Chairman of the **Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution**
2. Advocate of **social justice, equality, and dignity**
3. Key concept: **Constitutional Morality** → Institutions over individuals
4. Worked for upliftment of **Scheduled Castes & marginalized groups**



Key Constitutional Provisions

1. **Article 14** → Equality before law
2. **Article 15 & 16** → Prohibition of discrimination & equal opportunity
3. **Article 17** → Abolition of untouchability
4. **Article 21** → Right to life with dignity

Key Issues

1. **Symbolic Use of Ambedkar vs Real Implementation**
 - His ideas are celebrated but not fully applied in governance
 - Example: Statues vs lack of social justice outcomes
2. **Persistent Caste-based Inequality**
 - Social discrimination still affects opportunities and dignity
 - Example: Unequal access to jobs and education for SCs
3. **Weak Public Education System**
 - Poor quality limits upward mobility for marginalized groups
 - Example: Government schools lacking infrastructure & teachers
4. **Inadequate Public Healthcare**

- Health shocks push poor families into poverty
- Example: High out-of-pocket expenditure in rural areas

5. **Gender Inequality Remains Strong**

- Women's empowerment is incomplete despite policy efforts
- Example: Ambedkar's Hindu Code Bill reforms still debated

Global Best Practices

Nordic Countries	Strong welfare state ensuring equality and dignity
United States	Affirmative action for historically disadvantaged groups
South Africa	Constitutional focus on social justice post-apartheid

IN Indian Committees / Policy Frameworks

National Education Policy 2020	Promotes inclusive and equitable education
MGNREGA	Ensures livelihood security in rural areas
Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)	Transfers benefits directly to beneficiaries
Reservation Policies	For SC/ST/OBC upliftment

Way Forward

1. **Institutionalize Constitutional Morality**
 - Ensure governance is guided by law and fairness, not political personalities
2. **Strengthen Public Education & Health**
 - Improve quality infrastructure to ensure dignity and equal opportunity
3. **Enhance Social Justice Mechanisms**
 - Effective implementation of reservation and anti-discrimination laws
4. **Promote Women Empowerment**
 - Expand financial inclusion and leadership roles for women
5. **Boost Rural Economic Reforms**
 - Support farmers with credit, insurance, and market access

Conclusion

Reclaiming Ambedkar means moving beyond symbolism to **embedding his principles into governance and society**. True tribute lies in ensuring **dignity, equality, and justice** for all, making development both inclusive and sustainable.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Article 17 of the Indian Constitution abolishes untouchability.
2. Constitutional morality emphasizes rule by individuals rather than institutions.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 only

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q2. "Reclaiming Ambedkar requires translating constitutional ideals into governance outcomes." Discuss with examples from recent policy initiatives. (250 words)

The Fallout of the Crisis in West Asia on India's Economy

Source

- *The Hindu* (Editorial)
- Authors: C. Rangarajan & D. K. Srivastava

UPSC Subject Relevance

- **GS Paper III:** Economy, External sector, Inflation, Energy security
- **GS Paper II:** International relations (West Asia)
- **Essay:** Global crises and economic resilience

Introduction

The ongoing crisis in West Asia has highlighted India's vulnerability to **global supply shocks**, especially in energy and trade. As a major importer of crude oil and fertilizers, India faces cascading impacts on **inflation, growth, fiscal stability, and external balance**, making economic resilience and diversification critical.

Key Issues

- Supply Chain Disruptions**
 - War affects transport of oil, gas, and fertilizers
 - Example: Risk of blockage at Strait of Hormuz
- Rising Crude Oil Prices**
 - Direct impact on import bill and inflation
 - Example: Brent crude rising above \$100/barrel
- Imported Inflation**
 - Higher fuel costs increase prices across sectors
 - Example: Costlier transport → expensive food & goods
- Fertilizer Shortages**
 - Impacts agricultural productivity
 - Example: Reduced Kharif output due to input shortages
- Exchange Rate Depreciation**
 - Rupee weakens due to higher dollar demand
 - Example: Increased import payments → rupee pressure
- Current Account Deficit Widening**
 - Imports rise faster than exports
 - Example: Oil imports increasing CAD

Static Information

India's Energy Dependence

- Imports ~85% of crude oil needs
- Major suppliers: Iraq, Saudi Arabia, UAE

Key Economic Concepts

- **Current Account Deficit (CAD)** → Imports > Exports
- **Inflation** → Rise in general price levels
- **Exchange Rate** → Value of rupee vs dollar

Important Regions

- Strait of Hormuz → Handles ~20% of global oil trade

Global Best Practices

United States

Strategic Petroleum Reserves to stabilize prices

European Union	Diversification of energy sources (renewables)
China	Long-term oil contracts + supply diversification
Japan	Efficient energy use + emergency reserves

IN Indian Committees / Policy Frameworks

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Policies	Monetary tools to control inflation
Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)	Tax adjustments on fuel
Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR)	Buffer stock for energy security
Energy Transition Policies	Push towards renewables (solar, green hydrogen)

Way Forward

- Diversify Energy Sources**
 - Reduce dependence on West Asia by exploring alternative suppliers and renewables
- Strengthen Strategic Reserves**
 - Expand oil reserves to cushion supply shocks
- Promote Renewable Energy**
 - Accelerate solar, wind, and green hydrogen adoption
- Enhance Domestic Production**
 - Boost oil, gas, and fertilizer production within India
- Stabilize Macroeconomic Policies**
 - Balance inflation control with growth through fiscal and monetary tools

Conclusion

The West Asian crisis underscores India's exposure to global shocks. Building resilience through **diversification, self-reliance, and strong macroeconomic management** is essential to safeguard growth and stability in an uncertain world.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Strait of Hormuz is a major chokepoint for global oil trade.
2. A rise in crude oil prices can lead to an increase in India's Current Account Deficit.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) Both 1 and 2

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q2. Global geopolitical crises have a cascading impact on India's economy. Discuss the channels through which the West Asia crisis affects India and suggest measures to enhance economic resilience. (250 words)

Implications of Increasing the Size of the Lok Sabha

Source: *The Hindu* – M.R. Madhavan

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- Parliament and State Legislatures
- Constitutional amendments
- Representation and federalism

Introduction

India's evolving demographic realities have revived debates on increasing the size of the Lok Sabha. Proposals linked to delimitation and women's reservation highlight the need to balance effective representation, governance efficiency, and federal equity.

While expanding the Lok Sabha may improve representational fairness, it also raises institutional and functional concerns regarding legislative efficiency and parliamentary processes.

Key Issues

1. Federal Imbalance

- Population-based seat redistribution may increase representation of northern states, raising concerns for southern states.

2. Parliamentary Efficiency

- A larger Lok Sabha could make debates, discussions, and coordination more complex.

3. Reduced Role of Individual MPs

- Higher number of MPs may reduce speaking time and influence of individual representatives.

4. Institutional Capacity Constraints

- Infrastructure, committee systems, and administrative support may face pressure.

5. Delimitation Sensitivities

- Redistribution of seats can trigger political and regional tensions.



Global Practices

United Kingdom	House of Commons has around 650 members with strong committee systems.
United States	House of Representatives has fixed 435 members, despite population growth.
Germany	Uses a mixed system with flexible seat expansion.
Comparative Insight	Countries balance representation with efficiency through institutional mechanisms like committees.

Indian Policies / Framework

Delimitation Commission	Constitutional body responsible for redrawing constituency boundaries.
Women's Reservation (Recent Amendment)	To be implemented post-delimitation.
Census-Based Representation	Seat allocation linked to population data.

Way Forward

- Strengthen Parliamentary Committees**
 - Enhance committee functioning to manage increased legislative workload.
- Ensure Federal Balance**
 - Design mechanisms to address concerns of states with lower population growth.
- Improve Parliamentary Infrastructure**
 - Expand physical and digital infrastructure to accommodate more members.
- Reform Legislative Procedures**
 - Adopt technology and structured debate systems to improve efficiency.
- Promote Consensus-Based Approach**
 - Ensure wide political consultation before implementing major changes.

Conclusion

Expanding the Lok Sabha reflects India's commitment to representative democracy, but it must be accompanied by institutional reforms to maintain legislative efficiency. A balanced approach that safeguards federal principles and strengthens parliamentary functioning is essential for sustaining democratic effectiveness.

Prelims MCQ

Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. Delimitation of constituencies in India is based on Census data.
2. The strength of the Lok Sabha can exceed 600 members as per the Constitution.
3. Delimitation has been frozen until after the Census conducted post-2026.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Correct Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — the constitutional limit is 550.)

Mains Practice Question

Q.2 "Increasing the size of the Lok Sabha can improve representation but may affect parliamentary efficiency." Discuss. (250 words)

Devious Menace: Loan Apps in a Regulatory Dark Area

Source: The Hindu – Editorial

GS Paper Relevance
GS Paper II

- Governance and regulation
- Consumer protection

GS Paper III

- Digital economy
- Cyber security
- Financial inclusion

Introduction

The rapid growth of digital lending platforms has improved financial access, especially for underserved populations. However, the proliferation of unregulated loan apps has created serious concerns related to consumer protection, privacy violations, and financial exploitation.

The issue highlights the gap between technological innovation and regulatory oversight, necessitating a balanced approach to ensure both innovation and safety.

Key Issues
1. Regulatory Gaps

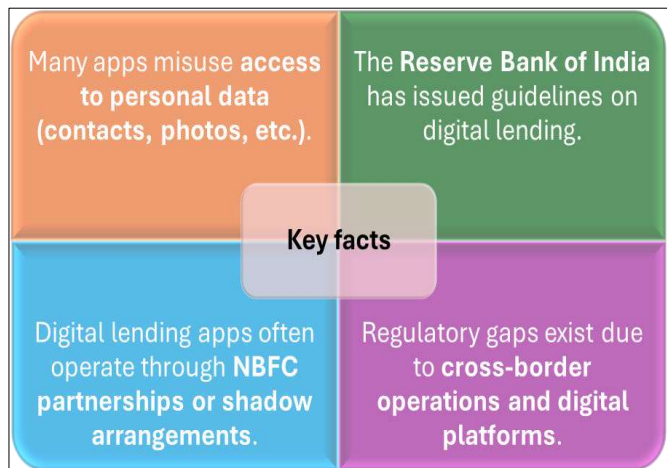
- Many loan apps operate outside formal regulatory frameworks, creating enforcement challenges.

2. Data Privacy Violations

- Apps access sensitive personal data and misuse it for harassment and coercion.

3. Predatory Lending Practices

- High interest rates, hidden charges, and unfair recovery practices exploit borrowers.
- **Cross-Border Jurisdiction Issues**
- Some apps are linked to foreign entities, complicating regulatory action.
- **Consumer Vulnerability**

4. Financially distressed individuals are most affected, leading to social and psychological distress.


Global Practices+ European Union	Strong data protection under GDPR ensures user privacy.
United States	Strict financial consumer protection laws regulate lending practices.
China	Crackdown on fintech platforms and tighter regulatory oversight.
Comparative Insight	Effective regulation combines financial oversight + data protection + enforcement capacity .

Indian Policies / Initiative =GST

RBI Digital Lending Guidelines: Focus on transparency, disclosure, and data protection.

IT Act, 2000: Provides legal framework for digital platforms.

State-Level Actions: Some states have taken steps to curb illegal lending apps.

Way Forward:
1. Strengthen Regulatory Oversight

- Bring all digital lending platforms under a clear regulatory framework.
- 2. Enhance Data Protection**
 - Implement stricter controls on data access and usage.
- 3. Improve Consumer Awareness**
 - Educate users about risks associated with unregulated apps.
- 4. Strengthen Enforcement Mechanisms**
 - Enable faster action against illegal platforms, including cross-border coordination.
- 5. Promote Responsible Digital Lending**
 - Encourage regulated fintech solutions with transparent practices.

Conclusion

Digital lending holds significant potential for financial inclusion, but unregulated growth can undermine trust and harm vulnerable users. A balanced regulatory framework that protects consumers while fostering innovation is essential for sustainable development of the digital financial ecosystem.

Prelims MCQ

Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. The Reserve Bank of India has issued guidelines on digital lending.
2. Digital lending apps cannot access user data under any circumstances.
3. Cross-border digital platforms create regulatory challenges.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Correct Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — apps may access data but misuse is the issue.)

Mains Practice Question

Q.2 “The rise of digital lending platforms has outpaced regulatory frameworks in India.” Examine the challenges and suggest measures to ensure consumer protection. (250 words)

GPSC Class 1 – 2 Foundation

Your First Step Towards Becoming A
Civil Servant

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

Duration: 1 year

Language: Hinglish (Hindi + English)

Mode of Learning: Residential | Online |
Classroom

[More Details](#)

GPSC Class 3 Master Batch

Your First Step Towards Becoming A
Civil Servant

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

Duration: 6 Months

Language: Gujarati

Mode of Learning: Residential | Online |
Classroom

[More Details](#)



India's Rural Models Are Shaping Development Diplomacy

Source: *The Hindu* – Veda Vaidyanathan

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- International relations
- Development diplomacy

GS Paper III

- Inclusive growth, Rural development
- Poverty alleviation

Introduction

From Domestic Reform to Global Development Model

India's rural development initiatives, particularly the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), are increasingly influencing global development discourse. What began as a domestic poverty alleviation programme has evolved into a model of institutional innovation, now being studied and adapted by countries across the Global South.

This transition reflects India's growing role in **development diplomacy**, where domestic success stories are leveraged for international engagement and cooperation.

Key Facts

1. The **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)** was launched in **2011**.
2. It operates under the **Ministry of Rural Development**.
3. Focuses on **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** for poverty alleviation.
4. Over **10 crore women** have been mobilised into SHGs.
5. Promotes **financial inclusion, skill development, and livelihood diversification**.

Key Issues

1. Scalability Challenges

- Replicating India's SHG model in different socio-political contexts may face constraints.

2. Institutional Capacity Variations

- Other countries may lack administrative and governance capacity for implementation.

3. Financial Sustainability

- Sustaining credit linkages and funding mechanisms can be difficult.

4. Context-Specific Adaptation

- Local socio-cultural conditions may require modification of the model.

5. Dependence on Community Mobilisation

- Success depends heavily on grassroots participation, which may vary across regions.

Global Practices

Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Malawi)	Countries are studying and adapting India's SHG-based livelihood model.
South-South Cooperation	Emphasises knowledge sharing among developing countries.
World Bank & UN Models	Focus on community-driven development approaches.
Comparative Insight	India's model stands out for its large-scale community mobilisation and institutional integration .

Indian Policies / Initiatives

National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)	Flagship programme for poverty alleviation through SHGs.
Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana	Umbrella scheme for rural and urban livelihoods.
Financial Inclusion Initiatives	Includes bank linkage programmes and microfinance support.
Development Partnerships Administration (MEA)	Facilitates India's development cooperation abroad.

Way Forward

- Institutionalise Knowledge Sharing**
 - Create formal platforms for sharing best practices globally.
- Strengthen South-South Cooperation**
 - Enhance partnerships with developing countries.
- Adapt Models to Local Contexts**
 - Ensure flexibility in implementation across regions.
- Enhance Capacity Building**
 - Provide training and technical assistance to partner countries.
- Integrate Digital Tools**
 - Leverage digital platforms for scaling and monitoring programmes.

Conclusion

India's rural development experience demonstrates how grassroots initiatives can evolve into instruments of international influence. By sharing scalable, inclusive, and sustainable models, India can strengthen its role in global development cooperation.

This approach reflects a shift from traditional aid-based diplomacy to **partnership-driven, knowledge-based engagement**, reinforcing India's position as a key actor in the Global South.

Prelims MCQ

Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. The National Rural Livelihood Mission focuses on Self-Help Groups.
2. NRLM is implemented by the Ministry of Finance.
3. NRLM aims at promoting financial inclusion and livelihood diversification.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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



Correct Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — it is under the Ministry of Rural Development.)

Creeping Risk: Industrial Safety and Accidents in India

Source

The Hindu – Editorial



GS Paper Relevance
GS Paper II

- Governance and labour welfare
- Regulatory institutions

GS Paper III

- Industrial safety, Disaster management
- Labour and employment

Introduction

India's expanding industrial landscape has brought economic opportunities, but it has also exposed systemic weaknesses in safety and regulatory enforcement. Industrial accidents are not isolated events but often reflect accumulated risks arising from inadequate maintenance, weak compliance, and institutional gaps.

Ensuring industrial safety is therefore not merely a technical requirement but a governance imperative linked to labour welfare and sustainable development.

Key Facts

1. Industrial accidents often result from **gas leaks, explosions, and chemical exposure**.
2. Safety audits and certifications are mandated under labour and industrial laws.
3. Contract labour constitutes a significant share of the workforce in hazardous industries.
4. Many accidents occur due to **lack of compliance with safety standards**.
5. Industrial safety falls under both **central and state regulatory frameworks**.

Key Issues

1. **Weak Enforcement of Safety Regulations**
 - Regulatory oversight is often inadequate, with compliance treated as a formality.
2. **Over-Reliance on Certification**
 - Periodic certifications do not ensure continuous safety monitoring in industrial units.
3. **Informalisation of Workforce**
 - Contract workers often lack proper training, protection, and awareness of safety norms.
4. **Inadequate Risk Management**
 - Preventive maintenance and hazard identification are often neglected.
5. **Accountability Gaps**
 - Employers frequently evade responsibility, and enforcement mechanisms remain weak.

Global Practices

European Union	Strict occupational safety standards with strong enforcement and worker protection laws.
United States	Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) ensures compliance and monitoring.
Japan	Focus on continuous safety improvement and workplace discipline.
Comparative Insight	Effective systems emphasise continuous monitoring, worker training, and strict accountability .

Indian Policies / Framework

Factories Act, 1948	Regulates safety, health, and welfare of workers.
Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020	Consolidates multiple labour laws on safety and working conditions.

Boiler Act and Industrial Safety Rules

Provide technical safety regulations for industrial operations.

Way Forward

- 1. Strengthen Enforcement Mechanisms**
 - Improve inspection systems and ensure strict compliance.
- 2. Shift to Continuous Monitoring**
 - Move beyond periodic certification to real-time safety audits.
- 3. Protect Contract Workers**
 - Ensure training, safety gear, and legal protections for informal labour.
- 4. Enhance Accountability**
 - Fix clear responsibility for industrial accidents and enforce penalties.
- 5. Promote Safety Culture**
 - Encourage industry-wide adoption of best practices and risk awareness.

Conclusion

Industrial safety is integral to sustainable economic growth. As India expands its manufacturing base, ensuring worker safety and robust regulatory enforcement becomes essential.

A proactive approach that prioritises prevention, accountability, and worker welfare can reduce risks and strengthen trust in industrial development.

Prelims MCQ
Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 deals with worker safety.
2. Industrial safety in India is regulated only by the central government.
3. Contract labour is often more vulnerable to industrial accidents.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — both Centre and States regulate industrial safety.)

Mains Practice Question
Q.2 “Industrial accidents in India are often the result of systemic regulatory failures rather than isolated incidents.” Examine and suggest measures for improving industrial safety. (250 words)
Student Notes

Deservedly Dead: Delimitation and Constitutional Balance

Source

The Hindu – Editorial

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- Constitutional amendments
- Federalism
- Representation in Parliament

Introduction

The proposal to link delimitation with women's reservation has raised significant constitutional and political concerns. While delimitation aims to ensure proportional representation, its timing and implementation carry implications for federal balance and political consensus.

The recent developments indicate the complexity of aligning constitutional mandates with political feasibility in a diverse federal system.

Key Issues

1. Linkage with Women's Reservation

- Combining delimitation with reservation complicates implementation and delays reform.

2. Federal Imbalance

- Population-based seat redistribution may disadvantage southern states.

3. Political Consensus Challenges

- Lack of broad agreement across parties creates implementation hurdles.

4. Risk of Regional Polarisation

- Changes in representation may intensify regional political tensions.

5. Constitutional vs Political Priorities

- Balancing constitutional mandates with political realities remains difficult.

Key Facts

1. Delimitation is governed under **Article 82** of the Constitution.
2. It is based on **Census data**.
3. Delimitation has been **frozen until after Census 2026**.
4. The Lok Sabha currently has **543 elected members**.
5. Constitutional amendments require a special **majority under Article 368**.

Global Practices

United States	Periodic redistricting ensures proportional representation
United Kingdom	Independent boundary commissions handle constituency revisions
Australia	Uses independent electoral bodies for fair delimitation
Comparative Insight	Independent and transparent mechanisms help reduce political friction in delimitation processes

Indian Policies / Framework

Delimitation Commission	Independent body responsible for constituency delimitation
Constitutional Amendments	Provide the legal basis for changes in representation

Women's Reservation Framework Linked with delimitation for implementation**Way Forward**

- 1. Decouple Delimitation and Reservation**
 - Handle both reforms independently for smoother implementation.
- 2. Build Political Consensus**
 - Engage all stakeholders to ensure broad agreement.
- 3. Ensure Federal Balance**
 - Consider mechanisms to address concerns of states with lower population growth.
- 4. Strengthen Institutional Processes**
 - Empower independent bodies like the Delimitation Commission.
- 5. Adopt Gradual Implementation**
 - Phase reforms to reduce political and administrative disruption.

Conclusion

Delimitation is essential for maintaining representative democracy, but its implementation must be carefully calibrated to preserve federal balance and political stability. A transparent, consensus-driven approach is key to ensuring that constitutional reforms strengthen rather than disrupt democratic institutions.

Prelims MCQ**Q1. Consider the following statements:**

1. Delimitation in India is based on Census data.
2. Article 368 deals with constitutional amendment procedures.
3. Delimitation has been permanently discontinued in India.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Correct Answer: a) 1 and 2 only

(Statement 3 is incorrect — delimitation is only temporarily frozen.)

Mains Practice Question

- Q2. "Delimitation is essential for representative democracy but poses challenges to federal balance."
Discuss. (250 words)**

Student Notes

China is the Real Winner in the Iran Conflict

Source

The Hindu – Manoj Pant

Introduction

Contemporary conflicts are increasingly shaped not only by military outcomes but by economic consequences. The Iran-related conflict dynamics highlight how disruptions in energy markets, trade routes, and geopolitical alignments create indirect winners.

In this evolving scenario, China emerges as a strategic beneficiary, leveraging global instability to secure economic and geopolitical advantages without direct involvement.

Key Issues

1. Economic Disruptions from Conflict

- Conflicts in West Asia impact global oil supply, inflation, and trade flows.

2. Strategic Vacuum

- Reduced influence of major powers in certain areas creates opportunities for others.

3. Shift from Ideological to Economic Competition

- Modern geopolitics is increasingly driven by economic interests rather than ideology.

4. Proxy Conflict Dynamics

- Indirect involvement of global powers complicates conflict resolution.

5. Global Supply Chain Vulnerabilities

- Disruptions in energy routes affect global economic stability.

Key Facts

1. The **Strait of Hormuz** handles a significant portion of global oil trade.
2. Iran is a major oil producer, though affected by sanctions.
3. China is one of the world's largest **energy importers**.
4. Global oil prices are highly sensitive to **West Asia tensions**.
5. Economic sanctions play a major role in shaping geopolitical outcomes.

Global Practices

United States	Uses sanctions and strategic alliances to influence geopolitical outcomes
European Union	Focuses on diplomatic engagement and energy diversification
China	Prioritises economic engagement, trade partnerships, and infrastructure investments
Comparative Insight	China's approach reflects strategic neutrality combined with economic opportunism

Indian Perspective / Policies

Energy Security Strategy	India diversifies oil imports to reduce dependency on volatile regions
Strategic Autonomy	Maintains balanced relations with multiple global powers
Act West Policy	Enhances engagement with West Asia

Way Forward

1. Strengthen Energy Diversification

- Reduce dependence on conflict-prone regions.

2. Enhance Strategic Autonomy

- Maintain balanced diplomatic relations.

3. Build Economic Resilience

- Strengthen domestic economic capacity to absorb global shocks.

4. Monitor Geopolitical Shifts

- Adapt foreign policy to emerging global power dynamics.

5. Promote Multilateral Engagement

- Support peaceful conflict resolution through global institutions.

Conclusion

Modern conflicts increasingly produce economic winners and losers beyond the battlefield. China's strategic positioning in the Iran conflict underscores the importance of geoeconomics in global politics.

For countries like India, navigating such complexities requires a balanced approach that integrates economic resilience with strategic diplomacy.

Prelims MCQ**Q3. Consider the following statements:**

1. The Strait of Hormuz is a major global oil transit route.
2. China is largely unaffected by disruptions in global oil markets.
3. Economic sanctions are used as tools of geopolitical strategy.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Correct Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — China is significantly affected as a major importer.)

Mains Practice Question

Q4. "In modern geopolitics, economic power often determines strategic advantage more than military engagement." Discuss with reference to recent West Asia conflicts. (250 words)

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Commitment

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Deceptively benign – Inflation and energy vulnerability

Source: The Hindu

GS Paper: GS Paper 3 (Economy – Inflation, Energy Security)

Introduction

India's recent retail inflation appears moderate on the surface, staying within the tolerance band of the Reserve Bank of India. However, this "benign" outlook masks deeper structural pressures emerging from wholesale inflation, rising input costs, and external vulnerabilities. The divergence between CPI and WPI reflects underlying stress that could translate into future inflationary spikes, especially in an import-dependent economy like India.

Key Issues

1. **CPI–WPI Divergence**
 - Retail inflation appears stable, but wholesale inflation is rising sharply that's why signals future cost push inflation.
2. **Imported Inflation Risk**
 - Dependence on oil and gas imports exposes India to global shocks, especially geopolitical disruptions.
3. **Currency Depreciation Impact**
 - Rupee depreciation (~2.5 -- 3%) increases cost of imports that's why fuels inflation across sectors.
4. **Supply Chain Disruptions**
 - Global conflicts and trade disruptions raise input costs in fertilizers, petrochemicals, and manufacturing.
5. **Hidden Inflationary Build-up**
 - Firms temporarily absorb costs so delayed price transmission that's why future inflation spikes likely.

Key Facts

1. **CPI (Consumer Price Index):** Measures retail inflation; RBI targets **4% ± 2%**
2. **WPI (Wholesale Price Index):** Reflects producer-level price changes; base year **2011-12**
3. **CFPI (Consumer Food Price Index):** Tracks food inflation component
4. India imports **~85% of crude oil**, making it highly vulnerable to global price shocks
5. Rupee depreciation increases **imported inflation**
6. International Monetary Fund publishes **World Economic Outlook (WEO)** projections

Global Practices

EU Nations	Diversifying energy mix rapidly toward renewables to reduce fossil dependency
Japan	Uses long-term LNG contracts to stabilize import costs
USA	Strategic petroleum reserves used to cushion shocks
Key takeaway	Energy diversification + strategic reserves = inflation resilience

Indian Policies / Institutional Framework

Inflation Targeting Framework (2016)	Anchored by RBI
National Solar Mission	Push toward renewable energy
National Biofuel Policy	Reducing oil dependence
Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR)	Buffer against global shocks
PLI Schemes	Strengthening domestic manufacturing to reduce import dependence

Way Forward

1. **Accelerate Energy Transition**
 - Scale up solar, wind, green hydrogen to reduce fossil fuel dependence
2. **Strengthen Domestic Supply Chains**
 - Reduce reliance on imported intermediates (fertilizers, petrochemicals)
3. **Currency Stabilisation Measures**
 - Improve forex reserves and export competitiveness
4. **Better Inflation Monitoring**
 - Integrate CPI and WPI signals for proactive policy response
5. **Strategic Diversification of Imports**
 - Broaden energy sourcing and invest in long-term contracts

Conclusion

India's inflation story is not as comfortable as headline numbers suggest. Beneath stable retail inflation lies a complex interplay of global shocks, currency pressures, and structural vulnerabilities. Addressing these requires not just monetary policy but a strategic shift toward energy security and economic resilience. A calibrated transition today can prevent sharper macroeconomic instability tomorrow.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

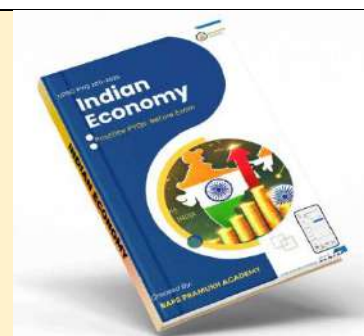
1. CPI is used by RBI for inflation targeting.
2. WPI includes services inflation.
3. Rupee depreciation reduces imported inflation.

Which of the above is/are correct?

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| A. 1 only | B. 1 and 2 |
| C. 2 and 3 | D. 1, 2 and 3 |

Answer: A

WPI does NOT include services; depreciation increases imported inflation.



Mains Question

Q2. "Headline inflation may often mask deeper structural vulnerabilities in an economy." Discuss in the context of India's recent inflation trends and energy dependence.

Lessons from Hungary's vote and Viktor Orbán's defeat

Source: The Hindu

GS Paper: GS Paper II

Relevance: Democracy, Electoral Politics, Global Political Trends

Introduction

The recent electoral outcome in Hungary, where voters rejected the long-standing rule of Viktor Orbán, highlights a crucial democratic principle: even entrenched "illiberal democracies" can be corrected through electoral processes. It reflects the enduring resilience of democratic institutions despite rising global populism.

Key Issues

1. **Myth of Electoral Invincibility Broken**
 - Long-standing leaders can be democratically removed.

- Challenges perception of “strongman permanence.”

2. Democratic Resilience

- Majority can reject authoritarian tendencies through ballots.
- Reinforces faith in electoral systems globally.

3. Role of External Influence

- Allegations of foreign interference (Russia, EU tensions).
- Raises concerns about sovereignty and information warfare.

4. Ideological Polarisation

- Conflict between liberal democratic values and nationalist politics.
- Deepens societal divisions.

5. Geopolitical Alignments

- Hungary’s tilt towards Russia and China created internal and external tensions.
- Elections reflect public response to such alignments.

Key Facts

1. **Hungary:** Central European country, member of the **European Union**
2. Concept of **Illiberal Democracy:** Popularised by Orbán; elections exist but liberal values weaken
3. **Vladimir Putin:** Key geopolitical influence in Europe
4. **Volodymyr Zelenskyy:** Central to Ukraine conflict narrative
5. **International Criminal Court:** Issues arrest warrants for global crimes.

Global Practices (Comparative Perspective)

USA & Europe	Strong institutional checks limit executive overreach
Eastern Europe	Rise of populist leaders, but electoral correction remains possible
Key takeaway	Strong institutions + active electorate = democratic correction mechanism

Indian Context

Election Commission of India (ECI)	Ensures free and fair elections
Model Code of Conduct	Maintains electoral neutrality
Judicial Oversight	Safeguards constitutional values

India’s scale and diversity make **institutional strength and voter awareness critical**.

Way Forward

1. **Strengthen Democratic Institutions:** Ensure autonomy of election bodies and judiciary
2. **Promote Informed Voting:** Encourage political awareness and civic education
3. **Counter Disinformation:** Regulate fake news and foreign interference
4. **Balance Leadership & Institutions:** Avoid over-centralisation of power
5. **Encourage Political Pluralism:** Ensure space for opposition and dissent

Conclusion

Hungary’s electoral shift demonstrates that democracy retains its corrective capacity even under strain. While global trends indicate rising populism, the ultimate power still rests with the electorate. Sustaining this requires vigilant institutions, informed citizens, and a commitment to constitutional values.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Hungary is a member of the European Union.

2. Illiberal democracy implies absence of elections.
3. International Criminal Court can issue arrest warrants.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 3 only B. 2 only
C. 1, 2 and 3 D. 1 only

Answer: A

Mains Question

Q2. "Elections remain the most effective tool to correct democratic backsliding." Discuss in the context of recent global political developments.

The Strategic Vulnerability in India's LPG Supply Model

Source: *The Hindu*

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- Energy security
- Government policies

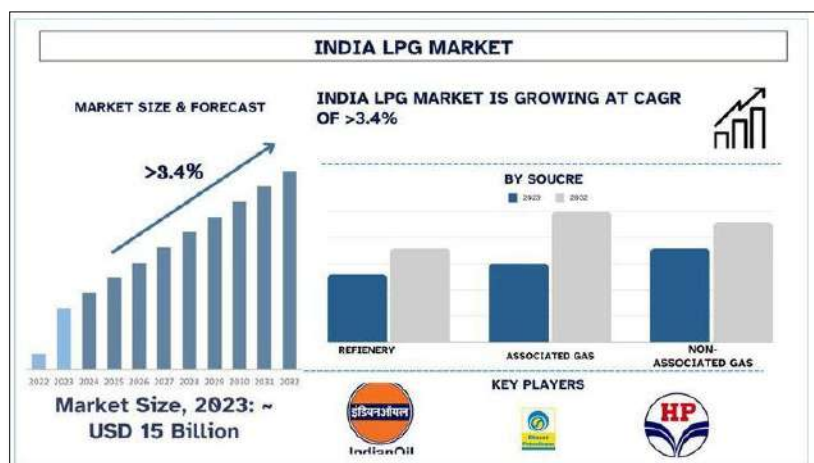
GS Paper III

- Infrastructure, Energy sector
- Economic resilience

Introduction

India's Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) sector has significantly expanded access over the years, especially for households. However, this growth has also increased dependence on imports, exposing the country to external vulnerabilities.

Recent global disruptions highlight that India's LPG challenge is not merely about supply shortages but about structural dependence and strategic resilience.



Key Issues

1. High Import Dependence

- India relies heavily on imports, making it vulnerable to global supply disruptions.

2. Strategic Chokepoints

- Critical routes like the Strait of Hormuz pose geopolitical risks.

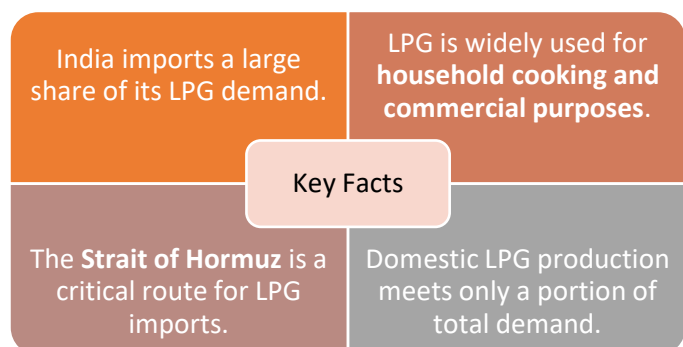
3. Limited Domestic Production

- Domestic LPG output has not kept pace with rising demand.

4. Inadequate Storage Capacity

- Insufficient reserves limit the ability to handle supply shocks.

5. Sectoral Imbalance



- Heavy focus on household consumption reduces flexibility in supply allocation.

Global Practices

Japan	Maintains high storage capacity and diversified supply sources.
South Korea	Strong energy infrastructure with efficient import management.
China	Diversifies energy sources and builds strategic reserves.
Comparative Insight	Countries enhance resilience through diversification, storage capacity, and infrastructure investment.

Indian Policies / Initiatives

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)	Expanded LPG access to rural households.
Strategic Petroleum Reserves	Primarily focused on crude oil storage.
Energy Diversification Policies	Encourage use of alternative fuels and domestic production.

Way Forward

1. **Increase Domestic Production:** Boost refining capacity and domestic LPG output.
2. **Diversify Import Sources:** Reduce reliance on specific regions or routes.
3. **Expand Storage Infrastructure:** Develop larger LPG reserves for emergency situations.
4. **Promote Alternative Energy Sources:** Encourage electric cooking and other clean energy options.
5. **Improve Supply Chain Flexibility:** Balance household and industrial demand for better resilience.

Conclusion

India's LPG sector reflects a broader challenge in energy security — balancing accessibility with strategic resilience. While expanding access has been a major achievement, addressing structural vulnerabilities is essential for long-term sustainability.

A diversified, resilient, and well-managed energy system will be crucial for reducing risks and ensuring uninterrupted supply.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. India imports a significant portion of its LPG requirements.
2. The Strait of Hormuz is an important route for energy imports.
3. India has fully self-sufficient LPG production.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: a) 1 and 2 only

(Statement 3 is incorrect — India is not self-sufficient in LPG.)

Mains Practice Question

Q1. "India's LPG supply model reflects structural vulnerabilities in energy security." Examine the challenges and suggest measures to enhance resilience. (250 words)

Worker Unrest Shows Cost-of-Living Crisis Cannot Be Ignored

Source: *The Hindu*

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- Social justice
- Welfare schemes
- Labour issues

GS Paper III

- Indian economy
- Poverty and unemployment
- Inclusive growth

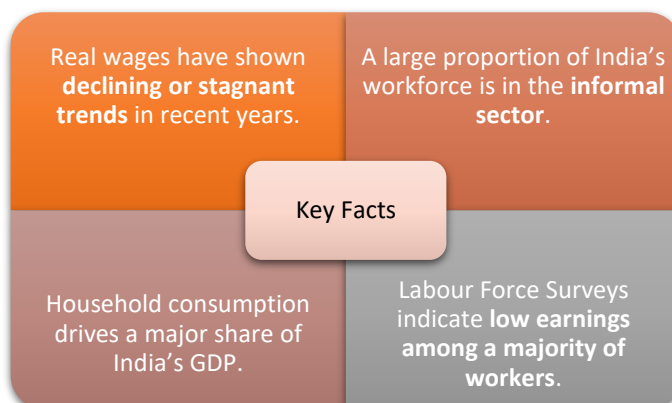
Introduction

Worker unrest across states reflects a deeper structural issue in India's economy — the widening gap between rising cost of living and stagnant or declining real wages.

Despite economic growth, a significant section of the workforce is struggling to meet basic needs, highlighting concerns of inequality and weak income growth.

Key Issues

1. **Declining Real Wages:** Even when nominal wages rise, inflation erodes purchasing power.
2. **High Informal Employment:** A large share of workers lack job security and stable income.
3. **Rising Cost of Living:** Food inflation and essential expenses are increasing faster than wages.
4. **Weak Consumption Demand:** Low incomes reduce spending, affecting overall economic growth.
5. **Inequality and Social Stress:** Income disparities lead to unrest and socio-economic instability.



Global Practices

United States	Implements minimum wage laws and social security benefits.
European Union	Strong labour protections and welfare systems.
China	Focus on manufacturing-led job creation and wage growth.
Comparative Insight	Advanced economies balance wage protection + social security + employment generation .

Indian Policies / Initiatives

MGNREGA	Provides rural employment and income support.
Labour Codes	Aim to simplify labour laws and improve compliance.
Food Security Schemes	Support vulnerable populations against inflation.

Way Forward

1. **Enhance Wage Growth:** Ensure wages rise in line with inflation.
2. **Strengthen Social Security:** Expand coverage for informal workers.
3. **Control Inflation:** Focus on food price stabilization and supply-side reforms.

4. **Promote Formal Employment:** Encourage job creation in the organized sector.
5. **Boost Consumption:** Increase income levels to drive demand-led growth.

Conclusion

India's growth story must be inclusive to be sustainable. The cost-of-living crisis underscores the need to align wage growth with inflation and ensure economic benefits reach the broader population. Addressing worker distress is not only a social necessity but also an economic imperative.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Real wages adjust nominal wages for inflation.
2. High inflation increases the purchasing power of workers.
3. Informal sector workers often lack social security.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — inflation reduces purchasing power.)

Mains Practice Question

Q1. "Rising cost of living combined with stagnant wages poses a challenge to inclusive growth in India." Examine the causes and suggest solutions. (250 words)

India Must Draw a Red Line on U.S. Unilateral Sanctions

Source: *The Hindu* – Suhasini Haidar

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- India–US relations
- Foreign policy & strategic autonomy
- International institutions & global governance

GS Paper III

- Energy security
- Global economy & sanctions regime

Introduction

The expanding use of unilateral sanctions by the United States has emerged as a defining feature of contemporary geopolitics. While these measures are often justified in the name of global security, their extraterritorial impact disproportionately affects third countries like India.

For India, the challenge lies in balancing strategic partnerships with the U.S.

while safeguarding its **economic sovereignty, energy security, and independent foreign policy.**

The U.S. uses **secondary sanctions** affecting third countries engaging with sanctioned nations.

The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) administers U.S. sanctions.

Key Facts

Iran and Venezuela are major countries under U.S. sanctions affecting global oil supply.

The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is strategically important for India.

Key Issues

1. **Extraterritorial Overreach of U.S. Sanctions**



- U.S. sanctions increasingly impact countries beyond their jurisdiction, challenging sovereignty.
- Example: India's oil imports from Iran and Venezuela curtailed.
- 2. Energy Security Risks**
 - Sanctions disrupt access to affordable crude oil, raising import costs and inflation.
 - Impact: Higher fuel prices → current account pressure → inflationary trends.
- 3. Erosion of Multilateralism**
 - Unilateral sanctions bypass the UN system, weakening global governance norms.
 - Shift from **rules-based order** → **power-based order**
- 4. Strategic Dependency Risks**
 - Compliance with sanctions reduces India's bargaining power in foreign policy.
 - Creates asymmetry in India–U.S. relations.
- 5. Missed Economic Opportunities**
 - Sanctions block access to cheaper energy and strategic trade routes.
 - Example: Loss of benefits from Iran's Chabahar connectivity and discounted oil.

Global Practices / Comparative Perspective

European Union	Often resists unilateral sanctions; seeks strategic autonomy in energy and trade
China	Actively bypasses sanctions through alternative financial systems; promotes yuan-based trade mechanisms
Russia	Develops parallel financial and energy systems

Indian Policy Response

Strategy/Aspect	Description
Strategic Balancing	India maintains ties with both the U.S. and sanctioned nations
Energy Diversification	Shift towards multiple suppliers to reduce vulnerability
Alternative Connectivity Projects	Chabahar Port and INSTC corridor
Financial Autonomy Efforts	Exploration of non-dollar trade mechanisms (e.g., rupee trade)

Way Forward

- 1. Define Clear Red Lines**
 - India must explicitly state sectors (energy, connectivity) where sanctions compliance is non-negotiable.
- 2. Build Sanctions-Resilient Ecosystem**
 - Develop alternative payment systems
 - Promote rupee-based trade settlements
- 3. Diversify Energy Basket**
 - Expand renewable energy
 - Increase domestic production
 - Strengthen strategic reserves
- 4. Strengthen Multilateralism**
 - Advocate that sanctions must be routed through **UN mechanisms**.
- 5. Lead Global South Consensus**
 - India can emerge as a voice against coercive economic practices.
- 6. Institutional Preparedness**

- Create legal, financial, and diplomatic frameworks to handle sanctions shocks.

Conclusion

India stands at a critical juncture where strategic partnerships must not come at the cost of sovereign decision-making. Drawing a calibrated but firm red line against unilateral sanctions is essential not as an act of defiance, but as a reaffirmation of **strategic autonomy, economic resilience, and commitment to a rules-based international order.**

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The United Nations Security Council is the only body authorized to impose universally binding sanctions.
2. U.S. secondary sanctions affect only U.S. companies.
3. OFAC is responsible for administering U.S. sanctions.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — secondary sanctions target non-U.S. entities as well.)

Mains Practice Question

Q2. “Unilateral sanctions challenge the principles of sovereignty and multilateralism.” Critically examine India’s options in dealing with such measures while maintaining strategic partnerships. (250 words)

Invidious speech

Source & Writer

- *The Hindu* (Editorial)
- Focus on actions of Election Commission of India

UPSC Syllabus Linkage

- **GS 2:** Constitutional bodies, Elections, Governance
- **GS 4:** Ethics in public life, Political morality

Introduction

Free and fair elections depend on **neutral institutions and responsible political conduct**. The article highlights concerns over alleged violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and questions the **delay and inconsistency in the ECI’s response**, raising issues about institutional credibility.

Key Issues

1. Delay in ECI Action

Model Code of Conduct (MCC) → Guidelines to ensure fair elections

Article 324 → Gives powers to the Election Commission

Static Concept

ECI ensures **free & fair elections** in India

MCC is **not legally binding**, but morally enforceable

- The Commission has been slow in responding to clear violations, raising doubts about its neutrality and efficiency during critical election phases.
- Example: No prompt action on controversial speeches
- 2. Selective Enforcement of MCC**
 - Perception that rules are applied differently to different leaders undermines fairness and equal political competition.
 - Example: Opposition leaders questioned more strictly
- 3. Use of Religion in Campaigning**
 - Invoking religion for electoral gain violates MCC and threatens secular values enshrined in the Constitution.
 - Example: Speeches targeting religious communities
- 4. Weak Accountability Mechanisms**
 - ECI lacks strong punitive powers, making it difficult to enforce compliance strictly beyond warnings or temporary bans.
 - Example: Limited penalties for violations
- 5. Erosion of Institutional Credibility**
 - Inaction or perceived bias damages public trust in the Election Commission and electoral democracy itself.
 - Example: Growing criticism from civil society and experts

Global Practices

UK	Strict electoral conduct monitored by independent bodies
USA	Campaign finance and speech regulations (limited but structured)
Canada	Strong oversight on election fairness
Australia	Clear guidelines and swift enforcement
EU Nations	Transparent monitoring of campaign practices

India – Committees / Recommendations

Law Commission Reports	Electoral reforms and stricter laws
Second ARC (Administrative Reforms Commission)	Strengthen institutions
Supreme Court Judgements	Emphasized free & fair elections
ECI Recommendations	Legal backing to MCC
Goswami Committee (1990)	Electoral reforms

Way Forward

- 1. Give Legal Backing to MCC**
 - Making MCC legally enforceable will strengthen ECI's authority and ensure stricter compliance with electoral rules by political parties and leaders.
- 2. Ensure Timely Action by ECI**
 - Quick and transparent decision-making during elections will improve public trust and prevent prolonged controversies around violations.
- 3. Strengthen Accountability Mechanisms**
 - Introduce stronger penalties like fines or disqualification to deter repeated violations and ensure seriousness in following electoral norms.

4. Promote Ethical Political Conduct

- Political parties must adopt internal codes to discourage hate speech and divisive campaigning during elections.

5. Enhance Institutional Transparency

- ECI should clearly communicate reasons behind its decisions to maintain credibility and avoid allegations of bias or partiality.

Prelims Practice Question**Q1. Consider the following statements:**

1. The Model Code of Conduct is legally enforceable in India.
2. Article 324 of the Constitution empowers the Election Commission of India to conduct elections.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 only

Mains Practice Question**Q2. The effectiveness of the Election Commission of India is central to maintaining free and fair elections.**

Discuss the challenges faced by ECI in enforcing the Model Code of Conduct and suggest reforms. (250 words)

Student Notes

On women's representation, a historic opportunity lost

Source & Writer

1. *The Hindu* (Opinion)
2. Author: Shaina NC

UPSC Syllabus Linkage (Brief)

1. **GS 2:** Parliament, Representation, Women empowerment
2. **GS 1:** Role of women in society
3. **GS 4:** Equality, constitutional morality

Introduction

Women's political representation in India has remained limited despite decades of discussion. The article highlights how the **Women's Reservation Bill (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam)** could have been a transformative reform, but delays and political hesitation have weakened its impact.

Key Issues

1. Delay in Implementation

- The law's benefits are postponed due to linkage with delimitation and census, delaying real political empowerment of women.
- Example: Reservation not until future elections

2. Historical Political Hesitation

- Past attempts at women's reservation failed due to lack of consensus and political will among parties.
- Example: Bill pending since 1996

3. Underrepresentation in Parliament

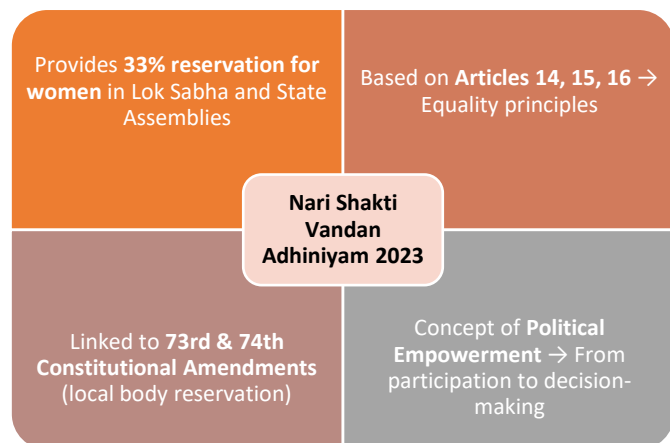
- Women remain significantly underrepresented in legislative bodies, limiting their influence in policymaking.
- Example: Around 14–15% representation in Lok Sabha

4. Tokenism vs Real Power

- Even when women enter politics, decision-making often remains male-dominated, reducing real empowerment.
- Example: Proxy representation in some local bodies

5. Socio-cultural Barriers

- Patriarchal norms and lack of support systems hinder women's active political participation and leadership roles.
- Example: Limited access to resources and networks



Global Practices

Rwanda	Over 60% women in Parliament (highest globally)
Nordic Countries	Strong gender equality in politics
France	Legal quotas for women candidates

UK	Party-based internal quotas
Nepal	Constitutional guarantee of women representation

IN India – Committees / Recommendations

National Commission for Women (NCW)	Advocates political participation
Law Commission Reports	Electoral reforms including gender inclusion
Parliamentary Committees	Supported reservation proposals
73rd & 74th Amendments	Successful model in local governance
Election Commission Suggestions	Encourage women candidates

Way Forward

- 1. Implement Reservation Without Delay**
 - Ensure early implementation by delinking it from delimitation so women can benefit immediately from increased representation in Parliament and Assemblies.
- 2. Promote Internal Party Quotas**
 - Political parties should voluntarily give more tickets to women candidates to improve representation beyond constitutional mandates.
- 3. Capacity Building for Women Leaders**
 - Provide training, leadership programs, and financial support to help women effectively participate and influence policymaking processes.
- 4. Address Social Barriers**
 - Encourage education, awareness, and societal change to remove patriarchal restrictions that limit women's entry into politics.
- 5. Ensure Real Decision-making Power**
 - Focus on meaningful participation by giving women leadership roles instead of symbolic representation in political institutions.

Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam provides 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha.
2. Women's reservation in Parliament was first proposed in 2023.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 only

Mains Practice Question

Q2. Women's political representation is essential for inclusive democracy. Discuss the challenges in implementing women's reservation in India and suggest measures to ensure effective empowerment. (250 words)

Three pathways for energy diversification

Source & Writer

1. *The Hindu* (Editorial/Opinion)
2. Authors: Prodipto Ghosh & Kolluru Krishnan

UPSC Syllabus Linkage

1. **GS 3:** Energy security, Infrastructure, Environment
2. **GS 2:** International relations (energy dependence)
3. **Essay:** Sustainable development, Energy transition

Introduction

India's heavy dependence on imported fossil fuels makes it vulnerable to global disruptions. The article suggests **three key pathways—renewables, biofuels, and natural gas**—to ensure energy diversification, sustainability, and long-term economic stability.

Key Issues

1. High Import Dependence on Fossil Fuels

- India relies heavily on imported oil and gas, making it vulnerable to global price shocks and geopolitical disruptions.
- Example: Strait of Hormuz crisis affecting oil supply

2. Slow Renewable Energy Transition

- Despite progress, renewable capacity expansion faces challenges like storage, grid integration, and financing constraints.
- Example: Solar energy variability issues

3. Underutilisation of Biomass Resources

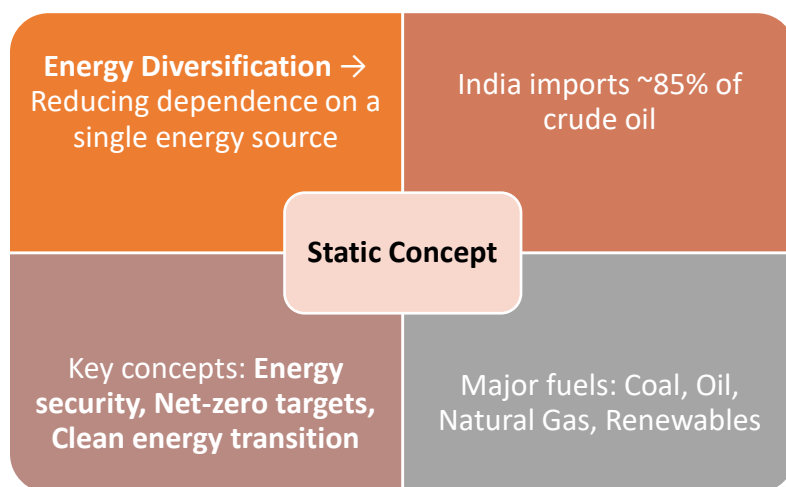
- India has large biomass potential, but inefficient collection, processing, and logistics limit its effective use.
- Example: Crop residue burning instead of energy use

4. Limited Natural Gas Infrastructure

- Gas pipelines and distribution networks are still inadequate, restricting the expansion of cleaner fuel usage.
- Example: Uneven gas access across states

5. Financial and Policy Constraints

- High investment requirements and policy uncertainties slow down private sector participation in energy diversification efforts.
- Example: Delays in biofuel and green hydrogen projects



Global Practices

Germany

Strong push for renewables (Energiewende)

Brazil	Successful biofuel (ethanol) programme
USA	Strategic petroleum reserves + gas infrastructure
China	Large-scale solar and wind investments
EU	Diversified energy sourcing policies

IN India – Committees / Recommendations (Brief)

NITI Aayog	Energy transition roadmap
Integrated Energy Policy (Planning Commission)	Diversification focus
National Biofuel Policy	Promote ethanol blending
Hydrocarbon Exploration Policy (HELP)	Boost domestic production
National Green Hydrogen Mission	Clean fuel transition

Way Forward

1. Accelerate Renewable Energy Expansion

- Increase solar and wind capacity with better storage solutions to ensure reliable and sustainable energy supply across regions.

2. Promote Biomass and Biofuels

- Utilize agricultural waste efficiently for energy production, reducing pollution and providing additional income to farmers.

3. Expand Natural Gas Infrastructure

- Develop pipelines and city gas networks to increase the share of cleaner fuel in India's overall energy consumption.

4. Encourage Private Investment

- Provide policy stability and financial incentives to attract private players in clean energy and infrastructure development projects.

5. Diversify Energy Imports

- Reduce dependence on specific regions by sourcing energy from multiple countries and strengthening strategic reserves.

Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Energy diversification reduces dependence on a single source of energy.
2. Biomass energy in India is mainly derived from fossil fuels.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 only

Mains Practice Question

Q2. Energy diversification is essential for India's economic stability and environmental sustainability. Discuss the challenges and suggest a multi-pronged strategy for achieving energy security. (250 words)

Information asymmetry in higher education

Source & Writer

- *The Hindu* (Opinion)
- Author: Inyanranjan Sahoo

UPSC Syllabus Linkage (Brief)

- **GS 2:** Education, Governance, Transparency
- **GS 3:** Human capital, Inclusive growth
- **Essay:** Education reforms, Information gaps

Introduction

India's higher education system has expanded rapidly, but students still struggle to make informed choices. The article highlights how **information asymmetry**—unequal access to reliable information—creates confusion, poor decision-making, and affects overall education quality.

Key Issues

1. Lack of Reliable Institutional Information

- Students depend on brochures and advertisements, which often present selective data and do not reflect actual academic quality or outcomes.
- Example: Colleges highlighting placements but hiding dropout rates

2. Misleading Signals from Rankings and Branding

- Institutions focus on visible indicators like infrastructure and branding rather than core academic quality, distorting student choices.
- Example: Fancy campuses attracting students despite weak faculty

3. Overload of Unstructured Information

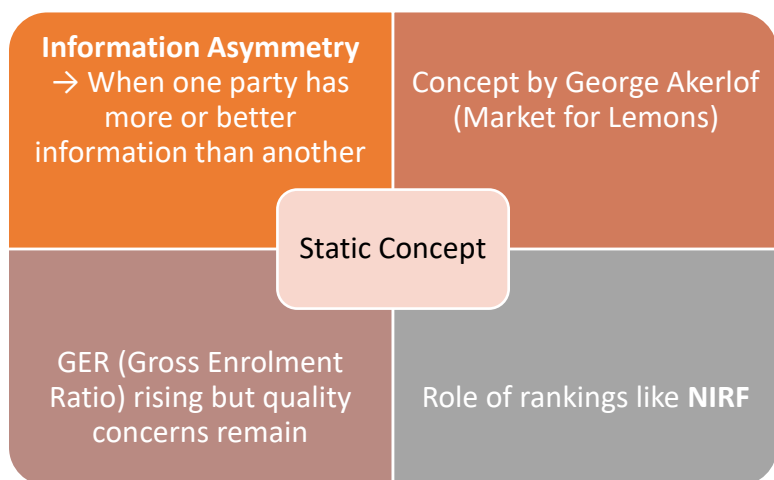
- Multiple sources like websites and social media provide fragmented data, making it difficult for students to compare institutions effectively.
- Example: Conflicting data across platforms

4. Absence of Standardised Data Systems

- Lack of common metrics and formats reduces comparability across institutions and increases dependence on informal sources.
- Example: Different definitions of "placement success"

5. Impact on Education Quality and Equity

- Poor decision-making leads to mismatch between student expectations and institutional quality, affecting employability and inclusiveness.
- Example: Students choosing low-quality colleges unknowingly



Global Practices

USA	Integrated education data portals (College Scorecard)
UK	Transparent student outcome data (TEF framework)
Australia	QILT surveys for student satisfaction
OECD	Standardised education indicators
EU	Comparable higher education data systems

IN India – Committees / Recommendations (Brief)

NEP 2020	Transparency and accountability in education
NIRF Framework	Standardised ranking system
AISHE Survey	Data collection on higher education
UGC Guidelines	Institutional disclosures
NAAC Accreditation	Quality assurance

Way Forward

- Develop Unified Data Portals**
 - Create a centralised platform with verified institutional data to help students compare colleges easily and make informed decisions.
- Standardise Key Education Metrics**
 - Ensure uniform definitions for indicators like placements, faculty quality, and infrastructure to improve transparency and comparability across institutions.
- Improve Data Verification Mechanisms**
 - Strengthen independent audits and validation systems to ensure accuracy and credibility of information shared by educational institutions.
- Enhance Student Awareness**
 - Educate students about evaluating institutions critically instead of relying solely on advertisements, rankings, or branding signals.
- Link Rankings with Learning Outcomes**
 - Focus ranking systems more on academic quality, teaching-learning processes, and student outcomes rather than just infrastructure and visibility.

Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

- Information asymmetry means equal access to information among all stakeholders.
- The NIRF ranking framework in India aims to improve transparency in higher education.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b) 2 only

Mains Practice Question

Q2. Information asymmetry in higher education affects both quality and equity. Discuss the challenges it creates and suggest measures to improve transparency and informed decision-making. (250 words)

Summer as a source of income shock for gig workers

Source & Writer

- *The Hindu* (Opinion)
- Author: Krishna Malakar

UPSC Syllabus Linkage

- **GS 1:** Urbanisation, Vulnerable sections
- **GS 2:** Welfare schemes, Labour issues, Governance
- **GS 3:** Climate change, Economy (informal sector)

Introduction

Heatwaves in India are no longer just a health concern—they are becoming an **economic shock**, especially for gig workers. As platform-based jobs expand, millions depend on daily earnings, making them highly vulnerable to climate extremes like rising temperatures.

Gig Economy –

Definition

The **Gig Economy** refers to a labor market where individuals work in **short-term, flexible, freelance, or contract-based jobs** instead of permanent employment. Workers are typically paid per task (“gig”) rather than receiving a fixed salary.

Examples: ride-sharing drivers, food delivery partners, freelance designers, online tutors.

1. **Nature of Work:** Task-based, on-demand, flexible working hours.
2. **Employment Status:** Workers are usually classified as **independent contractors**, not full-time employees.
3. **Platform-Based:** Often mediated through digital platforms like
 - Uber
 - Swiggy
 - Zomato
4. **Key Feature:** “No job security, no social security” (generally).
5. **Payment System:** Piece-rate or per service completed.

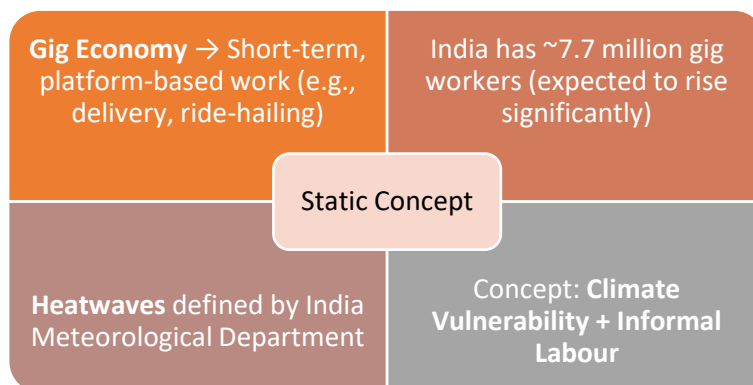
India-Specific Facts

1. Recognized under the **Code on Social Security 2020**, which defines gig and platform workers.
2. India is one of the fastest-growing gig markets globally.
3. **NITI Aayog Report (2022):**
 - Estimated **7.7 million gig workers** in India.
 - Expected to reach **23.5 million by 2029–30**.

Key Issues

1. **Income Directly Linked to Weather Conditions**
 - Gig workers’ earnings depend on completed tasks, and extreme heat reduces productivity, leading to immediate income loss without any safety net.
 - Example: Delivery workers earning less due to fewer trips
2. **Lack of Social Security Protection**
 - Gig workers are not covered under traditional labour laws, leaving them without insurance, paid leave, or compensation during extreme weather conditions.

- Example: No wage protection during heatwaves
- 3. **Inadequate Heat Preparedness Measures**
 - Existing Heat Action Plans focus on health advisories, but ignore income loss and working conditions of outdoor gig workers.
 - Example: Advice to “stay indoors” impractical
- 4. **Platform Design Ignores Climate Risks**
 - Algorithm-driven work systems push workers to meet targets even in extreme heat, increasing exposure and health risks.
 - Example: Incentives tied to number of deliveries
- 5. **Fragmented Institutional Response**
 - Multiple agencies handle climate, labour, and urban issues separately, leading to poor coordination and ineffective protection for gig workers.
 - Example: Lack of integrated policy response



Global Practices

EU	Expanding labour rights to platform workers
USA	Some states mandate heat safety rules for outdoor workers
Spain	Restrictions on outdoor work during extreme heat
ILO	Promotes social protection for informal workers
UK	Discussions on gig worker classification and rights

IN India – Committees / Recommendations

NITI Aayog Report on Gig Economy	Recognised vulnerabilities
Code on Social Security 2020	Includes gig workers (implementation pending)
NDMA Heatwave Guidelines	Focus on disaster response
State Heat Action Plans	Limited labour focus
E-Shram Portal	Database for informal workers

Way Forward

1. **Expand Social Security Coverage**
 - Extend insurance, income protection, and welfare schemes to gig workers to safeguard them from income shocks during extreme climate conditions.
2. **Integrate Labour and Climate Policies**
 - Align heat action plans with labour welfare policies so that income protection becomes a key component of climate adaptation strategies.
3. **Regulate Platform Algorithms**
 - Ensure platforms design work systems that reduce heat exposure by limiting tasks during peak hours and removing unsafe performance incentives.
4. **Improve Urban Heat Infrastructure**

- Provide cooling spaces, shaded rest areas, and drinking water facilities in cities to support outdoor workers during extreme heat conditions.

5. Strengthen Institutional Coordination

- Improve coordination between labour, climate, and urban departments to create a unified policy approach for protecting gig workers effectively.

Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Gig workers in India are fully protected under traditional labour laws.
2. Heat Action Plans in India mainly focus on reducing mortality and health risks.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 only

Mains Practice Question

Q2. Q. Climate change is increasingly becoming an economic risk for informal workers in India. Discuss with special reference to gig workers and suggest policy measures for protection. (250 words)



The banner features the PRAMUKH academy logo in the top left corner. The main text is written in a mix of Hindi and English. On the left, it says 'AB Delhi DOOR NAHI' in a stylized font. On the right, it says 'Scholarship' in a large, elegant script, followed by 'Talent deserves the right opportunity.' in a bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom, there are two boxes: the left one says 'PRASTHAN 2.0' and the right one contains details about the scholarship test, including 'Admission cum scholarship test.', 'Up to 100% scholarship based on merit.', and 'Detailed performance report with All India Rank.'

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India Needs a Clear, Rules-Based Framework for Petrol Prices

Source: *The Hindu* – Ajay Srivastava

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- Governance & policy transparency
- Public accountability

GS Paper III

- Indian economy, Energy pricing
- Inflation & fiscal policy

Introduction

India formally deregulated petrol and diesel prices in 2010–2014 to align domestic fuel prices with global crude oil trends. However, in practice, pricing continues to be influenced by government intervention, particularly through excise duties and informal controls on Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs).

This has created a system where prices are neither fully market-driven nor transparently administered, raising concerns about **predictability, fairness, and economic efficiency**.

Key Issues

- Lack of Price Transparency**
 - Consumers are unable to understand price formation due to opaque adjustments.
 - Informal price controls distort market signals.
- Asymmetric Price Transmission**
 - Prices rise quickly when crude increases
 - But fall slowly when crude declines
 - Creates perception of unfair pricing.
- Fiscal Dependence on Fuel Taxes**
 - Government relies heavily on fuel taxes for revenue.
 - Leads to reluctance in reducing taxes during price spikes.
- Impact on Inflation and Consumption**

High fuel prices:

 - Increase transport costs
 - Raise food inflation
 - Reduce disposable income
 - Affects overall economic demand.
- Financial Stress on OMCs**
 - When prices are suppressed, OMCs absorb losses.
 - Weakens balance sheets and investment capacity.
- Economic Insight (Value Addition)**
 - Fuel pricing is linked to **macroeconomic stability**
 - Exchange rate depreciation amplifies price shocks
 - Taxes act as both **revenue tools and price stabilisers**

Key Facts for Prelims

- Petrol and diesel pricing in India is officially deregulated.
- Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) include **IOC, BPCL, HPCL**.
- Fuel prices are influenced by:
 - Global crude oil prices
 - Exchange rate (₹ vs \$)
 - Central and state taxes
- Taxes form a significant portion of retail fuel prices.
- Fuel prices directly impact **inflation and fiscal revenues**.

Global Practices / Comparative Perspective

United States	Fully market-driven pricing Minimal tax distortion
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European Union	High taxes but transparent structure
Indonesia	Uses subsidies but with targeted reforms

Indian Policy Landscape

Deregulation Policy	Petrol (2010) Diesel (2014)
Tax Structure	Central excise duty State VAT
Current Practice	Informal price management by government Limited transparency in pricing formula

Way Forward

1. **Introduce Fuel Price Transparency Framework (FPTF)**

Clearly define formula linking:

- Crude price
- Exchange rate
- Taxes
- Refining & distribution costs

2. **Ensure Symmetric Price Adjustment**

Prices should:

- Rise and fall in line with market conditions
- Avoid selective intervention

3. **Rationalise Fuel Taxes**

- Reduce volatility in taxation
- Consider GST inclusion (long-term)

4. **Strengthen OMC Autonomy:** Allow OMCs to operate on commercial principles without hidden controls.

5. **Build Strategic Reserves:** Use reserves to smooth extreme price volatility.

6. **Promote Energy Diversification**

- Electric mobility
- Biofuels
- Renewable energy

7. **Improve Public Communication:** Regular disclosure of pricing methodology to build trust.

Conclusion

Fuel pricing is not merely an economic issue but a governance question involving transparency, accountability, and fairness. A rules-based framework can reduce uncertainty, protect consumers, and ensure fiscal balance. Moving toward a predictable pricing system will strengthen India's economic resilience and policy credibility.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Petrol prices in India are fully market-determined without any government influence.
2. Exchange rate fluctuations affect fuel prices in India.
3. Taxes constitute a significant portion of petrol prices.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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



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

Correct Answer: a) 2 and 3 only

(Statement 1 is incorrect — pricing is not fully market-determined.)

Mains Practice Question

Q2. "Despite deregulation, fuel pricing in India lacks transparency and predictability." Examine the challenges and suggest a rules-based framework for reform. (250 words)

Electoral Roll Purges Raise Constitutional Questions

Source: *The Hindu* – P.D.T. Achary**GS Paper Relevance****GS Paper II**

- Election Commission of India (ECI)
- Representation of the People Act
- Constitutional governance & electoral integrity

Introduction

Free and fair elections depend fundamentally on accurate electoral rolls. The recent Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists in several States has raised concerns regarding the **balance between electoral integrity and voter inclusion**. While periodic revision is necessary, large-scale deletions close to elections bring into question procedural fairness and constitutional safeguards.

Key Issues**1. Risk of Voter Exclusion**

- Large-scale deletions may remove genuine voters due to documentation gaps.
- Raises concern of **disenfranchisement**.

2. Procedural Fairness

- Short timelines and limited verification processes reduce scope for appeal or correction.
- Affects **natural justice principles**.

3. Institutional Jurisdiction Overreach

Questions arise regarding:

- Role of Ministry of Home Affairs in citizenship verification
- Limits of ECI's authority
- Potential overlap creates legal ambiguity.

4. Timing Concerns

Revisions conducted close to elections may:

- Influence electoral outcomes
- Reduce trust in neutrality

5. Documentation and Accessibility Challenges

- Many citizens lack formal documentation required for verification.

Key Facts

1. **Article 326:** Elections based on universal adult suffrage (18+ years).
2. **Representation of the People Act, 1950:** Governs preparation of electoral rolls.
3. Electoral rolls are revised:
 - Annually
 - Before elections (intensive/special revision)
4. **Election Commission of India (ECI)** supervises electoral processes.
5. **Citizenship** is a prerequisite for voter registration.

- Particularly impacts:
- Migrants
- Rural populations
- Marginalised groups

Global Practices

United Kingdom	Continuous voter registration system Strong verification + easy correction mechanisms
United States	State-driven systems Debates over voter ID laws and purging practices
Australia	Automatic enrolment systems linked to public databases

Indian Policy / Legal Framework

Representation of the People Act, 1950	Provides for electoral roll preparation and revision
Election Commission Guidelines	Booth Level Officers (BLOs) verify data Door-to-door enumeration
Judicial Oversight	Courts emphasize: • Due process • Non-arbitrary exclusion

Way Forward

1. **Strengthen Due Process Mechanisms**
 - Ensure notice before deletion
 - Provide adequate time for appeal
2. **Improve Documentation Flexibility**
 - Accept broader identity proofs
 - Use digital and Aadhaar-linked verification carefully
3. **Institutional Clarity**
Clearly define roles of:
 - ECI
 - Home Ministry
4. **Timing Reforms**
 - Avoid major revisions immediately before elections
5. **Transparency and Public Disclosure**
 - Publish criteria and data for deletions
 - Enable citizen audit mechanisms
6. **Technology Integration with Safeguards**
 - Use data analytics carefully
 - Prevent algorithmic exclusion

Conclusion

Electoral roll management must uphold both **accuracy and inclusiveness**, as each reflects a core democratic value. While preventing fraudulent entries is essential, ensuring that no eligible citizen is excluded remains equally critical. A transparent, rule-bound, and citizen-centric approach will reinforce trust in India's electoral system.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Article 326 of the Constitution provides for universal adult suffrage.
2. Electoral rolls in India can only be revised once every five years.
3. The Representation of the People Act, 1950 governs electoral roll preparation.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Correct Answer: a) 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect — revisions can occur annually and before elections.)

Mains Question

Q2. "Ensuring electoral integrity should not come at the cost of voter exclusion." Examine in the context of electoral roll revisions in India. (250 words)

The RTE Act and the idea of social inclusion

Source & Writer

- *The Hindu* (Opinion)
- Authors: Ayushi Khare & Karthika Annamalai

UPSC Syllabus Linkage (Brief)

- **GS 2:** Education, Welfare schemes, Social justice
- **GS 1:** Social empowerment, Inequality
- **Essay:** Inclusive development, Education reforms

Introduction

Education is not just about access but also about **social integration and equality**. The article explains how the **Right to Education (RTE) Act**, especially Section 12(1)(c), plays a key role in promoting **inclusive classrooms**, but still faces practical challenges.

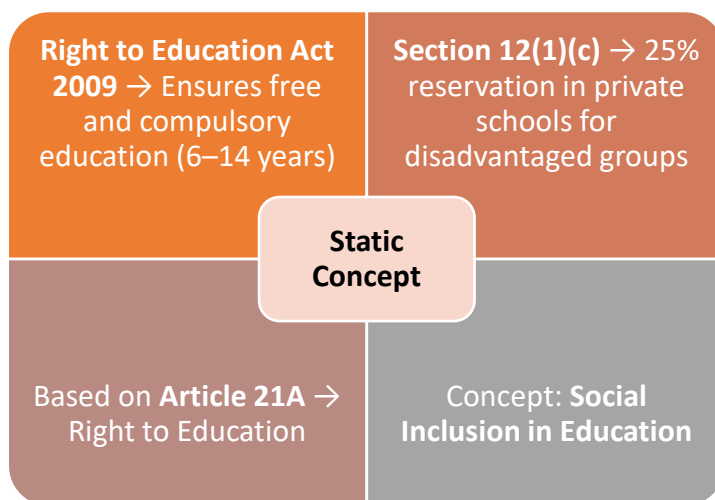
Key Issues

1. Misinterpretation of RTE Objective

- Section 12(1)(c) is often wrongly seen as promoting private schooling, while its actual aim is social integration through shared learning spaces.
- Example: Debate on "privatisation vs inclusion"

2. Uneven Implementation Across States

- Execution varies widely due to administrative gaps, delayed reimbursements, and weak monitoring systems affecting access and continuity.



- Example: Delays in fee reimbursements to schools
- 3. Hidden Costs for Students**
 - Even with free admission, indirect expenses like uniforms, books, and transport create barriers for economically weaker students.
 - Example: Parents struggling with additional costs
- 4. Resistance from Private Schools**
 - Some schools show reluctance due to financial and administrative burdens, limiting effective inclusion and participation.
 - Example: Limited cooperation in admissions
- 5. Quality vs Access Debate**
 - Focus often remains on enrolment rather than ensuring meaningful learning outcomes and integration within classrooms.
 - Example: Students facing discrimination or isolation

Global Practices

USA	Affirmative action for disadvantaged groups
UK	Pupil premium funding for disadvantaged students
Finland	Equal schooling system with minimal disparities
Brazil	Quotas for marginalised communities
OECD	Focus on inclusive and equitable education

IN India – Committees / Recommendations ()

Supreme Court Judgements	Upheld validity of RTE provisions
NEP 2020	Inclusive and equitable education
Kasturirangan Committee	Focus on access and quality
UGC/NCERT Guidelines	Promote inclusive learning
State-level MIS Systems	Improve monitoring

Way Forward

- 1. Strengthen Implementation Mechanisms**
 - Ensure timely reimbursements, better monitoring, and accountability to make RTE provisions effective and consistent across all states.
- 2. Reduce Hidden Costs for Students**
 - Provide additional support like free uniforms, books, and transport to ensure truly free and inclusive education for disadvantaged children.
- 3. Improve School-Level Inclusion Practices**
 - Train teachers and schools to promote social integration, prevent discrimination, and create supportive classroom environments for all students.
- 4. Enhance Transparency in Admissions**
 - Use digital systems and clear guidelines to make admissions under Section 12(1)(c) fair, transparent, and accessible.
- 5. Focus on Learning Outcomes**
 - Shift attention from enrolment numbers to quality education, ensuring students gain skills, confidence, and equal opportunities for growth.

Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Section 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act mandates 25% reservation for disadvantaged children in private schools.
2. The RTE Act applies only to government schools in India.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 only

Mains Practice Question

Q2. The Right to Education Act is not just about access but about achieving social inclusion. Discuss the role of Section 12(1)(c) in promoting inclusive education and highlight the challenges in its implementation. (250 words)

A recusal test the Delhi High Court failed

Source & Writer

- *The Hindu* (Opinion)
- Author: Kaleeswaram Raj

UPSC Syllabus Linkage

- **GS 2:** Judiciary, Governance, Accountability
- **GS 4:** Ethics, Integrity, Judicial conduct

Introduction

Judicial independence is the backbone of democracy, but it must also be accompanied by **impartiality and public trust**. The article discusses a controversy around recusal in the Delhi High Court, raising concerns about fairness and the standards applied in judicial conduct.

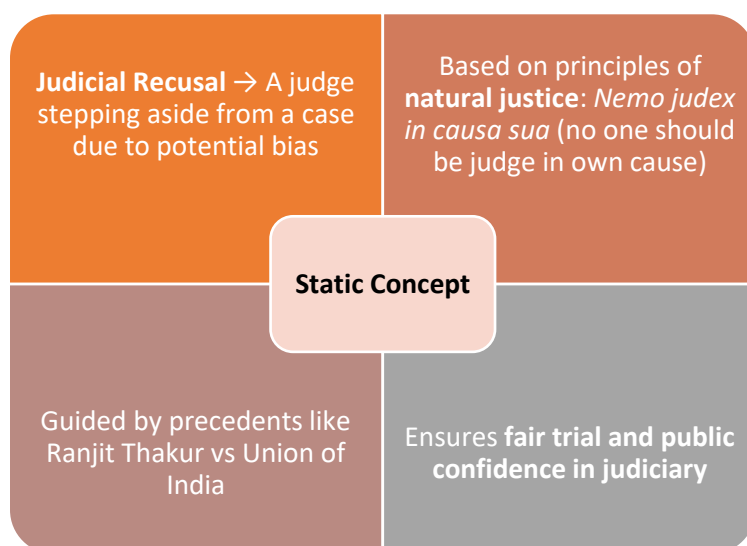
Key Issues

1. Perceived Bias vs Actual Bias

- Even if actual bias is absent, perceived bias can damage trust in the judiciary, making recusal an important ethical safeguard.
- Example: Alleged links influencing neutrality concerns

2. Inconsistent Application of Recusal Principles

- Different judges apply varying standards for recusal, leading to lack of uniformity and confusion in judicial processes.



- Example: Similar cases treated differently
- 3. Impact on Public Confidence**
 - Failure to recuse in controversial situations weakens faith in judicial fairness and independence.
 - Example: Public debate over impartiality
- 4. Lack of Clear Guidelines**
 - India lacks a codified framework on recusal, leaving decisions to individual judicial discretion.
 - Example: No statutory rules governing recusal
- 5. Balancing Judicial Duty and Ethics**
 - Judges must balance their duty to hear cases with the need to avoid even the appearance of bias.
 - Example: Refusal to step aside despite concerns

Global Practices (Brief)

USA	Codified judicial ethics rules for recusal
UK	Clear standards under judicial conduct guidelines
Canada	Emphasis on “reasonable apprehension of bias”
Australia	Transparent recusal norms
European Courts	Strict impartiality standards

IN India – Committees / Recommendations (Brief)

Law Commission	Suggested judicial reforms
Restatement of Values of Judicial Life (1997)	Ethical guidelines
Supreme Court Judgements	Defined recusal principles
Judicial Accountability Bill (proposed)	Strengthen oversight
In-house procedure of judiciary	Handles complaints

Way Forward

- 1. Frame Clear Recusal Guidelines**
 - Establish uniform legal standards for recusal to ensure consistency, transparency, and fairness in judicial decision-making across courts.
- 2. Enhance Judicial Transparency**
 - Judges should clearly state reasons for accepting or rejecting recusal requests to maintain public trust and accountability.
- 3. Strengthen Ethical Frameworks**
 - Update judicial conduct codes regularly to reflect modern expectations of impartiality and integrity in a democratic society.
- 4. Promote Institutional Mechanisms**
 - Create internal review systems within the judiciary to handle recusal-related disputes objectively and reduce individual discretion.
- 5. Build Public Confidence**
 - Ensure that judicial actions reflect fairness not only in decisions but also in processes to strengthen credibility of the legal system.

Prelims Practice Question



Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Judicial recusal is explicitly codified in Indian statutory law.
2. The principle of “no one should be a judge in his own cause” is related to natural justice.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 only

Mains Practice Question

Q2. Judicial recusal is essential for maintaining the credibility of the judiciary. Discuss the challenges associated with recusal in India and suggest reforms to ensure transparency and fairness. (250 words)

South Asian power balance shifts toward Pakistan

Source & Writer

- *The Hindu* (Opinion)
- Author: Mugdha Kiran

UPSC Syllabus Linkage (Brief)

- **GS 2:** International relations, India's neighbourhood
- **GS 3:** Security issues, Defence strategy

Introduction

Recent geopolitical developments in South Asia suggest a **shift in regional power dynamics**, with Pakistan attempting to reposition itself strategically. The article examines how diplomacy, alliances, and internal challenges are influencing the balance of power in the region.

Key Issues**1. Pakistan's Diplomatic Repositioning**

- Pakistan is actively rebuilding international relations and projecting itself as a key regional player to gain strategic advantage.
- Example: Engagement with global powers and Gulf countries

2. India's Relative Strategic Challenges

- India faces constraints due to complex neighbourhood issues and global pressures affecting its traditional dominance in South Asia.
- Example: Managing relations with multiple neighbouring countries

3. Role of External Powers

- Major powers like the USA and China influence regional balance, often supporting different sides based on strategic interests.
- Example: China-Pakistan cooperation

4. Security and Military Dynamics**Static Concept**

1. **Balance of Power** → Distribution of power among states to prevent dominance
2. Key players: India, Pakistan, China, United States
3. Concepts: **Geopolitics, Strategic alliances, Regional security**

- Shifts in military preparedness and strategic alliances impact regional stability and deterrence capabilities.
- Example: Defence partnerships and arms support

5. **Economic and Political Instability Factors**

- Internal economic challenges and political instability affect long-term power positioning for both India and Pakistan.
- Example: Economic crises impacting policy decisions

Global Practices

Europe	Balance maintained through NATO alliances
USA	Uses strategic partnerships globally
China	Expands influence via economic diplomacy
Middle East	Power balance through shifting alliances
ASEAN	Collective balancing approach

IN India – Committees / Recommendations ()

Kargil Review Committee	Strengthen national security
Group of Ministers (GoM) Report	Defence reforms
NITI Aayog Strategy Papers	Economic strength as power base
MEA Policy Frameworks	Neighbourhood First policy
Defence Planning Committee	Strategic preparedness

Way Forward

1. **Strengthen Regional Diplomacy**

- India should deepen engagement with neighbouring countries through consistent dialogue, economic cooperation, and trust-building measures to maintain regional leadership.

2. **Enhance Strategic Partnerships**

- Build stronger alliances with global powers while maintaining strategic autonomy to counterbalance emerging geopolitical shifts in South Asia.

3. **Boost Economic Strength**

- A strong economy will enhance India's global influence and provide stability in maintaining regional power balance effectively.

4. **Modernise Defence Capabilities**

- Invest in advanced military technologies and preparedness to maintain deterrence and ensure national security in a changing regional environment.

5. **Promote Internal Stability**

- Address domestic economic and social challenges to project a stable and strong image internationally, strengthening India's strategic position.

Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Balance of power refers to equal distribution of power among all countries.
2. External powers can influence regional power dynamics.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 only

Mains Practice Question

Q2. Changing geopolitical dynamics in South Asia are reshaping the regional balance of power. Discuss the factors responsible and suggest strategies for India to maintain its strategic position. (250 words)

The war on Iran and the Gulf's shattered illusions

Source & Writer

- *The Hindu* (Opinion)
- Author: Shashi Tharoor

UPSC Syllabus Linkage

- **GS 2:** International relations, West Asia
- **GS 3:** Energy security, Economic impacts of conflicts

Introduction

Conflicts in West Asia have far-reaching consequences beyond borders. The article explains how tensions involving Iran have shattered long-held assumptions about stability in the Gulf, impacting global energy markets, trade, and geopolitical alignments.

Key Issues

1. Myth of Gulf Stability Broken

- The long-held belief that Gulf economies are insulated from conflict has collapsed, exposing vulnerabilities in even wealthy and stable nations.
- Example: Rising tensions affecting oil markets

2. Global Economic Shockwaves

- Conflicts in the Gulf disrupt energy supply chains, increasing oil prices and triggering inflation across economies worldwide.
- Example: Oil price spikes impacting import-dependent countries

3. Overdependence on Oil Economies

- Heavy reliance on hydrocarbon revenues makes Gulf countries vulnerable to geopolitical shocks and global energy transitions.
- Example: Limited diversification despite wealth

4. Geopolitical Rivalries Intensifying

- Power struggles between regional and global actors are increasing instability and complicating diplomatic solutions.
- Example: Proxy conflicts involving major powers

5. Impact on Migrant Workers and Trade

- Instability affects millions of expatriate workers and disrupts trade flows, directly impacting countries dependent on remittances.
- Example: Indian diaspora in Gulf nations

Static Concept

- 1. Gulf Region** → Includes countries like Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar
- 2. Importance:** **Global oil supply, trade routes (Strait of Hormuz)**
- 3. Concepts:** **Energy security, Geopolitics, Economic interdependence**

Global Practices

Europe	Diversifies energy sources to reduce dependency
USA	Maintains strategic reserves for crises
China	Secures long-term energy contracts
Japan	Invests in energy efficiency and alternatives
Global Institutions	Promote cooperative energy frameworks

IN India – Committees / Recommendations (Brief)

Integrated Energy Policy (Planning Commission)	Energy diversification
NITI Aayog Energy Strategy	Reduce import dependence
Hydrocarbon Exploration Policy (HELP)	Domestic production
Strategic Petroleum Reserves Programme	Buffer against shocks
MEA West Asia Policy	Balanced diplomacy

Way Forward

1. Diversify Energy Sources

- India must reduce dependence on Gulf oil by investing in renewables, alternative fuels, and diversified import partners.

2. Strengthen Strategic Reserves

- Expand petroleum reserves to cushion short-term supply disruptions and stabilise the domestic economy during global crises.

3. Enhance Diplomatic Engagement

- Maintain balanced relations with all West Asian countries to ensure stability, energy security, and protection of diaspora interests.

4. Promote Economic Resilience

- Develop policies to manage inflation and trade disruptions caused by external conflicts, ensuring economic stability at home.

5. Protect Indian Diaspora

- Strengthen evacuation plans and welfare mechanisms for Indian workers in Gulf countries during geopolitical crises.

Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Strait of Hormuz is a critical route for global oil supply.
2. Gulf countries are completely insulated from geopolitical conflicts due to their wealth.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 only

Mains Practice Question

Q2. Conflicts in West Asia have significant implications for global energy security and India's economy.

Discuss the challenges and suggest measures for India to safeguard its interests. (250 words)

જાણ IAS, IPS, જેવી પદવી યાચી કરી સાચા અર્થમાં રાષ્ટ્ર સેવક
બને અને સમાજ તથા દેશની સેવા કરે.

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