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Preface

PRAMUKH SAMEEKSHA MAGAZINE compilation attempts to encapsulate crucial analysis published in **The Hindu and The Indian Express** from **March 1 to March 31, 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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Table of Content

POLITY GOVERNANCE & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Controller General of Accounts (CGA)	8
2. Central Warehousing Corporation Celebrates its 70th Foundation Day	9
3. Strait of Hormuz Disruptions and India's Oil Imports	10
4. India-Japan CEPA Joint Committee Meeting (7th Meeting)	11
5. Political Party Income Report (ADR)	12
6. 11th edition of the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi	13
7. Citizenship (Amendment) Act	14
8. Khelo India Tribal Games	15
9. 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW-70).....	17
10. Gyan Bharatam Mission	18
11. MOZAMBIQUE – INDIA'S HUMANITARIAN RICE ASSISTANCE	19
12. UNSC RESOLUTION AGAINST IRAN – INDIA AS CO-SPONSOR	20
13. SPEAKER'S POWERS AND PARLIAMENTARY RULES – LOK SABHA	21
14. Sujal Gaon ID	22
15. India-EU Ties.....	23
16. Jnanpith Award 2025	24
17. Revocation of Suspension of 8 MPs / Parliamentary Decorum	25
18. Chhattisgarh Anti-Conversion Bill	25
19. India's FTA Negotiations with Israel and GCC.....	26
20. Autonomous District Councils (ADCs).....	27
21. India's Dependence on West Asia For Urea.....	28
22. Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2026.....	29
23. FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION (REGULATION) ACT (FCRA) AMENDMENT BILL, 2026	30
24. WOMEN'S RESERVATION & DELIMITATION	30
25. Panama Canal.....	31
26. GARBH-INI Initiative (Group for Advanced Research in Birth Outcomes – DBT India Initiative).....	32
27. GloBE NETWORK – GLOBAL ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE.....	33
28. QS World University Rankings 2026 – India's Performance	34
29. Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme	35
30. Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.....	36
31. Gruh Sugam Portal	37

32. Lebanon – Geopolitical Developments	38
33. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Annual Report 2025	39
34. G7 Meet and Global Divisions.....	40
35. Progress under Smart Cities Mission	41
36. National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)	42
37. Supreme Leader Gone, Revolutionary Guards Hold Key to Iran’s Future	43
38. Supreme Leader Gone, Revolutionary Guards Hold Key to Iran’s Future	45
39. Constitutional Values over Star Power in Tamil Nadu	47
40. Transforming Representation into Real Change by 2029	49
41. Rights, Justice, Action for India’s Women Farmers	51
42. National interest is not at odds with core values: Recalibrating India’s Foreign Policy	54
43. Era of Gentle Trade Is Over: Global Village Replaced by Strategic Competition	56
44. Oil Prices Reflect Geopolitical Risks, Not Only Supply	58
45. Constitutional Values over Star Power in Tamil Nadu	60
46. India’s West Asia Reset, More Sinned Against than Sinning	62
47. Undemocratic’ Politics in Great Nicobar over Land.....	64
48. West Bengal’s Two-Cornered Battle: Continuity vs Change	66
49. Deepening global corruption as a pointer for India.....	67
50. Democracy, dissent and the ‘national image’ debate	69
51. The Transgender Persons Amendment Bill, a flawed fix	71
52. The key to India’s multi-domain deterrence capabilities	72

Environment

53. Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary in News	75
54. Indian Bison (Gaur)	76
55. Sulphur Dioxide (SO ₂).....	76
56. World Wildlife Day	78
57. India Meteorological Departments.....	79
58. Musa sikkimensis	80
59. Kappatagudda Wildlife Sanctuary.....	81
60. Moonshot Project	82
61. Qeshm Island	83
62. Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) released the State of India’s Environment Report 2026	84
63. National Green Hydrogen Mission.....	85

64. Sharavathi Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary.....	86
65. Mission Mausam.....	87
66. NAURADEHI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY.....	88
67. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	89
68. Spotted Hyena (Crocuta crocuta)	90
69. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).....	91
70. Enhancement of Indigenous Capacity in Nuclear Fuel Cycle.....	92
71. Nagoya Protocol.....	93
72. Hippopotamus Attack – Shivamogga (Karnataka)	94
73. MANGROVES.....	95
74. SAHIWAL CATTLE & OPU-IVF TECHNOLOGY	96
75. LITANI RIVER (LEBANON)	97
76. Centre may add battery storage under revamped PM-KUSUM 2.0	97
77. Van Dhan Conclave 2026	98
78. Red-Crowned Roofed Turtle	99
79. Earth Hour.....	100
80. LPG Cylinder Crunch Hits Home, Sings Stories of Welfare and Aspiration	101
81. On Climate Change, Mind the Science–Policy Gap.....	103
82. Building India’s Climate Resilience with Water at the Core	105
83. A Bit of a Blur over India’s New Carbon Credit Plan	108
84. On climate change, India has a good story to tell.....	110
85. We need a green exit from the urea trap.....	112

Science and Tech

86. Light Combat Helicopter ‘Prachand’	115
87. India Ranks Second Globally in Childhood Obesity.....	116
88. Cushing’s Syndrome.....	117
89. Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD).....	118
90. GPS spoofing	119
91. breast cancer incidence in India	120
92. Janaushadhi Saptah 2026	121
93. Exercise LAMITIYE – 2026	122
94. LIGO-India Gravitational Wave Observatory	123
95. Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth (RAV) – 29th Convocation & Shishyopanayaniya Samskara	124

96. National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP)	125
97. Pradhan Mantri–Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM)	126
98. Van Allen Probe A (NASA)	127
99. National Additive Manufacturing Symposium (NAMS) 2026	128
100.INS Trikand’s Port Call at Mauritius	129
101.Acrylonitrile.....	130
102.Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome (HGPS).....	131
103.Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)	132
104.NavIC / ISRO Second-Generation Satellites	133
105.PRODUCTION LINKED INCENTIVE (PLI) SCHEME – PHARMACEUTICALS.....	134
106.AYUSH & GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY	135
107.FAME India Scheme (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles)	135
108.National AI Skilling Initiative	136
109.Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (Navic) – Issues & Launch Delays	137
110.Pm Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana –Rooftop Solar Expansion	138
111.QADER CRUISE MISSILE.....	139
112.Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP).....	140
113.IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX).....	141
114.India must use the AYUSH opportunity	142
115.The evolving diagnostic landscape for tuberculosis	144
Society History and Miscellaneous	
116.Human Development Index (HDI).....	146
117.Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended greetings on the occasion of Attukal Pongala.....	148
118.Repatriation of Thirumangai Alvar Bronze Statue	149
119.Tamil Nadu Women Entrepreneur Empowerment Scheme (TWEES)	150
120.Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) will host a breakout session on Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana and Divyangjan Sahara.....	151
121.International Recognition and Promotion of Durga Puja	152
122.Women Participation in AI Learning in India	153
123.Employees’ Pension Scheme (EPS), 2026	154
124.World’s Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector	155
125.Steps Taken for Reducing Maternal Mortality in India	156
126.Gajapati Empire Inscription Discovery.....	157

127. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)	158
128. Tribute To Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia	159
129. DIAGNOSTIC LANDSCAPE FOR TUBERCULOSIS	160
130. Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026	160
131. Beavers & Climate Change Mitigation	161
132. SONOWAL KACHARIS	162
133. GRUHA SUGAM PORTAL	163
134. LAQSHYA SCHEME –	164
135. Shyamji Krishna Varma	165
136. Protecting Women’s Rights Amid Conflict and Instability	166
137. Obesity Complicates the Nutrition Challenge.....	168
138. Bitter Milk – Detecting Violation of Rules in Time is Better than Stringent Penalties.....	170
139. Should men get paternity leave in India?	172
140. Beyond the rhetoric of the north-south divide.....	174
141. The West Bengal puzzle — social gains have not translated into higher incomes.....	176

Economy

142. Sixteenth Finance Commission — Misses and Concerns.....	179
143. IIP Growth in January Slows Down to 4.8%	181
144. India, Canada Ink Uranium Deal as Carney Meets Modi	182
145. The Union Government released over ₹299 crore as Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV-FC)	184
146. RBI Open Market Operations (OMO) – Purchase of Government Securities	185
147. Fiscal Health Index (FHI), 2026.....	186
148. CPI INFLATION – FEBRUARY 2026	187
149. Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Food Processing Industry.....	188
150. First Export of GI-Tagged Joha Rice from Assam to the United Kingdom	189
151. MSME Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP) and SFURTI	190
152. Policy Changes in China Pertaining to Lithium and Impact on EV Sector	191
153. Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).....	192
154. White Revolution 2.0	193
155. Prison Overcrowding and Health Risk in Jails	194
156. Force Majeure.....	194
157. White Revolution 2.0	195
158. World’s Largest Food Storage Scheme for Farmers	196

159.Cotton Corporation of India (CCI)	197
160.Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme	198
161.Index Of Eight Core Industries (ICI).....	199
162.RBI – VARIABLE RATE REPO (VRR) AUCTION.....	200
163.Core Sector Growth Slowdown.....	200
164.Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme (MCGS–MSME)	201
165.Rice & Wheat Procurement Issue	202
166.NET FDI NEGATIVE FOR FIFTH STRAIGHT MONTH.....	203
167.Blue Revolution & Fisheries Development – PM Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).....	203
168.Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (DDKY).....	204
169.Micro and Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP).....	205
170.RARE EARTH & LITHIUM EXPLORATION IN INDIA.....	206
171.RoDTEP SCHEME – RESTORATION OF BENEFITS.....	207
172.Organisation For Economic Cooperation and Development (Oecd)	209
173.Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) Phase-II	210
174.Operationalisation of PM-SETU Scheme.....	211
175.New Reality: Fiscal Targets to Be Realigned on Updated GDP Estimates.....	212
176.Revisiting <i>The Wealth of Nations</i> and its Suspicion of Concentrated Power	215
177.Holding Up Half the Sky on India’s Farms.....	217
178.Economic Survey Promises and the Impact of New Labour Codes	219
179.Preparing India for a True Innovation-Led Economy.....	221
180.The Opportunity in Cameroon to Rebalance the WTO.....	223
181.AI-powered Tax Governance in India and its Challenges.....	225
182.New GDP Series: Charting the Path Ahead.....	227
183.Looking back at the lockdown, lessons in leadership	228



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POLITY GOVERNANCE & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Controller General of Accounts (CGA)

The **Controller General of Accounts (CGA)** recently launched two key initiatives in New Delhi:

1. **Government Bank Dashboard**
2. **Government Bank Manual**

These initiatives aim to enhance transparency, efficiency, and coordination in government banking operations.

Controller General of Accounts

1. The CGA is the **Principal Accounting Adviser** to the Government of India.
2. Established in **October 1975** following the departmentalisation of Union Government accounts.
3. Responsible for overseeing the **Central Government's accounting system and internal audit framework**.
4. Functions under the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.

Key Functions of CGA

Fiscal Analysis and Reporting

1. Conducts annual analysis of **government expenditure, revenue, borrowings, and fiscal indicators**.
2. Prepares and consolidates Union Government accounts.

Accounting Policy Formulation

1. Frames policies on **general accounting principles, formats, and procedures** for Central and State Governments.

Administration of Payments and Receipts

1. Oversees payment, receipt, and accounting processes for **Central Civil Ministries and Departments**.



सत्यमेव जयते

CONTROLLER GENERAL OF ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE

MINISTRY OF FINANCE, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Audit Monitoring

1. Monitors Action Taken Notes (ATNs) on recommendations of:
 - Public Accounts Committee (PAC)
 - Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)
2. Utilises the **Audit Para Monitoring System (APMS)** for tracking compliance.

Basis	Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)	Controller General of Accounts (CGA)
Nature	Independent constitutional authority	Executive authority under government
Constitutional Status	Provided under Article 148 of Indian Constitution	Not a constitutional or statutory body
Reporting Authority	Reports to President of India (placed before Parliament)	Reports to Ministry of Finance
Core Function	Audit and oversight of government finances	Accounting and financial management
Role	Examines finances of Union, States & UTs	Maintains accounts of Central Government
Audit Function	Acts as supreme audit institution of India	Does not perform audit
Accounting Role	No direct role in maintaining accounts	Prepares and consolidates accounts

Advisory Role	Advisory role in financial accountability	Principal Accounting Adviser to Government of India
Control Over Funds	Audits transactions involving debt, deposits, expenditure	Prescribes accounting principles and formats

Source: PIB

Statement-Based MCQ

Q.1 With reference to the Controller General of Accounts (CGA), consider the following statements:

1. It functions under the Ministry of Finance.
2. It is responsible for conducting external audits of the Union Government.
3. It administers payments and accounting for Central Civil Ministries.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: A. 1 and 3 only

(Statement 2 is incorrect because external audits are conducted by the CAG, not the CGA.)

Central Warehousing Corporation Celebrates its 70th Foundation Day

Source: PIB (Press Information Bureau)

What In News

Union Minister Shri Prahlad Joshi highlighted the Central Warehousing Corporation's role in strengthening India's food security and logistics ecosystem on its 70th Foundation Day.

Major Key Facts

1. CWC celebrated its **70th Foundation Day** in New Delhi.
2. It operates under the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution**.
3. CWC manages warehousing for food grains, agricultural produce, and notified commodities.
4. It plays a key role in **buffer stock management and food security**.
5. CWC contributes to improving logistics efficiency and reducing post-harvest losses.



Central Warehousing Corporation (Cwc)

Establishment & Legal Status

1. Established in **1957**.
2. Statutory body under the **Warehousing Corporations Act, 1962**.
3. Public Sector Undertaking (PSU).

Administrative Ministry

1. Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution
2. Works closely with:
 - Food Corporation of India (FCI)
 - State Warehousing Corporations

Core Functions	Role in Food Security	Importance in Logistics Sector
1. Scientific storage of agricultural produce	6. Supports Public Distribution System (PDS)	1. Integrated warehousing network
2. Warehousing of food grains (buffer stocks)	7. Facilitates procurement under MSP operations	2. Supports e-NAM and agri-market reforms
3. Cold storage facilities	8. Reduces post-harvest losses	3. Strengthens rural infrastructure
4. Logistics & supply chain support	9. Enhances food availability during crises	4. Contributes to multimodal logistics
5. Pest control & fumigation services		

Prelims Practice Question

Q.1 With reference to the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC), consider the following statements:

1. It is a statutory body established under the Warehousing Corporations Act, 1962.
2. It functions under the Ministry of Agriculture.
3. It plays a role in buffer stock management.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: A — 1 and 3 only

Strait of Hormuz Disruptions and India's Oil Imports

Introduction

Disruptions in oil shipments through the **Strait of Hormuz** amid the **West Asia Conflict** may push India to increase imports of **Russian crude oil** to ensure supply stability.

Key Facts

1. Around **2.5–2.7 million barrels per day (bpd)** of India's crude imports pass through the **Strait of Hormuz**.
2. This represents **nearly 50% of India's total crude oil imports**, mainly sourced from **Iraq, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait**.
3. India is the **third-largest crude oil consumer globally** and imports **over 88% of its oil requirements**.
4. The Strait handles **around one-fifth of global petroleum and LNG trade**, making it the **world's most critical oil transit chokepoint**.
5. Statements from **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps** triggered concerns of closure, leading traders and insurers to suspend shipments.
6. About **10 million barrels of Russian crude** are currently available in **Asian waters and floating storage**, potentially supplying India.



Static Information

1. The **Strait of Hormuz** connects the **Persian Gulf** with the **Arabian Sea**.
2. It lies between **Iran** (north) and **Oman** (south), with the **Musandam Peninsula** controlling the southern side.
3. The Strait is only about **33 km wide at its narrowest point**, with shipping lanes just **3 km wide in each direction**.
4. Major oil exporters using the route include **Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates**.
5. According to the **U.S. Energy Information Administration**, about **20% of the world's petroleum liquids consumption** moves through this chokepoint.

Practice Question

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding the Strait of Hormuz:

1. It connects the Persian Gulf with the Arabian Sea.
2. It lies between Iran and Oman.
3. Nearly half of India's crude oil imports pass through it.
4. It carries less than 5% of global petroleum trade.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

India–Japan CEPA Joint Committee Meeting (7th Meeting)

News / Introduction

The 7th Joint Committee meeting under the **India–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** was held in **Tokyo** to review CEPA implementation and strengthen bilateral trade and investment cooperation.

Key Facts

1. The **7th Joint Committee Meeting** under the **India–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** was held on **2 March 2026** in **Tokyo**.
2. The meeting was co-chaired by **Rajesh Agrawal** and the **Senior Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan**.
3. Discussions covered **bilateral trade, investment cooperation, improving business environment, and CEPA implementation**.
4. The Indian side also met officials from **Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry** to deepen economic engagement.



5. Focus sectors for increasing **Indian exports to Japan** include **textiles, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and services**.
6. A **Trade and Investment Roadshow** was organized by the **Embassy of India in Japan** in collaboration with the **Confederation of Indian Industry**.
7. Discussions also touched on issues related to the upcoming **World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference**.

Static Information

India–Japan CEPA

1. The **India–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** came into force in **2011**.
2. It aims to **reduce or eliminate tariffs on about 90% of traded goods** between the two countries.
3. Covers **trade in goods, services, investment, intellectual property rights, and movement of natural persons**.
4. Seeks to promote **economic integration and supply chain cooperation** between India and Japan.
5. Japan is among the **largest investors in India**, particularly in **infrastructure, automobiles, and technology sectors**.

Practice Question

Q.1 (Consider the following statements regarding the India–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA):

1. It came into force in 2011.
2. It only deals with trade in goods between India and Japan.
3. It aims to eliminate tariffs on the majority of bilateral trade.

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)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB) – Ministry of Commerce & Industry release on the **7th India–Japan CEPA Joint Committee Meeting**.

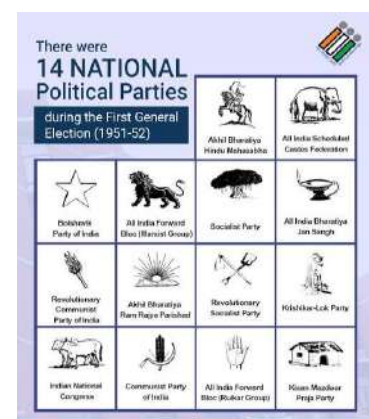
Political Party Income Report (ADR)

News

According to a report by the **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)**, the **BJP declared ₹6,769.14 crore income in FY 2024–25**, the highest among national parties, while **Congress reported ₹918.28 crore**.

Key Facts

1. The **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)** analysed the **annual audit reports** submitted by **six national parties** to the **Election Commission of India (ECI)**.
2. The six parties include **BJP, Congress, CPI(M), AAP, BSP, and National People's Party (NPEP/NPP)**.



3. These six national parties together declared a **total income of ₹7,960.09 crore in FY 2024–25**.
4. **BJP accounted for 85.03% of the total income** declared by national parties.
5. BJP spent **₹3,774.58 crore (55.76% of its income)**, while **Congress spent about ₹1,111.94 crore**.
6. Between **2023–24 and 2024–25**, BJP's income **increased by 55.95%**, whereas Congress income **declined by 25.05%**.

Static Information**1. Election Commission of India (ECI)**

- A **constitutional body under Article 324** of the Constitution.
- Responsible for **conducting elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, and offices of the President and Vice-President**.
- Political parties must submit **annual audited financial statements** to the ECI.

2. Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)

- A **non-governmental organization (NGO)** working for **electoral reforms and political transparency** in India.
- Founded in **1999** by professors from **IIM Ahmedabad**.

National Political Parties (ECI Criteria)

A party is recognized as a **national party** if it satisfies any of the following:

- Secures **6% of valid votes in at least four states** and **wins 4 Lok Sabha seats**, or
- Wins **2% of Lok Sabha seats (currently 11 seats)** from **at least three states**, or
- Recognized as a **state party in four or more states**.

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

1. The Election Commission of India is a constitutional body established under Article 324 of the Constitution.
2. Political parties in India are required to submit annual audited financial statements to the Election Commission.
3. The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) is a statutory body established by Parliament.

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)

Source: The Hindu / Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) Report.

11th edition of the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi**News / Introduction**

The Prime Minister recently inaugurated the **11th edition of the Raisina Dialogue** in New Delhi, India's flagship geopolitical conference bringing global leaders, policymakers, and experts together to discuss major international challenges.

Key Facts

1. **Raisina Dialogue** is India's premier conference focused on **geopolitics and geo-economics**.
2. It is **modeled on global forums** like the **Munich Security Conference** and **Shangri-La Dialogue**.
3. The dialogue has been **held annually in New Delhi since 2016**.
4. It is a **multi-stakeholder platform** involving heads of state, ministers, policymakers, private sector leaders, media, and academia.
5. The event is **hosted by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF)** in partnership with the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)**.
6. **Raisina Dialogue 2026** is the **11th edition**, themed **"Samskara – Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement."**
7. Around **2700 participants from about 110 countries** are attending the three-day conference.

Static Information (Authentic Sources: ORF, Ministry of External Affairs)

1. **Raisina Dialogue** was launched in **2016** as India's flagship conference on international affairs.
2. It is **named after Raisina Hill**, the seat of India's government in New Delhi.
3. The event aims to **shape global conversations on strategic, economic, and technological issues**.
4. Participants include **heads of state, ministers, diplomats, military leaders, and scholars**.
5. The conference focuses on themes such as **global security, climate change, economic cooperation, technology governance, and international order**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Raisina Dialogue:

1. It is India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics.
2. It is organized by the Ministry of Defence in partnership with NITI Aayog.
3. It has been held annually in New Delhi since 2016.

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: Observer Research Foundation (ORF) / Ministry of External Affairs / News on Air (NOA).

Citizenship (Amendment) Act

News / Introduction

An Assam woman, earlier declared a foreigner by a Foreigners' Tribunal and detained for two years, received Indian citizenship after seven years by applying for naturalisation under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Key Facts

1. The woman was **declared a foreigner by a Foreigners' Tribunal in Assam in 2019**.
2. She had **spent more than two years in Silchar Central Jail detention camp** before being released on bail in 2021.
3. The case began after a **police reference suspecting her entry into Assam from Bangladesh after March 25, 1971**.



4. She obtained **citizenship through naturalisation under provisions of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA)**.
5. The **Supreme Court's 2020 order allowed detainees completing two years in detention to seek bail**.
6. Citizenship cases in the **Barak Valley face challenges due to documentation requirements proving Bangladeshi origin**.

Static Information (Authentic Sources: Ministry of Home Affairs, Citizenship Act 1955)

1. The **Citizenship Act, 1955** provides five ways to acquire Indian citizenship:
 - **By birth**
 - **By descent**
 - **By registration**
 - **By naturalisation**
 - **By incorporation of territory**
2. The **Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA)** provides a **fast-track citizenship process** for certain migrants from **Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh** belonging to **Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian communities**.
3. It **reduces the residency requirement for naturalisation from 11 years to 5 years** for these groups.
4. In **Assam**, citizenship disputes are adjudicated by **Foreigners' Tribunals**, established under the **Foreigners Act, 1946**.
5. The **cut-off date for citizenship in Assam under the Assam Accord is March 25, 1971**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding citizenship in India:

1. The Citizenship Act, 1955 provides for acquisition of citizenship by birth, descent, registration, naturalisation and incorporation of territory.
2. The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 reduced the residency requirement for naturalisation for certain migrants from 11 years to 5 years.
3. Foreigners' Tribunals in Assam function under the Citizenship Act, 1955.

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)

Source: The Indian Express / Ministry of Home Affairs.

Khelo India Tribal Games

News

The Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports announced that the **inaugural Khelo India Tribal Games** will be held from **March 25 to April 6 in Chhattisgarh**, dedicated exclusively to tribal athletes.

Key Facts

1. The **Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG)** are organised under the **Khelo India Scheme**.



2. **Seven medal sports** will be included: athletics, football, hockey, weightlifting, archery, swimming and wrestling.
3. **Two demonstration sports** will also be showcased — **Mallakhamb** and **Kabaddi**.
4. **Chhattisgarh** will host the **first-ever edition** of this national event for tribal athletes.
5. Athletes from **most States and Union Territories** are expected to participate.
6. The event will be jointly managed by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Sports Authority of India (SAI), Indian Olympic Association, National Sports Federations and the Chhattisgarh organising committee**.
7. The official mascot is “**Morveer**”, derived from Chhattisgarhi words meaning “**our hero**” symbolising **courage and valour**.



Static Information

1. **Khelo India Programme** was launched in **2018** to revive the sports culture at the grassroots level in India.
2. It is a **Central Sector Scheme** implemented by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**.
3. The scheme aims to **identify talent, provide financial assistance, and develop sports infrastructure** across the country.
4. Selected **Khelo India athletes** receive an annual scholarship of **₹5 lakh for 8 years** for training and development.
5. Major competitions under the programme include:
 - **Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG)**
 - **Khelo India University Games (KIUG)**
 - **Khelo India Winter Games**
6. In **2020**, the **Khelo India Games** were declared an “**Event of National Importance**” under the **Sports Broadcasting Signals (Mandatory Sharing with Prasar Bharati) Act, 2007**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Khelo India Tribal Games:

1. The Games are organised under the **Khelo India Scheme** of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
2. The inaugural edition will be hosted by **Chhattisgarh**.
3. The Games include **Mallakhamb and Kabaddi as medal sports**.

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 (Mallakhamb and Kabaddi are demonstration sports, not medal sports)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB), Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports

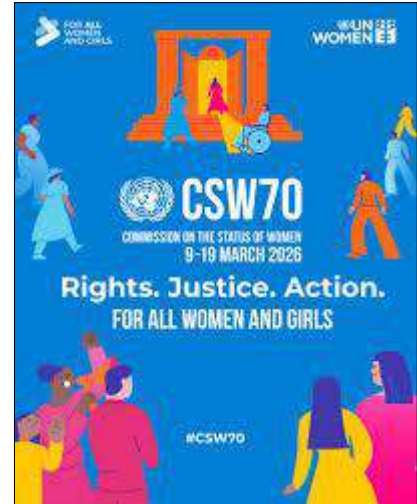
70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW-70)

News /

The Minister of State for Women and Child Development will participate in the **70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW-70)** at the **United Nations Headquarters**.

Key Facts

1. The **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** is a **functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.
2. It was **established on 21 June 1946** through an ECOSOC resolution.
3. It is the **principal global intergovernmental body** dedicated to **promoting gender equality and empowering women**.
4. The commission works to advance **women's political, economic, civil, social, and educational rights worldwide**.
5. In **1996**, ECOSOC expanded CSW's mandate to monitor the implementation of the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**.
6. The **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**, adopted by **189 countries**, is considered the **most comprehensive global agenda for gender equality**.



Static Information

The **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** meets **annually at the United Nations Headquarters in New York**.

1. It reviews **progress on gender equality and women's empowerment** and formulates **policy recommendations** for member states.
2. The commission consists of **45 member states**.
3. Members are **elected by ECOSOC based on equitable geographical distribution**.
4. Each member state serves a **four-year term**.
5. The CSW also reviews implementation of **global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-5: Gender Equality)**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW):

1. It is a **functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.
2. It was **established in 1946**.
3. Its members are **directly elected by the UN General Assembly for five-year terms**.

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: Press Information Bureau (PIB); United Nations (UN Women / ECOSOC).

Gyan Bharatam Mission

News

The Gyan Bharatam Mission, **announced during Union Budget 2025-26**, aims to digitize, conserve and promote India's vast manuscript heritage using technology, research and nationwide institutional collaboration.

Key Facts

1. Gyan Bharatam Mission is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture to identify, document and digitize India's manuscript heritage.
2. The Cabinet has sanctioned ₹401 crore for 2025–2031 to implement the mission.
3. Around one crore manuscripts across libraries, archives and institutions will be surveyed, digitized and conserved.
4. The mission will use AI-based tools, Large Language Models (LLMs), Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and translation tools for cataloguing and analysis.
5. Major repositories include Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute (Chennai), Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (Varanasi), and Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (Pune).
6. The National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) portal has already digitized over 8 lakh manuscripts and 15 lakh manuscript pages.

Static Information

1. National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) was launched in 2003 by the Ministry of Culture to preserve India's manuscript heritage.
2. A manuscript is defined as a handwritten document older than 75 years, written on materials such as palm leaf, birch bark, parchment or paper.
3. India possesses one of the largest manuscript collections in the world, estimated at over 5 million manuscripts.
4. Manuscripts cover diverse fields such as science, medicine, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, literature and art.
5. The mission supports conservation, digitization, translation and public accessibility of manuscripts.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Gyan Bharatam Mission:

1. It aims to digitize and preserve India's manuscript heritage.
2. The mission is implemented by the Ministry of Culture.
3. It focuses exclusively on ancient inscriptions written on stone and metal.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB) / Ministry of Culture.

MOZAMBIQUE – INDIA’S HUMANITARIAN RICE ASSISTANCE

News

India recently shipped **500 metric tonnes of rice to Mozambique** as humanitarian assistance after severe floods affected several central and southern provinces, highlighting India’s disaster relief cooperation with African nations.

Key Facts

1. India sent **500 metric tonnes (mt) of rice** as relief assistance to Mozambique.
2. The aid was provided **after severe flooding** impacted several **central and southern provinces** of the country.
3. Mozambique lies in **Southern Africa** and extends into both the **Southern and Eastern Hemispheres**.
4. The country has a **coastline along the Indian Ocean on its eastern side**.
5. The **Mozambique Channel** separates Mozambique from **Madagascar, Comoros, and Mayotte**.
6. The **capital city of Mozambique is Maputo**.



Static Information

1. Mozambique is bordered by **Tanzania (north), Malawi and Zambia (northwest), Zimbabwe (west), and South Africa & Eswatini (southwest)**.
2. The **Zambezi River** is the largest river flowing through the country.
3. Other important rivers include **Limpopo, Rovuma, Lurio, and Licungo**.
4. **Lake Malawi (Lake Nyasa)** is the major lake associated with the country.
5. The **highest peak is Mount Binga** located on the Zimbabwe border.
6. Major natural resources include **natural gas, coal, mineral sands, hydropower potential, and possibly oil**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements about Mozambique:

1. Mozambique has a coastline along the Indian Ocean.
2. The Mozambique Channel separates Mozambique from Madagascar.
3. The Zambezi River is one of the major rivers flowing through the country.

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

Source: News On Air (AIR News)

UNSC RESOLUTION AGAINST IRAN – INDIA AS CO-SPONSOR

News

India co-sponsored a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution demanding Iran immediately cease attacks on GCC countries, emphasizing protection of civilians and stability in the Gulf region.

Key Facts

1. The **UNSC adopted a resolution demanding Iran stop attacks on Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.**
2. **India co-sponsored the resolution**, highlighting concerns over regional stability and civilian safety.
3. The resolution reportedly received **support from 13 out of 15 UNSC member states.**
4. It condemned **Iran's actions in the Persian Gulf and potential interference in international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.**
5. The **Gulf region is crucial for global energy security**, with a large share of India's crude oil imports coming from this region.
6. India emphasized the **importance of diplomacy and protection of civilians** amid escalating tensions in West Asia.



Static Information

1. The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** is one of the **six principal organs of the United Nations** responsible for maintaining international peace and security.
2. It consists of **15 members: 5 permanent members (P5) and 10 non-permanent members elected for two-year terms.**
3. The **permanent members are the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France**, each having **veto power.**
4. The UNSC can **adopt binding resolutions**, impose **sanctions**, and authorize **peacekeeping operations or use of force.**
5. India has served as a **non-permanent member of the UNSC eight times**, most recently during **2021–2022.**

Practice Question

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the United Nations Security Council (UNSC):

1. The UNSC has 15 members including 5 permanent members.
2. All permanent members possess veto power.
3. Non-permanent members are elected for a three-year term.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Source: The Hindu / United Nations Website

SPEAKER'S POWERS AND PARLIAMENTARY RULES – LOK SABHA

News

After the Lok Sabha defeated the Opposition's motion seeking his removal, Speaker Om Birla emphasized that Members of Parliament can speak in the House only according to parliamentary rules and procedures.

Key Facts

1. A motion seeking the removal of the Lok Sabha Speaker was defeated in the Lok Sabha.
2. Speaker Om Birla stated that MPs have the right to speak but must follow parliamentary rules.
3. The motion was reportedly backed by more than 100 MPs but did not succeed.
4. The Speaker highlighted that order and discipline in the House are governed by parliamentary procedures.
5. Reference was made to Article 105 of the Constitution, which provides parliamentary privileges to members.
6. The Speaker urged members to conduct discussions within the framework of parliamentary rules and decorum.

Indian Legislation	Speakers- Parliament	
	Rajya Sabha	Lok Sabha
	- Vice President of Nation is the speaker. - Administratively 2nd head of nation.	- Speaker is elected through voting by elected members. - Administratively 3rd head of nation.
	- Administrative heads and responsible for flawless workings of Respective houses. - Power to take penal actions against members of respective houses. - Power to vote for motion in situation of deadlock. - Power to suspend the respective houses sine-die or for particular period.	

Static Information

1. The **Speaker of the Lok Sabha** is elected by the members of the Lok Sabha from among themselves.
2. The Speaker presides over sessions of the Lok Sabha and maintains order and discipline in the House.
3. The Speaker decides whether a bill is a Money Bill under Article 110.
4. The Speaker also interprets the rules of procedure and conducts parliamentary business.
5. The office of the Speaker continues until immediately before the first meeting of the next Lok Sabha, even after dissolution.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Speaker of the Lok Sabha:

1. The Speaker is elected by members of the Lok Sabha from among themselves.
2. The Speaker decides whether a bill is a Money Bill.
3. The Speaker vacates office immediately when the Lok Sabha is dissolved.

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)

Source: The Hindu / Constitution of India / Lok Sabha Secretariat

Sujal Gaon ID

News

The Union Ministry of Jal Shakti recently launched the Sujal Gaon ID, a digital identifier for rural water infrastructure to enable comprehensive mapping and monitoring of rural piped water supply systems.

Key Facts

1. Sujal Gaon ID is a scheme-based digital identifier for rural water supply assets.
2. It enables complete digital mapping of rural piped water supply infrastructure.
3. 67,000 Sujalam Bharat IDs have already been linked across 31 States/UTs.
4. Each Sujal Gaon ID integrates Infrastructure ID and Service Area ID.
5. It is linked with the Sujalam Bharat national digital architecture.
6. The initiative is implemented under the Jal Jeevan Mission.



Static Information

1. Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) was launched on 15 August 2019.
2. Aim: Provide Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs) to every rural household.
3. It focuses on safe and adequate drinking water supply.
4. Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Jal Shakti.
5. Funding Pattern:
 - 50:50 between Centre and States
 - 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States
 - 100% central funding for UTs
6. It emphasizes community participation and water quality monitoring.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Jal Jeevan Mission:

1. It aims to provide Functional Household Tap Connections to all rural households.
2. It was launched in 2019.
3. The funding pattern is uniformly 50:50 for all states including North-Eastern states.

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: Press Information Bureau (PIB)

India–EU Ties

News

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited Brussels for talks with European Union leaders and foreign ministers to deepen strategic ties following the recent India–EU Free Trade Agreement negotiations.

Key Facts

1. The visit marks the first high-level Indian visit to Brussels after the India-EU FTA negotiations in January.
2. Jaishankar attended the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting.
3. He interacted with foreign ministers of the 27 EU member states.
4. The visit took place at the invitation of EU High Representative Kaja Kallas.
5. Discussions focused on strategic partnership, trade and global issues.
6. The talks occurred amid the Iran–US tensions affecting global energy flows.

Static Information

1. The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 27 European countries.
2. Headquarters of major EU institutions are located in Brussels, Belgium.
3. Key EU institutions include:
 - European Commission
 - European Parliament
 - Council of the European Union
 - European Council
4. India–EU relations were upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in 2004.
5. The India–EU Summit is the highest forum for bilateral engagement.



Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the European Union:

1. It currently has 27 member states.
2. The headquarters of major EU institutions are located in Brussels.
3. India–EU relations were upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in 2004.

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)

Source: Press Trust of India (PTI)

Jnanpith Award 2025

News

Tamil lyricist and author **R. Vairamuthu** has been selected for the **Jnanpith Award 2025**, India's highest literary honour, recognising outstanding contributions to literature in Indian languages.

Key Facts

1. **R. Vairamuthu**, a prominent Tamil poet and lyricist, has been chosen for the **2025 Jnanpith Award**.
2. It is the **highest literary honour in India**.
3. The award carries a **cash prize of ₹11 lakh**, a **bronze statue of Vagdevi (Saraswati)**, and a citation.
4. It is **sponsored by Bharatiya Jnanpith**, a cultural and literary organisation.
5. The **first recipient** of the award was **G. Sankara Kurup (Malayalam poet)** in **1965** for *Odakkuzhal*.
6. The award is given for literature in **languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution and English**.



UPSC REVISION POINTERS ON JNPANPITH AWARD

What is the Jnanpith Award?

- India's highest literary award.
- Presented by Bharatiya Jnanpith since 1961.
- Honors outstanding contribution to Indian literature.
- Covers 22 Eighth Schedule languages + English.
- Not awarded posthumously.

59th Jnanpith Award Winner (2024 Cycle)

- Winner: Vinod Kumar Shukla
- Language: Hindi
- State: Chhattisgarh (first from state)
- Famous Works: Naukar Ki Kameez, Deewar Mein Ek Khirkee, Rehli Thi
- Known for: Minimalist, poetic, emotional writing style.

Award Components

- Bronze statue of Goddess Saraswati
- Citation
- ₹11 lakh cash prize

Key Eligibility

- Only Indian citizens
- Published literary work / Lifetime contribution
- Writers of any 22 scheduled languages + English

Selection Process

- Nomination by scholars/universities/literary bodies
- Language Advisory Committees evaluate authors
- Central Selection Board finalizes the recipient

Language Rotation Rule

- After a language wins, it is **not** considered for next 2 award cycles
- Ensures **balanced representation** across Indian languages

Firsts to Highlight

- First Winner (1965) - G. Sankara Kurup (Malayalam)
- First Woman Winner (1976) - Ashapurna Devi (Bengali)
- First English Recipient (2019) - Amitav Ghosh

Static Information

1. **Jnanpith Award** was instituted in **1961** by **Bharatiya Jnanpith**.
2. It is awarded **annually for outstanding contribution to Indian literature**.
3. Only **living Indian citizens** are eligible.
4. A language that receives the award in a particular year is **not considered again for the next two years**.
5. An author **can receive the award only once**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Jnanpith Award:

1. It is the highest literary award in India.
2. It was instituted in 1961 by Bharatiya Jnanpith.
3. It is awarded only for literature written in Hindi and English.

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

Revocation of Suspension of 8 MPs / Parliamentary Decorum

News

The Lok Sabha revoked the suspension of eight Opposition MPs, while the Speaker reiterated that fake or AI-generated images, placards and banners should not be displayed in Parliament.

Key Facts

1. Lok Sabha passed a **unanimous resolution** revoking the suspension of eight MPs.
2. The Speaker stressed maintenance of **dignity and decorum** of the House.
3. Members were told not to display **fake or AI-generated posters, placards or banners**.
4. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju referred to members not crossing the “**Lakshman Rekha**” in protests.
5. The issue highlighted the balance between **protest inside legislatures and parliamentary discipline**.
6. It also reflects emerging concerns regarding **AI-generated misinformation in public institutions**.

Static Information

1. Under **Article 93**, the House of the People chooses **two members to be Speaker and Deputy Speaker**.
2. The Speaker presides over Lok Sabha sittings and is responsible for maintaining **order and decorum** in the House.
3. Suspension of members in Lok Sabha is governed by the **Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha**.
4. **Parliamentary privileges** are meant to ensure the functioning, authority and dignity of the House.
5. The Tenth Schedule deals with **disqualification on grounds of defection**, which is different from temporary suspension for disorderly conduct.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Article 93 of the Constitution provides for the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
2. Temporary suspension of a member from the House is the same as disqualification under the Tenth Schedule.
3. The Speaker plays a central role in maintaining order in the Lok Sabha.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: C

Chhattisgarh Anti-Conversion Bill

News

The Chhattisgarh Assembly has passed a new anti-conversion law with stricter penalties, prior intimation requirements and provisions dealing with coercion, inducement and mass conversion.

Key Facts

1. The Bill seeks to replace an earlier law dating back to the **undivided Madhya Pradesh era**.

2. It treats conversions by force, coercion, undue influence, misrepresentation or allurement as illegal.
3. The draft broadens “allurement” to include benefits such as gifts, employment, education, medical help or promises of better lifestyle or marriage.
4. It proposes life imprisonment and fine up to **₹25 lakh in specific aggravated cases**.
5. Persons intending to convert and religious functionaries involved must give prior intimation to the competent authority.
6. The Bill states that reconversion to one’s ancestral religion will not be treated as conversion.

Static Information

1. Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice and propagate religion.
2. This freedom is subject to public order, morality, health and other Fundamental Rights.
3. The State can regulate secular activities associated with religious practice.
4. The right to propagate religion does not include the right to convert another person by force, fraud or inducement.
5. Public order is a State subject, so such laws are usually enacted by state legislatures.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding freedom of religion in India:

1. Article 25 guarantees freedom of conscience.
2. The right to propagate religion is absolute and unrestricted.
3. Public order is one of the grounds on which the State may regulate religious freedom.

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)

Source: The Hindu

India’s FTA Negotiations with Israel and GCC

News

India’s free trade agreement negotiations with Israel and GCC countries may face delays due to instability in West Asia, while implementation of the India-UK trade pact is expected earlier.

Key Facts

1. Ongoing conflict in West Asia may delay India’s FTA talks with Israel and GCC countries.
2. The India-UK trade agreement may be implemented earlier than these negotiations.
3. India has held an initial round of bilateral FTA negotiations with Israel.
4. GCC FTA talks involve Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.



5. The article also notes expectations regarding progress in the India-EU trade track.
6. West Asian instability can affect trade diplomacy, logistics and political consultations.

Static Information

1. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) consists of 6 members: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.
2. An FTA generally seeks reduction or elimination of tariffs and may also cover services, investment, rules of origin, standards and dispute settlement.
3. Trade agreements are negotiated by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
4. FTAs are used to deepen market access and improve bilateral or plurilateral trade relations.
5. India is increasingly using FTAs as part of its broader trade and strategic diplomacy.

Practice Question

Q1. With reference to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), consider the following statements:

1. It includes Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
2. Iran is a member of the GCC.
3. India is negotiating a trade agreement with the GCC as a bloc.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: The Hindu / Ministry of Commerce

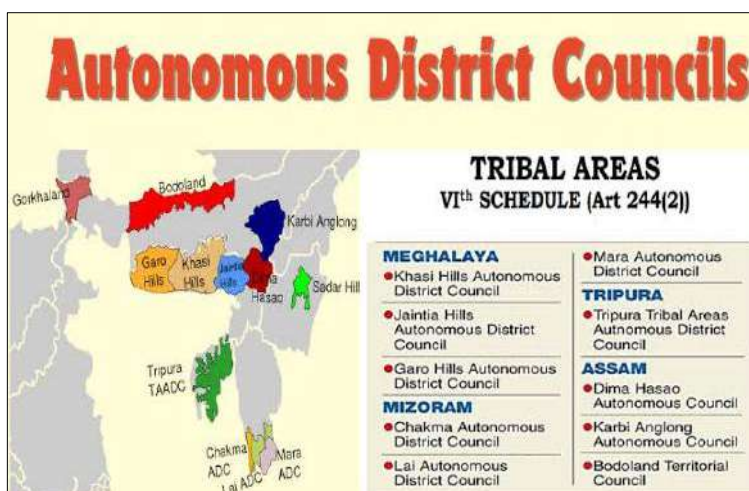
Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)

News

The Meghalaya government has extended the tenure of the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council, drawing attention to the constitutional framework and powers of Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule.

Key Facts

1. Autonomous District Councils are autonomous bodies under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.
2. The Sixth Schedule applies to tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
3. Each notified tribal area forms an autonomous district administered through a council.
4. ADCs may have up to 30 members.



5. Of these, 4 may be nominated by the Governor and the rest are elected.
6. These councils have powers over land, forests other than reserved forests, village administration, inheritance, marriage and local institutions.

Static Information

1. The Sixth Schedule is linked to Article 244(2) of the Constitution.
2. ADCs can make laws on land, forest management (except reserved forests), shifting cultivation, village administration and social customs.
3. They can establish and manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, ferries, fisheries and roads.
4. They may levy certain taxes such as on professions, animals, vehicles, boats, market entry and ferries.
5. These bodies are meant to protect tribal identity, customary law and local self-governance in the North East.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution:

1. It applies to tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
2. It provides for Autonomous District Councils.
3. These councils have no taxation powers.

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: News on Air / Constitution of India

India's Dependence on West Asia For Urea

News

Ongoing West Asia conflict highlights India's heavy dependence on LNG imports affecting domestic urea production and fertilizer supply chain stability.

Key Facts

1. LNG is key input for urea production
2. India imports over 60% LNG, largely from West Asia
3. Major suppliers: Qatar, UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia
4. Urea imports exceeded 2,300 lakh metric tonnes (2025)
5. Over 30% LNG used in fertilizer sector
6. Strait of Hormuz is a critical chokepoint



Static Information

1. Urea: Nitrogenous fertilizer (46% N)
2. Controlled under Urea Subsidy Scheme
3. India is among largest fertilizer consumers
4. Produced using natural gas → ammonia → urea

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

1. Urea is a phosphorus-based fertilizer
2. LNG is used in ammonia production
3. India is fully self-sufficient in urea

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: Indian Express

Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2026**News**

Global Terrorism Index 2026 released by Institute for Economics and Peace highlights global terrorism trends, with Pakistan ranked most affected and India placed 13th.

Key Facts

1. Published by Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)
2. Covers 163 countries
3. Score range: 0 (low) to 10 (high impact)
4. Terror deaths decreased by 28%
5. Sub-Saharan Africa = epicentre
6. Pakistan ranked 1st, India 13th

Static Information

1. Measures: incidents, deaths, injuries, economic impact
2. Used for global security analysis
3. Helps in policy formulation & risk assessment

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

1. GTI is released by UN
2. It ranks countries based on terrorism impact
3. Higher score indicates higher terrorism impact

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION (REGULATION) ACT (FCRA) AMENDMENT BILL, 2026

News

The Union Government plans to amend the FCRA Act to regulate NGO assets, expand “key functionary” definition, reduce penalties, and mandate prior approval for investigations.

Key Facts

1. Proposal to appoint a **designated authority** to manage assets of NGOs with suspended/cancelled FCRA registration.
2. Definition of “**key functionary**” **expanded** to include trustees, partners, karta, and governing members.
3. Key functionaries to be made **liable for FCRA violations**.
4. Amendment to **Section 43**: Prior Central approval required before investigation by State agencies.
5. Maximum imprisonment for offences reduced from **5 years to 1 year**.
6. Fixed timelines for utilisation of foreign funds under **prior permission category**.



Static Information

1. FCRA enacted in **1976**, replaced by **FCRA, 2010**.
2. Administered by **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.
3. Mandatory registration for NGOs to receive foreign funds.
4. Prohibits certain persons (e.g., election candidates, journalists, judges) from receiving foreign contributions.
5. FCRA Amendment Act, 2020 introduced **SBI New Delhi branch account requirement** and cap on administrative expenses (20%).

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. FCRA is administered by the Ministry of Finance.
2. The amendment proposes reducing imprisonment for FCRA offences.
3. NGOs can receive foreign funds without registration under FCRA.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Source: The Hindu

WOMEN'S RESERVATION & DELIMITATION

News

The Centre is considering early delimitation to implement Women's Reservation Act, possibly using 2011 Census data instead of waiting for post-2026 Census completion.

Key Facts

1. Article **82** deals with delimitation after Census.
2. Women's Reservation Act provides **33% reservation**.
3. Delimitation earlier scheduled after **post-2026 Census**.
4. Proposal may use **2011 Census data**.
5. Requires **constitutional amendment (2/3rd majority)**.
6. May include **expansion of State Assemblies**.

Static Information

1. Delimitation Commission: independent body.
2. Last delimitation based on **2001 Census (implemented 2008)**.
3. Seats frozen until **2026 (42nd Amendment)**.
4. Women's Reservation Act = **106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Delimitation is carried out by Election Commission.
2. Women's Reservation Act provides 50% reservation.
3. Article 82 relates to delimitation.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: The Hindu

Panama Canal

News

The **Panama Canal** is operating at near full capacity due to increased LNG vessel traffic amid geopolitical tensions, highlighting its strategic importance in global maritime trade routes.

Key Facts

1. It is a **man-made waterway** connecting the **Atlantic Ocean** and **Pacific Ocean** across the Isthmus of Panama.
2. The canal is **owned and administered by Panama** and is about **40 miles (≈64 km)** long.
3. It was **constructed by the United States** and completed in **1914**.
4. The canal remained under **U.S. control until 1979**, after which joint control began, and full control passed to Panama in **1999**.
5. It uses a **system of locks (water elevators)** to raise and lower ships between different sea levels.
6. The **Pacific Ocean** is slightly higher than the **Atlantic**, necessitating the lock system.



Static Information

1. The **Panama Canal** is one of the **most important global maritime chokepoints**, significantly reducing travel distance between the east and west coasts of the Americas.
2. It passes through the **Isthmus of Panama**, linking two major oceans and facilitating **global trade and energy transportation (including LNG shipments)**.
3. The canal operates using **Gatun Lake**, an artificial lake that forms a key part of the transit route.
4. The lock system includes **Gatun Locks, Pedro Miguel Locks, and Miraflores Locks**.
5. Expansion of the canal in **2016 (New Panama Canal / Neopanamax locks)** allows larger ships to pass through.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Panama Canal:

1. It connects the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific Ocean.
2. It uses a lock system to raise and lower ships due to differences in sea levels.
3. It is currently jointly administered by the United States and Panama.

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)

Source: The Hindu (TH); Panama Canal Authority.

GARBH-INi Initiative (Group for Advanced Research in Birth Outcomes – DBT India Initiative)

News

The Government highlighted that the **GARBH-INi Initiative** is conducting India's largest pregnancy cohort study of 12,000 women to develop AI-based solutions for preterm birth prevention.

Key Facts

1. It is a **large-scale cohort study of 12,000 pregnant women** aimed at understanding adverse birth outcomes.
2. Focuses on **developing AI-driven prediction tools for preterm birth (PTB)**.
3. It promotes **maternal and child health research** with emphasis on reducing mortality and morbidity.
4. The initiative was **launched in May 2015** as a collaborative interdisciplinary programme.
5. It is led by the **Translational Health Science and Technology Institute**.
6. It aims to study conditions such as **preterm birth and fetal growth restriction (FGR)**.

Static Information

1. The **Department of Biotechnology** under the **Ministry of Science and Technology** implements the initiative.
2. It is part of the **Atal Jai Anusandhan Biotech Mission**, which promotes translational research in biotechnology.

3. **Preterm birth** is defined as birth before **37 weeks of gestation**.
4. Categories include:
 - **Extremely preterm** (<28 weeks)
 - **Very preterm** (28–32 weeks)
 - **Moderate to late preterm** (32–37 weeks)
5. Reducing preterm births is critical for achieving **SDG targets on maternal and child health**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the GARBH-INi Initiative:

1. It is implemented under the Department of Biotechnology.
2. It aims to develop prediction tools for preterm birth using advanced technologies.
3. It is exclusively focused on vaccine development for maternal diseases.

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)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB); Department of Biotechnology, Government of India.

GloBE NETWORK – GLOBAL ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

News

India hosted the **12th Steering Committee Meeting of the GloBE Network in New Delhi**, strengthening international cooperation in combating corruption and enhancing asset recovery mechanisms among member countries.

Key Facts

1. GloBE Network consists of **135 member countries and 250 authorities**.
2. Includes **18 observers** such as EUROPOL and international organizations.
3. Established under the **Riyadh Initiative during Saudi Arabia's G20 Presidency**.
4. Focuses on **asset recovery and anti-corruption law enforcement cooperation**.
5. Enables **direct agency-to-agency collaboration**, bypassing lengthy procedures.
6. India's **Ministry of Home Affairs is the central authority**, with CBI as enforcement agency.

Static Information

GloBE Network (Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities) launched in **2021**.

1. Operates under:
 - **United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)**
2. Supported by:
 - **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** (Secretariat)
3. Objectives:
 - Facilitate **international cooperation in corruption cases**
 - Strengthen **asset tracing, freezing, seizure, and confiscation**

4. Key features:
 - Secure communication platform
 - Capacity-building initiatives
 - Real-time information exchange
5. Membership:
 - Open to **anti-corruption law enforcement authorities worldwide**

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the GloBE Network:

1. It operates under the framework of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).
2. It is supported by the World Bank as its secretariat.
3. It facilitates direct cooperation between anti-corruption law enforcement agencies.

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: News on Air, UNODC, PIB India

QS World University Rankings 2026 – India's Performance

News

IIM Kozhikode entered the top 100 in QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026, highlighting India's improved global academic presence with increased institutional participation and better subject-wise performance.

Key Facts

1. IIM Kozhikode achieved a place in the **global top 100**, marking a significant milestone.
2. India recorded **120 new entries**, ranking **4th globally** in fresh appearances.
3. India holds the **fourth-largest representation** after the US, China, and UK.
4. **Six Indian institutions** are in the top 100 for computer science.
5. **IIT (ISM) Dhanbad** maintained leadership in **mineral and mining engineering**.
6. **IIM Ahmedabad** entered the **top 25 globally** in business, management, and marketing.



Static Information

1. QS World University Rankings are published annually by **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)**.
2. Rankings are **subject-wise and overall**, assessing universities globally.
3. Evaluation is based on key indicators such as:
 - Academic reputation
 - Employer reputation

- Citations per faculty
- International research network
- 4. The framework uses **five broad lenses**:
 - Research & Discovery
 - Employability & Outcomes
 - Learning Experience
 - Global Engagement
 - Sustainability
- 5. Each indicator contributes to a **composite score**, determining final rankings.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding QS World University Rankings:

1. It is published by UNESCO.
2. It evaluates institutions based on employer reputation and citations per faculty.
3. Rankings are only overall and not subject-specific.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Source: The Hindu (TH)

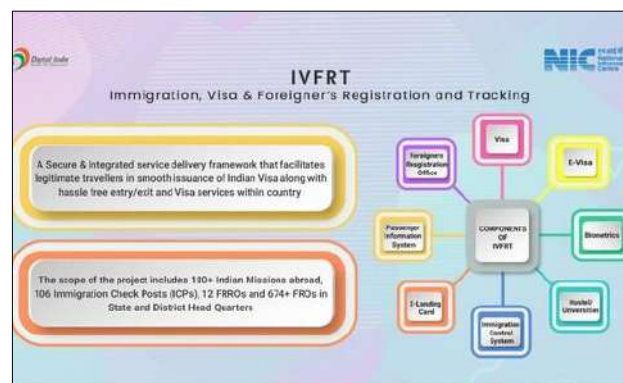
Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme

News

The Union Cabinet approved continuation of the IVFRT Scheme to modernize immigration and visa systems through advanced digital infrastructure, enhancing security, efficiency, and service delivery across India till 2031.

Key Facts

1. Scheme extended for **five years (2026–2031)**.
2. Aims to **integrate immigration, visa, and foreigner registration systems**.
3. Originally launched in **2010**, with multiple expansion phases.
4. Focus on **emerging technologies and digital transformation**.
5. Includes **mobile-based services and self-service kiosks**.
6. Strengthens infrastructure at **Immigration Posts, FRROs, and Data Centres**.



Static Information

1. IVFRT is implemented by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.
2. Supports **e-Governance in immigration processes**.
3. Covers services like:

- Visa issuance
- Foreigner registration
- Immigration clearance
- 4. Key institutions involved:
 - **Bureau of Immigration (BoI)**
 - **Foreigners Regional Registration Offices (FRROs)**
- 5. Enhances **national security through real-time data sharing**.
- 6. Aligns with **Digital India Programme** objectives.

Practice Question (UPSC Pattern)

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding IVFRT Scheme:

1. It is implemented by the Ministry of External Affairs.
2. It aims to digitize immigration and visa-related services.
3. It includes infrastructure upgrades at FRROs and Immigration Posts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB)

Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

News

Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is transforming 13 railway stations in Delhi with completed structural works at key stations, aiming to modernize infrastructure, improve passenger amenities, and promote sustainable development.

Key Facts

1. **1300+ stations** identified nationwide for redevelopment.
2. **13 stations in Delhi** selected under the scheme.
3. Major stations: New Delhi, Anand Vihar, Bijwasan, Safdarjung, Delhi Cantt.
4. Focus on **modern passenger amenities and accessibility features**.
5. Includes **divyangjan-friendly infrastructure and multimodal integration**.
6. Development based on **long-term master planning approach**.

Static Information

1. Launched by **Ministry of Railways**.
2. Aims for **continuous station redevelopment (not one-time upgrade)**.
3. Key features:



- Roof plazas and city centers
 - Improved waiting halls and circulation areas
 - Better signage and passenger information systems
4. Promotes:
- **Sustainability (green buildings, energy efficiency)**
 - **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)**
5. Focus on integrating stations with **local urban transport systems**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Amrit Bharat Station Scheme:

1. It focuses on one-time redevelopment of railway stations.
2. It emphasizes multimodal integration and accessibility.
3. It is implemented by the Ministry of Railways.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB)

Gruh Sugam Portal

News

National Housing Bank launched the Gruh Sugam Portal to streamline home loan access for government and defence personnel, enhancing digital lending, transparency, and affordable housing across India.

Key Facts

1. Launched by **National Housing Bank (NHB)**.
2. Targets **defence, paramilitary, and government employees**.
3. Offers a **unified digital marketplace for home loans**.
4. Enables **comparison of loan offers from multiple lenders**.
5. Provides **online grievance redressal and chat support**.
6. Improves access to housing loans, especially in **remote postings**.



Static Information

1. NHB is a **statutory body under the Government of India (1988)**.
2. Works under **Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance**.
3. Objectives:
 - Promote housing finance institutions
 - Regulate housing finance companies

- Support affordable housing initiatives
- 4. Portal aligns with:
 - **Financial Inclusion goals**
 - **Digital India initiative**
- 5. Encourages **transparent and competitive lending ecosystem**.

Lebanon – Geopolitical Developments

News

Israel announced plans to take control of southern Lebanon up to the Litani River to establish a security zone, escalating tensions and raising concerns over regional stability in West Asia.

Key Facts

1. Israel aims to create a **“security zone”** in southern Lebanon.
2. The proposed control extends up to the **Litani River**.
3. Move reflects **ongoing tensions between Israel and Lebanon (Hezbollah presence)**.
4. The region is strategically important due to **proximity to Israel’s northern border**.
5. Raises concerns about **conflict escalation in West Asia**.
6. The Litani River is a **key geographic feature of southern Lebanon**.



Static Information

Location & Boundaries

1. Lebanon is located on the **eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea (West Asia)**.
2. Borders:
 - **North & East:** Syria
 - **South:** Israel
 - **West:** Mediterranean Sea
3. Shares maritime boundary with **Cyprus**.

Physical Geography

1. Major mountain ranges:
 - **Lebanon Mountains (Mount Lebanon)**
 - **Anti-Lebanon Mountains (Hermon range)**
2. Highest peak: **Qurnat as Sawda (~3,088 m)**.
3. Major valley: **Bekaa Valley (fertile agricultural region)**.
4. Important river: **Litani River (entirely within Lebanon)**.

Climate & Economy

1. Climate: **Mediterranean (wet winters, dry summers)**.
2. Natural resources: limestone, gypsum, small oil & gas reserves.
3. Economy dominated by **services sector (banking, tourism)**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements about Lebanon:

1. It shares land borders with Syria and Israel only.
2. The Litani River flows through multiple countries in West Asia.
3. Bekaa Valley is an important agricultural region in Lebanon.

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: Times of India (TOI)

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Annual Report 2025

News

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released PLFS Annual Report 2025 indicating stable labour indicators, declining unemployment, and improvement in employment structure during 2025 compared to 2024.

Key Facts

1. LFPR remained stable at **59.3%**; male **79.1%**, female **40.0%**.
2. WPR estimated at **57.4%**, almost unchanged.
3. Unemployment rate among educated persons declined to **6.5% (2025)**.
4. Urban female unemployment reduced to **6.4%**.
5. Overall unemployment rate stood at **3.1%**.
6. Youth unemployment declined to **9.9%**.
7. Share of **regular wage/salaried workers increased** to 23.6%.
8. **Manufacturing employment share increased**, agriculture share declined.
9. Share of **self-employed declined** to 56.2%.

What is the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)?

ABOUT

The PLFS was launched by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in 2017 with the aim of generating labour force statistics at more frequent intervals.

OBJECTIVES OF PLFS

- To estimate key employment and unemployment indicators such as **Worker Population Ratio (WPR)**, **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)**, and **Unemployment Rate (UR)** at three-month intervals for urban areas using the Current Weekly Status (CWS) approach.
- To estimate the same indicators annually for both rural and urban areas, using both **Usual Status (Principal activity status (ps) + Subsidiary economic activity status (ss))** and **CWS** approaches.

INDICATORS

LFPR: The percentage of persons in the labour force (employed or seeking employment) in the total population.

$$LFPR = \frac{\text{Number of Employed} + \text{Number of Unemployed}}{\text{Total Population}} \times 100$$
WPR: The percentage of employed persons in the total population.

$$WPR = \frac{\text{Number of Employed Persons}}{\text{Total Population}} \times 100$$
UR: The percentage of unemployed persons among the total labour force.

$$UR = \frac{\text{Number of Unemployed Persons}}{\text{Number of Employed} + \text{Number of Unemployed}} \times 100$$

ACTIVITY STATUS

- Usual Status (ps+ss):** This is based on the activity status over the last 365 days prior to the survey date. It considers: **ps** (the activity in which a person spent the majority of their time) and **ss** (any secondary economic activity performed for at least 30 days in the past year).
- CWS:** This approach captures the activity status over the 7 days preceding the survey date.

Static Information

1. Conducted by **National Statistical Office (NSO)**.
2. Launched in **2017**.
3. Provides data on employment, unemployment and labour participation.
4. Covers **both rural and urban areas**.
5. Uses:
 - **Usual Status (ps+ss)**
 - **Current Weekly Status (CWS)**

Practice Question

Q1. With reference to Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), consider the following statements:

1. It is conducted by the National Statistical Office.
2. It provides both usual status and weekly status employment data.
3. It is released by the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
4. It covers both rural and urban labour statistics.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1, 2 and 4 only

Source: PIB (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation)

G7 Meet and Global Divisions

News

Recent G7 foreign ministers' meeting in Paris highlighted divisions among Western nations over geopolitical conflicts, while emphasizing maritime security, diplomatic engagement, and global economic stability.

Key Facts

1. G7 includes major advanced economies.
2. Meeting influenced by Middle East tensions and global economic concerns.
3. Focus on protection of civilians and diplomatic missions.
4. Highlighted risks to global oil and gas supply routes.
5. Emphasized maritime security and freedom of navigation.
6. India attended as a special invitee.
7. Discussions included coordination on international crises.



Static Information

1. **G7 Members:** USA, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan.
2. Informal grouping without permanent secretariat.
3. Focus areas: global economy, security, climate, and governance.
4. Originated as G6 in 1975; Canada joined in 1976.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. G7 is a formal international organization with a permanent secretariat.
2. India is a permanent member of G7.
3. Canada is a member of G7.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: The Hindu

Progress under Smart Cities Mission

News

NITI Aayog report highlighted strong performance of Smart Cities Mission with 93% project completion and full operationalization of ICCCs, improving urban governance, mobility, safety, and environmental outcomes.



Key Facts

1. NITI Aayog evaluated Smart Cities Mission under **Centrally Sponsored Schemes Package (2025 report)**.
2. **93% of 8,063 projects completed** across selected smart cities.
3. **100% Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs)** operational.
4. ICCCs improved **urban livability, mobility, safety, and environmental management**.
5. MoHUA conducted **ICCC Maturity Assessment Framework (IMAF 2.0)** in two cycles.
6. Assessment based on **10 pillars** including infrastructure, governance, cybersecurity, and data management.
7. Cities undertook **self-assessment to identify gaps and improve efficiency**.
8. Best practices compiled as **"Making City Smart" document** for replication across states.

Static Information

1. Smart Cities Mission

- Launched in **2015** by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).
- Covers **100 selected cities** through area-based development and pan-city solutions.
- Focus on **sustainable and citizen-friendly urban infrastructure**.

2. Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC)

- Acts as **central nervous system of smart cities**.
- Integrates services like **traffic management, surveillance, waste management, and emergency response**.

3. ICCC Maturity Assessment Framework (IMAF 2.0)

- Tool to assess **performance and operational maturity** of ICCCs.
- Covers aspects like **technology, governance, data usage, and innovation**.

4. NITI Aayog

- Apex public policy think tank of Government of India.
- Conducts **evaluation of schemes and policy guidance**.

5. Smart Cities Mission contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities).

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Smart Cities Mission was launched in 2015 to promote sustainable urban development.
2. Integrated Command and Control Centres are used only for traffic management in cities.

3. ICCC Maturity Assessment Framework evaluates governance, infrastructure, and data management aspects of smart cities.

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)

National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)

News

NCLAT upheld NCLT's authority to direct defreezing of demat accounts in insolvency cases and dismissed appeals filed by the Bombay Stock Exchange, reinforcing tribunal powers.

Key Facts

1. NCLAT is a **quasi-judicial body** under **Companies Act, 2013**.
2. Hears **appeals against orders of NCLT**.
3. Also hears appeals from **IBBI, CCI, and NFRA** decisions.
4. Can **regulate its own procedure** and has powers of a civil court.
5. Orders of NCLAT are **enforceable like civil court decrees**.
6. Appeals against NCLAT lie in the **Supreme Court of India**.
7. Civil courts have **no jurisdiction** over matters under NCLAT.
8. Mandated to ensure **timely disposal (within 6 months)**.



Static Information

1. **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)**
 - Established under **Companies Act, 2013**.
 - Functions as **appellate authority** over NCLT.
 - Headquarters: **New Delhi**.
2. **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)**
 - Adjudicates issues related to **company law and insolvency**.
3. **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016**
 - Provides framework for **time-bound insolvency resolution**.
 - NCLT is adjudicating authority; NCLAT is appellate body.
4. **Composition**
 - Includes **Chairperson, Judicial Members, and Technical Members**.
 - Appointed by the **Central Government**.
5. **Powers**
 - Can **summon witnesses, receive evidence, and issue commissions**.

- Can provide **advisory opinions** when referred by the President of India.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. NCLAT is established under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.
2. NCLAT hears appeals against orders of Competition Commission of India.
3. Civil courts have jurisdiction over matters handled by NCLAT.

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: Media/Current Affairs Compilation

Supreme Leader Gone, Revolutionary Guards Hold Key to Iran's Future

Source: *The Hindu* (Ramin Jahanbegloo)

Introduction:

Iran's political system is uniquely structured around clerical authority and institutionalised military influence. The Supreme Leader has traditionally served as the apex authority, combining religious legitimacy with constitutional control over the armed forces.

In the event of leadership transition or political instability, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) emerges as a decisive actor. The evolving balance between clerical institutions and the IRGC will significantly shape Iran's political trajectory and regional posture.



Key Issues

1. Military Consolidation of Power

- The IRGC's expanding institutional influence blurs the line between military authority and civilian governance.

2. Economic Entrenchment

- The IRGC controls significant economic sectors, including construction, energy, and infrastructure.

3. Regional Proxy Engagement

- Iran's support for non-state actors across West Asia complicates regional stability.

4. Internal Political Suppression

- Domestic political dissent is often tightly regulated, limiting pluralistic transitions.

5. Uncertain Leadership Succession

- Leadership transition in hybrid regimes carries risks of institutional rivalry and instability.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. The **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)** was established after the 1979 Iranian Revolution.
2. The **Supreme Leader of Iran** holds ultimate authority over the military, judiciary, and state broadcasting.
3. Iran's political structure combines elected institutions (President, Parliament) with clerical oversight bodies.
4. The **Assembly of Experts** is constitutionally empowered to appoint or remove the Supreme Leader.
5. The IRGC has influence over defence, economic enterprises, and regional proxy networks.

Global Practices

Turkey	Military historically played a political role, though recent years saw civilian reassertion.
Pakistan	The military remains an influential institutional actor in national security and foreign policy.
Egypt	Post-Arab Spring developments saw the military consolidate political authority.
Comparative Insight	In states where military institutions acquire political and economic influence, transitions often hinge on institutional accommodation rather than abrupt systemic change.

Indian Policies / Strategic Position

India's West Asia Balancing Strategy	India maintains diplomatic engagement with Iran while also deepening ties with Israel and Gulf states.
Energy Security Considerations	Iran has historically been an important crude oil supplier to India.
Connectivity Interests	The Chabahar Port project represents India's strategic engagement with Iran.
Strategic Autonomy Doctrine	India avoids overt alignment in regional conflicts while maintaining working relationships with all actors.

Way Forward

1. Maintain Diplomatic Channels

- Continue dialogue with all institutional stakeholders in Iran.

2. Safeguard Strategic Projects

- Ensure continuity of infrastructure initiatives such as Chabahar.

3. Monitor Regional Stability

- Closely assess spillover risks affecting West Asian security architecture.

4. Protect Energy Interests

- Diversify energy sources while maintaining flexibility in sanctions-sensitive environments.

5. Encourage Peaceful Transition

- Support stability and constitutional processes without direct interference.

Conclusion:

Iran's political evolution will depend less on individual leadership and more on institutional balance between clerical authority and the Revolutionary Guards. The IRGC's entrenched economic, military, and political role makes it central to any transition scenario.

For regional actors and partners like India, prudence lies in calibrated engagement — recognising structural realities while preparing for strategic contingencies.

Prelims MCQ

Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was formed after the 1979 Iranian Revolution.
2. The Assembly of Experts in Iran has the authority to appoint the Supreme Leader.
3. The President of Iran exercises ultimate command over the armed forces.

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 — ultimate command rests with the Supreme Leader.)

Mains Practice Question

Q.2 "In hybrid political systems, institutional actors often matter more than individual leaders." Examine this statement in the context of Iran's political structure and regional implications. (250 words)

Supreme Leader Gone, Revolutionary Guards Hold Key to Iran's Future

Source: *The Hindu* (Ramin Jahanbegloo)

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- International relations
- West Asia geopolitics
- Role of non-state and military actors in politics

GS Paper III

- Internal security
- State and non-state armed actors
- Regional instability

Introduction:

Iran's political system is uniquely structured around clerical authority and institutionalised military influence. The Supreme Leader has traditionally served as the apex authority, combining religious legitimacy with constitutional control over the armed forces.



In the event of leadership transition or political instability, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) emerges as a decisive actor. The evolving balance between clerical institutions and the IRGC will significantly shape Iran's political trajectory and regional posture.

Key Issues

1. Military Consolidation of Power

- The IRGC's expanding institutional influence blurs the line between military authority and civilian governance.

2. Economic Entrenchment

- The IRGC controls significant economic sectors, including construction, energy, and infrastructure.

3. Regional Proxy Engagement

- Iran's support for non-state actors across West Asia complicates regional stability.

4. Internal Political Suppression

- Domestic political dissent is often tightly regulated, limiting pluralistic transitions.

5. Uncertain Leadership Succession

- Leadership transition in hybrid regimes carries risks of institutional rivalry and instability.

Key Facts for Prelims

- The **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)** was established after the 1979 Iranian Revolution.
- The **Supreme Leader of Iran** holds ultimate authority over the military, judiciary, and state broadcasting.
- Iran's political structure combines elected institutions (President, Parliament) with clerical oversight bodies.
- The **Assembly of Experts** is constitutionally empowered to appoint or remove the Supreme Leader.
- The IRGC has influence over defence,

Global Practices

Turkey	Military historically played a political role, though recent years saw civilian reassertion.
Pakistan	The military remains an influential institutional actor in national security and foreign policy.
Egypt	Post-Arab Spring developments saw the military consolidate political authority.
Comparative Insight	In states where military institutions acquire political and economic influence, transitions often hinge on institutional accommodation rather than abrupt systemic change.

Indian Policies / Strategic Position

India's West Asia Balancing Strategy	India maintains diplomatic engagement with Iran while also deepening ties with Israel and Gulf states.
Energy Security Considerations	Iran has historically been an important crude oil supplier to India.
Connectivity Interests	The Chabahar Port project represents India's strategic engagement with Iran.
Strategic Autonomy Doctrine	India avoids overt alignment in regional conflicts while maintaining working relationships with all actors.

Way Forward

1. Maintain Diplomatic Channels

- Continue dialogue with all institutional stakeholders in Iran.

2. Safeguard Strategic Projects

- Ensure continuity of infrastructure initiatives such as Chabahar.

3. Monitor Regional Stability

- Closely assess spillover risks affecting West Asian security architecture.

4. Protect Energy Interests

- Diversify energy sources while maintaining flexibility in sanctions-sensitive environments.

5. Encourage Peaceful Transition

- Support stability and constitutional processes without direct interference.

Conclusion:

Iran's political evolution will depend less on individual leadership and more on institutional balance between clerical authority and the Revolutionary Guards. The IRGC's entrenched economic, military, and political role makes it central to any transition scenario.

For regional actors and partners like India, prudence lies in calibrated engagement — recognising structural realities while preparing for strategic contingencies.

Prelims MCQ**Q.1 Consider the following statements:**

1. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was formed after the 1979 Iranian Revolution.
2. The Assembly of Experts in Iran has the authority to appoint the Supreme Leader.
3. The President of Iran exercises ultimate command over the armed forces.

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 — ultimate command rests with the Supreme Leader.)

Mains Practice Question

Q.2 "In hybrid political systems, institutional actors often matter more than individual leaders." Examine this statement in the context of Iran's political structure and regional implications. (250 words)

Constitutional Values over Star Power in Tamil Nadu

Source: The Hindu (Editorial)

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper II** – Indian Constitution, Federalism, Political Parties, Governance
- **GS Paper IV** – Ethics in Public Life (Political Accountability & Values)

Introduction:

Tamil Nadu's upcoming Assembly election has revived debates about the nature of political competition in the State. The seat-sharing arrangement between the DMK and Congress has highlighted deeper ideological questions — whether governance should be rooted in constitutional values or driven by personality-centric mobilisation.

The editorial argues that Tamil Nadu's political culture has historically prioritised social justice, secularism and federal autonomy over celebrity appeal, and that this legacy must be preserved.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article

1. Personality-Centric Mobilisation vs Ideology-Based Politics

- The emergence of actor-led political mobilisation (e.g., TVK) raises concerns about politics shifting from ideology-driven governance to charisma-based appeal.

2. Governance vs Spectacle

- Mass rallies and image-building exercises may overshadow policy discourse and accountability.

3. Ideological Coherence within Alliances

- Expansion of alliances for electoral arithmetic can dilute ideological consistency, particularly in coalitions.

4. Federal and Secular Political Culture

- Tamil Nadu's politics has traditionally emphasised federal autonomy, secularism and welfare-oriented governance.

5. Accountability and Democratic Maturity

- The editorial stresses that governance performance, rather than identity mobilisation or communal polarisation, should guide voter choice.

Key Facts for Prelims

- **Dravidian Movement:** Social reform movement emphasising social justice, rationalism and anti-caste politics.
- **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK):** Major political party in Tamil Nadu.
- **All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK):** Another major Dravidian party.
- **Federalism:** Division of powers between Centre and States (Articles 245–263).
- **Representation of the People Act, 1951:** Governs conduct of elections.
- **Personality-driven politics:** Often associated with populism and celebrity influence.

Global Practices

United Kingdom	Party-based parliamentary democracy prioritises manifesto commitments over individual charisma.
Germany	Strong party structures and coalition governance ensure policy continuity rather than personality dominance.
United States	While personality plays a role in presidential elections, institutional checks limit unilateral power.
South Korea	Celebrity candidates have emerged, but institutional frameworks regulate campaign practices and accountability.
Comparative Insight	Mature democracies sustain institutional checks and programmatic politics even when charismatic leaders emerge.

Indian Policies / Committees

Election Commission of India (ECI)	Ensures free and fair elections.
Model Code of Conduct (MCC)	Regulates campaign conduct.
Anti-Defection Law (Tenth Schedule)	Promotes stability within parties.
Finance Commission & GST Council	Examples of federal institutional functioning.

Tamil Nadu's political evolution has operated within these constitutional frameworks while maintaining a distinct welfare orientation.

Way Forward

1. Strengthen Internal Party Democracy

- Institutional decision-making within parties reduces personality dominance.
- 2. Promote Policy-Based Campaigning**
 - Encourage issue-based debates through media and civil society platforms.
- 3. Ensure Transparency in Alliances**
 - Clear articulation of common minimum programmes.
- 4. Voter Awareness on Constitutional Values**
 - Civic education initiatives emphasising secularism, social justice and federalism.
- 5. Accountability Mechanisms Post-Election**
 - Regular performance audits and legislative scrutiny.

Conclusion

Tamil Nadu's political journey reflects a model where social justice, secularism and welfare have shaped governance choices. While electoral competition may introduce new actors and styles, constitutional values must remain central to democratic practice. A mature democracy balances popular appeal with institutional responsibility, ensuring that governance is guided by enduring principles rather than transient charisma.

Prelims MCQ

Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. The Model Code of Conduct is legally enforceable through statutory backing under the Representation of the People Act.
2. Federalism in India is part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
3. The Tenth Schedule of the Constitution deals with anti-defection provisions.

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

Q.1 "Electoral success in a democracy must rest on constitutional values rather than personality-driven mobilisation." Discuss with reference to State politics in India. (250 words)

Transforming Representation into Real Change by 2029

Source: The Hindu (International Women's Day Editorial)

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper II** – Parliament, Representation, Social Justice
- **GS Paper I** – Women Empowerment, Demography and Social Issues

Introduction:

India is set to witness a historic transformation in political representation with the implementation of the **Women's Reservation Act**, which reserves **one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for women**. By **2029**, India may have its most gender-representative Parliament.

However, the editorial emphasises that representation alone does not guarantee policy transformation. For meaningful impact, women's representation must translate into policy attention toward structural issues affecting women's lives, such as elder care, economic security, and social protection.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article

1. Representation Without Agenda

- Women entering Parliament will influence policy only if issues affecting women are already part of the national political agenda.

2. Neglect of Elder Care Policies

- India lacks a comprehensive **gender-sensitive elder care framework**, despite rapid population ageing.

3. Economic Vulnerability of Ageing Women

- Women often have **lower lifetime savings, interrupted careers, and fewer assets**, making them more vulnerable in old age.

4. Invisible Burden of Care Work

- Women perform a disproportionate share of **unpaid caregiving responsibilities**, often without institutional support.

5. Limited Policy Attention in Parliament

- Parliamentary debates and legislative initiatives on ageing and elder care remain limited, indicating a policy gap.

Key Facts for Prelims

- Women's Reservation Act, 2023 (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam):** Provides **33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies**.
- Reservation will be implemented **after the next delimitation exercise based on the Census**.
- National Policy for Older Persons (1999):** Framework addressing welfare of elderly citizens.
- Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS):** Social assistance programme under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP).
- Alzheimer's and Dementia prevalence in India:** Estimated **8.8 million people above 60**

Global Practices

Scandinavian Countries	Countries such as Sweden and Denmark integrate elder care within universal welfare systems, ensuring state-supported caregiving.
Japan	Facing rapid ageing, Japan has introduced long-term care insurance systems and community-based elderly care services.
Germany	Germany operates a statutory long-term care insurance model , combining state funding and social insurance.
Canada	Canada promotes community-based elder support programmes and caregiver allowances.
Comparative Insight	Successful ageing policies globally recognise elder care as public infrastructure rather than private family responsibility .

Indian Policies / Committees

Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007	Legal framework for protecting elderly rights.
National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE)	Provides specialised geriatric healthcare services.
Atal Vayo Abhyudaya Yojana (AVYAY)	Scheme supporting senior citizens' welfare.
National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)	Includes old-age pension support.

Women's Reservation Act (2023)

Aims to increase women's political participation and representation.

Way Forward

1. **Integrate Gender Perspective in Ageing Policies:** Policy frameworks must recognise the specific vulnerabilities of ageing women.
2. **Treat Elder Care as Public Infrastructure:** Develop institutional care systems, community services and caregiver support.
3. **Strengthen Social Security Systems:** Expand pension coverage and healthcare support for elderly women.
4. **Improve Gender-Disaggregated Data Collection:** Reliable data on ageing women is necessary for evidence-based policymaking.
5. **Encourage Policy Leadership by Women Legislators:** Newly elected women representatives should prioritise structural gender issues beyond electoral politics.

Conclusion

The expansion of women's representation in Parliament marks a significant democratic milestone. Yet representation must evolve into substantive policy action. Addressing structural challenges such as elder care, economic security and gender-sensitive social protection will determine whether India's most representative Parliament also becomes one of its most responsive.

Prelims MCQ
Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Women's Reservation Act provides one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
2. The National Policy for Older Persons was introduced in 1999.
3. The Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme is part of the National Social Assistance Programme.

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 and 3 only

Answer: (c)

Mains Question

Q2. "Political representation of women is a necessary but insufficient condition for gender-sensitive policymaking." Discuss in the context of the Women's Reservation Act and the emerging challenges of ageing in India. (250 words)

Rights, Justice, Action for India's Women Farmers

Source: The Hindu (Opinion – International Women's Day Special)

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper I** – Women Empowerment, Rural Society
- **GS Paper III** – Agriculture, Food Security, Inclusive Development
- **GS Paper II** – Social Justice and Welfare Schemes

Introduction:


International Women's Day highlights the need to translate legal rights into practical empowerment. In India's agricultural sector, women play a crucial role in cultivation, livestock management and household food security. However, despite their extensive contribution, women often remain unrecognised as farmers in law, policy and institutional systems.

The article argues that achieving equity in agriculture requires recognising women's roles, strengthening their access to land and resources, and ensuring that food systems reflect both gender justice and nutritional goals.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article

1. Lack of Land Ownership and Legal Recognition

- Women often cultivate land but land titles are usually held by men. Without legal ownership, women face barriers in accessing credit, insurance and government schemes.

2. Structural Barriers in Agricultural Support Systems

- Eligibility for many agricultural programmes depends on documented land ownership, excluding women farmers from institutional support.

3. Feminisation of Agriculture Without Institutional Security

- As male migration increases, women assume greater agricultural responsibilities but lack access to resources, training and decision-making authority.

4. Nutritional Challenges in Rural Households

- Despite producing food, many women farmers cannot ensure diverse and nutritious diets for themselves and their families due to cereal-dominated food systems.

5. Limited Visibility in Policy and Data

- Agricultural data and policies often fail to capture the full participation of women farmers, leading to inadequate policy responses.

Key Facts for Prelims (Static-Linked)

- **International Women's Day** is celebrated annually on **March 8**.
- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013** provides subsidised food grains and nutritional support for vulnerable populations.
- **National Policy for Farmers (2007)** emphasises improving farmers' welfare and productivity.
- **India has witnessed a "feminisation of agriculture"** due to male migration and rural economic shifts.
- **Public Distribution System (PDS)** distributes essential food grains to eligible households.
- **Anganwadi Services (under ICDS)** provide nutrition and health support to women and children.

Global Practices (Comparative Perspective)

Rwanda	Land reforms ensured joint land ownership for spouses , improving women's access to credit and agricultural productivity.
Ethiopia	Land certification programmes recognised women's rights, strengthening tenure security.
Brazil	Family farming programmes integrate women farmers into public procurement and food security initiatives.
FAO Gender-Sensitive Agriculture Initiatives	Promote equal access to agricultural inputs, training and markets for women globally.
Comparative Insight	Countries that formalise women's land rights and integrate them into agricultural policy frameworks achieve better productivity and food security outcomes.

Indian Policies / Committees (Simplified)

National Food Security Act, 2013	Strengthens food and nutritional security.
Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)	Crop insurance scheme accessible to farmers.
Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)	Programme under NRLM to empower women farmers.
Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)	Supports women’s self-help groups and livelihoods.
Minimum Support Price (MSP) procurement system	Provides price support for farmers. However, implementation gaps remain in ensuring women’s effective participation.

Way Forward (Actionable Steps)

- 1. Recognise Women as Farmers in Law and Policy**
 - Ensure agricultural policies explicitly identify women cultivators as farmers.
- 2. Promote Joint Land Titles and Equal Inheritance**
 - Strengthen legal measures to ensure women’s land ownership and tenure security.
- 3. Expand Gender-Sensitive Agricultural Extension Services**
 - Provide training, technology access and advisory services tailored for women farmers.
- 4. Integrate Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture**
 - Encourage cultivation of pulses, millets, fruits and vegetables to improve dietary diversity.
- 5. Strengthen Women’s Collectives and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)**
 - Collective platforms can enhance bargaining power, market access and financial inclusion.

Conclusion

Women farmers are central to India’s food security, rural livelihoods and agricultural sustainability. Yet their contributions remain undervalued and under-recognised. Bridging this gap requires a comprehensive approach that ensures land rights, institutional support and policy recognition. Strengthening women’s role in agriculture can not only advance gender justice but also enhance productivity, nutrition and resilience in India’s food systems.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The National Food Security Act, 2013 provides subsidised food grains to eligible households.
2. Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana aims to empower women farmers through capacity building and institutional support.
3. The Public Distribution System operates under the National Food Security Act framework.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. “Women play a critical role in India’s agricultural sector, yet their contributions remain inadequately recognised.” Discuss the challenges faced by women farmers and suggest measures to strengthen their role in agricultural development. (250 words)

National interest is not at odds with core values: Recalibrating India’s Foreign Policy

Source: *The Hindu – Opinion*

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper II:** International Relations – India and West Asia, Foreign Policy Principles
- **GS Paper III:** Energy Security, Global Economic Stability

Introduction:

India’s foreign policy traditionally rests on a balance between national interest and normative values such as sovereignty, peace, and multilateralism. Recent geopolitical tensions in West Asia, particularly involving the United States, Israel, and Iran, highlight the challenges India faces in protecting its energy security, diaspora interests, and trade routes while maintaining a principled diplomatic posture. The debate calls for recalibrating India’s engagement with the region without compromising its core diplomatic values.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article

1. Escalating Conflict in West Asia

- Military actions between major powers and regional actors risk widening geopolitical instability in a region crucial for global energy supply.

2. Energy Security Concerns

- India remains heavily dependent on oil and gas imports from the Gulf. Any disruption in maritime routes such as the Strait of Hormuz can significantly increase energy prices and inflation domestically.

3. Trade and Economic Impact

- Conflict zones among key trading partners may disrupt India’s trade worth hundreds of billions of dollars with Gulf countries, affecting imports, exports, and shipping costs.

4. Risks to the Indian Diaspora

- Millions of Indians working in Gulf economies could face labour market disruptions, security risks, and remittance decline, which may affect India’s domestic economy.

5. Diplomatic Balancing Challenges

- India’s strategic partnerships with Israel, the U.S., and Gulf countries, alongside long-standing ties with Iran, require careful diplomacy to avoid alienating any partner.

Key Facts for Prelims

- **Strait of Hormuz:** A strategic maritime chokepoint through which around one-fifth of global oil trade passes. Disruptions affect global energy markets.
- **West Asia’s Energy Role:** Over 50% of India’s crude oil imports and most LNG/LPG imports originate from the Gulf region.
- **Indian Diaspora in Gulf:** Nearly 9 million Indians live and work in West Asia, contributing significantly to remittances.
- **Remittances:** Gulf countries account for about 55% of India’s total remittances, which contribute around 3–4% of India’s GDP.
- **Chabahar Port (Iran):** Strategic connectivity project enabling India’s access to Central Asia and Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan.

Global Practices:

United States	Maintains strong security alliances in West Asia but simultaneously seeks energy diversification and strategic reserves to manage supply shocks.
European Union	Promotes multilateral diplomacy and conflict mediation, while expanding renewable energy to reduce dependence on unstable regions.
China	Pursues economic diplomacy and infrastructure investments in West Asia under the Belt and Road Initiative while maintaining neutrality in regional conflicts.
Comparative Insight	Most major powers adopt a multi-vector foreign policy, balancing strategic interests with diplomatic engagement rather than aligning rigidly with one bloc.

Indian Policies / Institutional Framework

Act West Policy	India's diplomatic strategy to strengthen economic and strategic ties with West Asian countries.
Energy Diversification Strategy	India is expanding energy imports from Russia, the United States, and Africa to reduce overdependence on the Gulf.
Strategic Petroleum Reserves	India has created emergency oil reserves to manage temporary supply disruptions.
Chabahar Port Development	A strategic initiative to enhance regional connectivity and trade routes independent of Pakistan.
Diaspora Protection Mechanisms	Policies such as Pravasi Bharatiya initiatives and labour agreements aim to protect Indian workers abroad.

Way Forward

- Diversify Energy Sources**
 - India should accelerate diversification of oil and gas suppliers and invest in renewable energy.
- Strengthen Maritime Security**
 - Protecting sea lanes like the Strait of Hormuz and Indian Ocean routes is essential for trade stability.
- Balanced Diplomatic Engagement**
 - India must maintain constructive relations with all regional stakeholders, including Iran, Israel, and Gulf states.
- Expand Strategic Reserves**
 - Enhancing petroleum reserves can provide a buffer against global energy shocks.
- Protect Diaspora and Remittances**
 - Develop contingency plans to ensure safe evacuation and economic security for Indian workers abroad.

Conclusion

India's foreign policy must reconcile pragmatic national interests with enduring diplomatic principles. A balanced approach that safeguards energy security, economic stability, and diaspora welfare while upholding international norms will enable India to navigate complex geopolitical tensions and strengthen its leadership role in the Global South.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding India's engagement with West Asia:

1. The Strait of Hormuz is a critical route for India's oil imports.

2. Chabahar Port provides India access to Central Asia bypassing Pakistan.
3. Gulf countries account for a significant share of India's remittance inflows.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Mains Question

Q2. "India's foreign policy requires balancing strategic interests with normative values." Discuss this statement in the context of India's relations with West Asia.

Era of Gentle Trade Is Over: Global Village Replaced by Strategic Competition

Source: *The Hindu* – Shashi Tharoor

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper II

- International relations
- Global governance and multilateralism

GS Paper III

- Global economy, International trade
- Geopolitical competition

Introduction

For nearly three decades after the Cold War, the world economy expanded under the belief that deeper economic integration would foster peace and cooperation. Global supply chains flourished, trade barriers fell, and the idea of a "global village" appeared increasingly plausible.

However, rising geopolitical tensions, trade wars, and strategic rivalries are reshaping global economic relations. The earlier vision of open, cooperative globalisation is increasingly giving way to strategic competition, protectionism, and fragmented economic blocs.

Key Issues

1. Breakdown of Trust in Global Trade

- Rising geopolitical tensions have weakened the assumption that economic interdependence guarantees peace.

2. Weaponisation of Supply Chains

- Countries increasingly use trade restrictions, sanctions, and export controls as geopolitical tools.

3. Fragmentation of Global Markets

- Emerging trade blocs and regional alliances are replacing universal economic integration.

4. Decline of Multilateral Trade Institutions

- Institutions like the WTO face challenges in resolving disputes and maintaining rules-based trade.

5. Rise of Protectionist Policies

- Countries are prioritising domestic industries, strategic sectors, and national economic security.

Key Facts for Prelims

- The **World Trade Organization (WTO)** was established in 1995 to regulate global trade.
- Global trade expansion accelerated after the **end of the Cold War**.
- Concepts such as **"friend-shoring"** and **"near-shoring"** have emerged in recent years.
- Major disruptions to globalisation include:
 - **US–China trade tensions**
 - **Russia–Ukraine conflict**
 - **Supply chain disruptions during COVID-19**
- International trade has historically been a key driver of global economic growth.

Global Practices

United States	Promotes “friend-shoring” to shift supply chains toward politically aligned partners.
European Union	Develops strategic autonomy policies while maintaining open trade frameworks.
China	Expands alternative economic networks through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative.
Comparative Insight	Global economic policy is shifting from efficiency-driven globalisation to security-driven economic strategy .

Indian Policies / Committees

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme	Encourages domestic manufacturing and reduces import dependence.
Atmanirbhar Bharat Initiative	Aims to strengthen domestic supply chains and strategic industries.
Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)	India is negotiating trade agreements with the EU, UK, and other partners to diversify trade relationships.
National Logistics Policy	Improves infrastructure and reduces supply chain costs.

Way Forward

- Strengthen Economic Resilience**
 - Diversify supply chains and reduce excessive dependence on any single country.
- Promote Strategic Trade Partnerships**
 - Build trusted trade networks with multiple regions.
- Reform Global Trade Institutions**
 - Strengthen dispute settlement mechanisms in the WTO.
- Invest in Domestic Competitiveness**
 - Enhance industrial capacity, innovation, and manufacturing capabilities.
- Balance Openness with Security**
 - Ensure trade policy protects strategic sectors while supporting global integration.

Conclusion

The era of effortless globalisation built on mutual trust and open markets is gradually giving way to a more complex world shaped by geopolitical competition and strategic economic policies. While global trade will continue to play a vital role in economic growth, nations must adapt to a landscape where security considerations increasingly influence economic decisions.

The challenge for countries like India is to balance openness with resilience, ensuring that economic engagement remains both beneficial and strategically sustainable.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The World Trade Organization (WTO) was established in 1995.
2. The concept of “friend-shoring” refers to shifting supply chains to politically aligned countries.
3. Globalisation has completely eliminated protectionist trade policies worldwide.

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

Mains Practice Question

Q2. The global economic order is shifting from liberal globalisation to strategic economic competition. Discuss the implications of this shift for international trade and India's economic policy. (250 words)

Oil Prices Reflect Geopolitical Risks, Not Only Supply

Source: *The Hindu – Opinion*

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper III:** Energy Security, Economy, Infrastructure
- **GS Paper II:** International Relations and Geopolitics

Introduction:

Global oil prices are influenced not only by the traditional factors of supply and demand but increasingly by **geopolitical developments and strategic rivalries among nations**. Conflicts, sanctions, and disruptions in key maritime routes have transformed oil from a purely economic commodity into a **strategic geopolitical instrument**, affecting global markets and energy security for importing nations like India.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article

1. Rising Geopolitical Tensions

- Conflicts in regions such as West Asia increase uncertainty in global oil markets, causing **sharp price fluctuations and supply concerns**.

2. Vulnerability of Maritime Trade Routes

- Key chokepoints like the **Strait of Hormuz** and **Bab-el-Mandeb** are vital for global oil transport, making them sensitive to geopolitical disruptions.

3. Oil as a Political Instrument

- Oil is increasingly used in geopolitical strategies, including **sanctions, trade realignments, and strategic alliances**, affecting global energy markets.

4. Financial Market Influence

- Oil is traded not only as a physical commodity but also as a **financial asset through futures and derivatives**, amplifying price volatility.

5. Impact on Importing Countries

- Countries dependent on imported energy, including India, face challenges related to **price volatility, inflation, and energy security**.

Key Facts for Prelims

- **Brent Crude Oil:** A global benchmark used to determine international oil prices.
- **Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR):** Emergency stockpiles of crude oil maintained by countries to address supply disruptions.
- **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC):** A group of major oil-producing countries that coordinate production policies to influence global oil markets.
- **Strait of Hormuz:** A critical maritime chokepoint through which a significant portion of global oil trade passes.
- **Energy Security:** The uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price.

Global Practices: Comparative Perspectives



United States	Maintains large Strategic Petroleum Reserves and uses them to stabilize domestic and global markets during supply disruptions.
European Union	Focuses on diversification of energy sources and suppliers to reduce dependence on a single region.
China	China has built significant strategic oil reserves and diversified import routes , including pipeline networks.
Comparative Insight	Energy security strategies globally emphasize diversification, strategic reserves, and diplomatic engagement with producing countries .

Indian Policies / Committees

Strategic Petroleum Reserve Programme	India maintains strategic crude oil reserves to buffer against supply disruptions and price volatility .
Energy Diversification Strategy	India imports crude from multiple regions to reduce dependence on a single supplier or region .
National Energy Policy Initiatives	Policies aim to improve energy efficiency, renewable energy expansion, and domestic energy production .
International Energy Cooperation	India participates in global energy dialogues and partnerships to ensure stable energy supplies .
Renewable Energy Expansion	India is promoting solar, wind, and green hydrogen projects to reduce long-term dependence on fossil fuels .

Way Forward

- Strengthen Strategic Petroleum Reserves**
 - Expanding reserves can provide **short-term protection against supply disruptions and price spikes**.
- Diversify Energy Import Sources**
 - Import diversification helps reduce vulnerability to **regional geopolitical crises**.
- Accelerate Renewable Energy Transition**
 - Increasing renewable energy capacity can reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels.
- Improve Maritime Security**
 - Strengthening naval presence and international cooperation can protect **critical sea lanes of communication**.
- Integrate Energy and Foreign Policy**
 - Energy diplomacy should become a core component of India's **foreign policy and strategic planning**.

Conclusion

Oil markets today are shaped as much by geopolitical risks as by economic fundamentals. For energy-importing countries such as India, strengthening resilience through **diversification, strategic reserves, and a transition to cleaner energy sources** will be essential to manage future uncertainties in the global energy landscape.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding global oil markets:

1. The Strait of Hormuz is a critical chokepoint for global oil transportation.
2. Strategic Petroleum Reserves are maintained by countries to manage supply disruptions.
3. OPEC is an organization consisting mainly of oil-importing countries.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. Global oil prices increasingly reflect geopolitical risks rather than purely economic factors. Discuss the implications of this trend for India's energy security and economic stability.

Constitutional Values over Star Power in Tamil Nadu

Source: The Hindu (Editorial)

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper II** – Indian Constitution, Federalism, Political Parties, Governance
- **GS Paper IV** – Ethics in Public Life (Political Accountability & Values)

Introduction:

Tamil Nadu's upcoming Assembly election has revived debates about the nature of political competition in the State. The seat-sharing arrangement between the DMK and Congress has highlighted deeper ideological questions — whether governance should be rooted in constitutional values or driven by personality-centric mobilisation.

The editorial argues that Tamil Nadu's political culture has historically prioritised social justice, secularism and federal autonomy over celebrity appeal, and that this legacy must be preserved.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article

1. **Personality-Centric Mobilisation vs Ideology-Based Politics**

- The emergence of actor-led political mobilisation (e.g., TVK) raises concerns about politics shifting from ideology-driven governance to charisma-based appeal.

2. **Governance vs Spectacle**

- Mass rallies and image-building exercises may overshadow policy discourse and accountability.

3. **Ideological Coherence within Alliances**

- Expansion of alliances for electoral arithmetic can dilute ideological consistency, particularly in coalitions.

4. **Federal and Secular Political Culture**

- Tamil Nadu's politics has traditionally emphasised federal autonomy, secularism and welfare-oriented governance.

Key Facts for Prelims

- **Dravidian Movement:** Social reform movement emphasising social justice, rationalism and anti-caste politics.
- **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK):** Major political party in Tamil Nadu.
- **All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK):** Another major Dravidian party.
- **Federalism:** Division of powers between Centre and States (Articles 245–263).
- **Representation of the People Act, 1951:** Governs conduct of elections.
- **Personality-driven politics:** Often associated with populism and celebrity influence.

5. Accountability and Democratic Maturity

- The editorial stresses that governance performance, rather than identity mobilisation or communal polarisation, should guide voter choice.

Global Practices

United Kingdom	Party-based parliamentary democracy prioritises manifesto commitments over individual charisma.
Germany	Strong party structures and coalition governance ensure policy continuity rather than personality dominance.
United States	While personality plays a role in presidential elections, institutional checks limit unilateral power.
South Korea	Celebrity candidates have emerged, but institutional frameworks regulate campaign practices and accountability.
Comparative Insight	Mature democracies sustain institutional checks and programmatic politics even when charismatic leaders emerge.

Indian Policies / Committees

Election Commission of India (ECI)	Ensures free and fair elections.
Model Code of Conduct (MCC)	Regulates campaign conduct.
Anti-Defection Law (Tenth Schedule)	Promotes stability within parties.
Finance Commission & GST Council	Examples of federal institutional functioning.

Tamil Nadu's political evolution has operated within these constitutional frameworks while maintaining a distinct welfare orientation.

Way Forward

- Strengthen Internal Party Democracy**
 - Institutional decision-making within parties reduces personality dominance.
- Promote Policy-Based Campaigning**
 - Encourage issue-based debates through media and civil society platforms.
- Ensure Transparency in Alliances**
 - Clear articulation of common minimum programmes.
- Voter Awareness on Constitutional Values**
 - Civic education initiatives emphasising secularism, social justice and federalism.
- Accountability Mechanisms Post-Election**
 - Regular performance audits and legislative scrutiny.

Conclusion

Tamil Nadu's political journey reflects a model where social justice, secularism and welfare have shaped governance choices. While electoral competition may introduce new actors and styles, constitutional values must remain central to democratic practice. A mature democracy balances popular appeal with institutional responsibility, ensuring that governance is guided by enduring principles rather than transient charisma.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Model Code of Conduct is legally enforceable through statutory backing under the Representation of the People Act.
2. Federalism in India is part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
3. The Tenth Schedule of the Constitution deals with anti-defection provisions.

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. "Electoral success in a democracy must rest on constitutional values rather than personality-driven mobilisation." Discuss with reference to State politics in India. (250 words)

India's West Asia Reset, More Sinned Against than Sinning

Source: *The Hindu – Opinion*

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper II:** International Relations (West Asia, India's Foreign Policy)
- **GS Paper III:** Energy Security, Strategic Affairs

Introduction

India's evolving engagement with West Asia reflects a shift from traditional diplomatic positioning to a **more pragmatic, interest-driven approach**. Amid intensifying regional conflicts and shifting power balances, India's policy reset seeks to balance competing interests while safeguarding its economic, strategic, and diaspora-related concerns.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **Gulf Cooperation Council:** Regional bloc of six Gulf nations crucial for India's energy imports and trade.
2. **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement:** Trade agreement to boost economic ties with Gulf countries.
3. **Strait of Hormuz:** Critical maritime route for global oil transportation.
4. India has around **10 million diaspora** in Gulf countries.
5. West Asia accounts for a major share of India's **crude oil imports**.

Key Issues



1. Balancing Competing Strategic Interests

- India must maintain relations simultaneously with **Israel, Iran, Gulf countries, and Western powers**, making diplomacy complex.

2. Criticism of Policy Shift

- The article notes domestic criticism regarding:
- Perceived dilution of support for Palestine
- Concerns over alignment with Western positions

3. Regional Instability and Uncertainty

- Ongoing conflicts (Iran-Israel tensions, Gulf insecurity) create **volatile conditions affecting trade and diplomacy**.

4. Limited Strategic Space

- Global powers like the U.S., China, and Russia shape outcomes, leaving **limited maneuverability for middle powers like India**.

5. Economic and Energy Vulnerabilities

- Disruptions in routes like the **Strait of Hormuz** impact:
- Oil supply
- Trade logistics
- Freight costs

Global Practices

United States	Security-centric approach, maintaining military presence to influence regional stability.
China	Economic diplomacy focused on energy security and infrastructure investments.
European Union	Norm-based engagement emphasizing diplomacy and multilateralism.
Lesson for India	Adopt a balanced mix of strategic autonomy, economic engagement, and diplomatic flexibility .

Indian Policies / Committees

Act West Policy	Expanding engagement with West Asian countries.
Energy Diversification Strategy	Reducing overdependence on a single region.
Trade Agreements	Including Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement .
Diaspora Engagement Policy	Protecting Indian citizens abroad.
Strategic Partnerships	Strengthening ties with multiple regional actors.

Way Forward

1. Maintain Strategic Autonomy

- Continue independent decision-making without aligning rigidly with any bloc.

2. Deepen Economic Engagement

- Expand trade and investment ties with Gulf and regional economies.

3. Strengthen Maritime Security

- Enhance naval cooperation to secure critical sea lanes.

4. Diversify Energy Sources

- Reduce vulnerability to regional disruptions through renewable energy and diversified imports.

5. Enhance Diplomatic Agility

- Develop flexible and responsive diplomacy to manage rapidly changing geopolitical situations.

Conclusion

India's West Asia policy reflects a **measured transition towards pragmatic diplomacy rooted in national interest**. In a region marked by volatility and shifting alliances, maintaining balance, flexibility, and strategic foresight will be essential for sustaining India's long-term interests and regional relevance.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Gulf Cooperation Council consists of six countries.
2. The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.
3. CEPA agreements are primarily related to military cooperation.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. "India's West Asia policy increasingly reflects strategic autonomy amid changing geopolitical dynamics." Examine the challenges and opportunities associated with this shift.

Undemocratic' Politics in Great Nicobar over Land

Source: The Hindu

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper II (Governance, Tribal Issues), GS Paper III (Environment, Infrastructure)

Introduction:

The proposed infrastructure project in Great Nicobar has triggered a debate on the balance between strategic development and democratic rights. The issue highlights concerns over land acquisition, tribal consent, and environmental sustainability in ecologically sensitive regions.

Key Issues

1. **Concerns over Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)**
 - Reports indicate possible pressure on tribal communities to "voluntarily" surrender land.
2. **Inadequate Compensation Mechanism**
 - Compensation rates allegedly below market value, raising fairness concerns.
3. **Procedural Irregularities in Land Acquisition**
 - Questions over legal compliance in transferring tribal and forest land.
4. **Impact on Tribal Livelihoods and Culture**
 - Risk of displacement of Shompen and Nicobarese communities with limited rehabilitation clarity.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **Location:** Great Nicobar Island — southernmost island of India.
2. **Project:** Great Nicobar Infrastructure Project (includes port, airport, township).
3. **Tribes:**
 - Shompen tribe
 - Nicobarese tribe
4. **Legal Frameworks:**
 - Forest Rights Act 2006
 - Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Act 2013
5. **Ecological Importance:** Part of a biodiversity-rich and seismic-sensitive zone.

5. Environmental Risks

- Large-scale infrastructure in a fragile ecosystem may affect forests, biodiversity, and coastal systems.

Global Practices

Canada & Australia	Strong emphasis on indigenous consent and negotiated settlements.
Latin America (e.g., Peru)	Legal requirement of prior consultation with indigenous communities.
UN Framework	FPIC principle under UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).
Comparison	India has legal provisions, but implementation gaps persist compared to more institutionalised consultation frameworks globally.

Indian Policies / Committees

1. **Forest Rights Act (2006):** Recognises rights of forest-dwelling communities.
2. **PESA Act (1996):** Mandates Gram Sabha consent in Scheduled Areas (though not directly applicable in A&N, principles remain relevant).
3. **Island Development Agency (IDA):** Oversees strategic island development.
4. Environmental clearance mechanisms under MoEFCC.

Way Forward

1. **Ensure Genuine Tribal Consent**
 - Transparent and participatory consultation processes.
2. **Strengthen Compensation and Rehabilitation**
 - Market-linked compensation with livelihood restoration plans.
3. **Strict Environmental Safeguards**
 - Independent impact assessments and continuous monitoring.
4. **Institutional Oversight Mechanisms**
 - Third-party audits for legal and procedural compliance.
5. **Balanced Development Approach**
 - Align strategic interests with ecological sustainability and social justice.

Conclusion

The Great Nicobar project underscores the need for a calibrated approach where development ambitions are harmonised with democratic values, tribal rights, and environmental stewardship. Sustainable progress lies in ensuring that growth does not come at the cost of inclusivity and ecological balance.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Great Nicobar Island:

1. It is the southernmost part of India.
2. The Shompen tribe is classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).
3. The Forest Rights Act, 2006 does not apply to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

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

Mains Question

Q2. Examine the challenges involved in balancing infrastructure development with tribal rights and environmental sustainability in island ecosystems like Great Nicobar.

West Bengal's Two-Cornered Battle: Continuity vs Change

Source: The Hindu

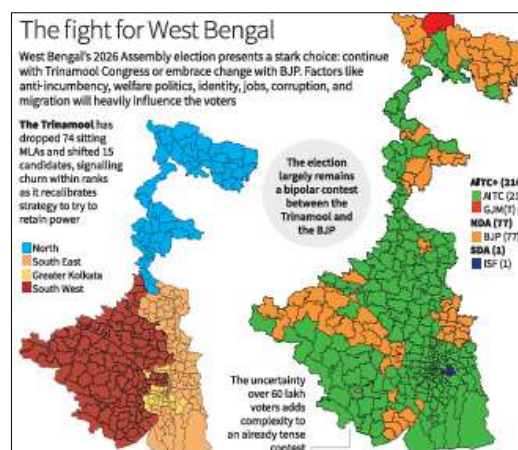
GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper II (Polity, Elections, Federalism)

Introduction:

West Bengal's upcoming Assembly election reflects a shift from multi-cornered contests to a more direct bipolar contest. The political narrative is shaped by governance continuity, welfare politics, identity mobilisation, and emerging demographic and regional dynamics.

Key Issues

- Shift to Bipolar Contest**
 - Decline of Left-Congress space has led to a direct TMC vs BJP competition.
- Anti-incumbency vs Welfare Politics**
 - TMC relies on welfare schemes and identity appeal to counter anti-incumbency.
- Regional and Demographic Factors**
 - North Bengal, border areas, and urban centres show varying political preferences.
- Narratives of Governance vs Polarisation**
 - Governance claims are juxtaposed with allegations of corruption and identity politics.
- Electoral Management and Strategy**
 - Reduced phases and logistical changes indicate administrative streamlining but also raise strategic implications.



Key Facts for Prelims

- State:** West Bengal
- Current CM:** Mamata Banerjee
- Major Parties:**
 - All India Trinamool Congress
 - Bharatiya Janata Party
 - Communist Party of India (Marxist)
 - Indian National Congress
- Assembly Seats:** 294
- Election Type:** First-past-the-post system.

Global Practices

United Kingdom	Stable two-party dominance simplifies voter choice but may limit smaller parties.
United States	Bipolar competition with strong campaign narratives and identity politics.
Germany	Coalition-based multiparty system ensures broader representation.
Comparison	India's FPTP system often produces bipolar outcomes even in a multiparty setup, similar to the UK model.

Indian Policies / Committees

Election Commission of India (ECI)	Conducts free and fair elections.
Delimitation Commission	Periodic redrawing of constituencies.

Model Code of Conduct (MCC)	Ensures level playing field.
Anti-defection Law (10th Schedule)	Maintains political stability post-elections.

Way Forward

- Strengthen Electoral Transparency**
 - Enhance monitoring of campaign finance and disclosures.
- Promote Issue-Based Campaigning**
 - Focus on governance, development, and employment rather than polarisation.
- Ensure Administrative Neutrality**
 - Reinforce institutional independence during elections.
- Encourage Voter Awareness**
 - Improve civic participation and informed voting.
- Balanced Regional Development**
 - Address disparities between regions to reduce identity-based politics.

Conclusion

West Bengal's electoral contest illustrates the evolving nature of Indian democracy, where political competition increasingly consolidates into bipolar narratives. The challenge lies in ensuring that this competition strengthens democratic accountability while maintaining inclusiveness and institutional integrity.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding elections in India:

1. India follows a first-past-the-post electoral system.
2. The Election Commission of India is a constitutional body.
3. Coalition governments are mandatory in all State Assemblies.

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

Mains Question

Q2. Discuss how the shift towards bipolar electoral contests in Indian states impacts democratic representation and governance.

Deepening global corruption as a pointer for India

Source: The Hindu

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper II (Governance, Transparency), GS Paper III (Economy)

Introduction:

Recent global trends indicate that corruption is not receding but deepening, with implications for democratic accountability and economic performance. For India, this serves as a pointer that governance quality—particularly transparency and institutional strength—is now central to sustaining long-term growth.

Key Issues

1. Stagnation in India's Governance Perception

- India's CPI score has remained largely unchanged over a decade despite economic growth.

2. High Economic Costs of Corruption

- Increases transaction costs, compliance burden, and reduces productivity and investment.

3. Complex Compliance Architecture

- Businesses face thousands of regulatory provisions, increasing discretion and rent-seeking risks.

4. Institutional Weaknesses

- Challenges in transparency, judicial efficiency, and regulatory predictability persist.

5. Impact on Investment Climate

- Perceptions influence sovereign risk, capital allocation, and long-term investor confidence.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **Index:** Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).
2. **Publisher:** Transparency International.
3. **Scale:** Scores range from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).
4. **India's Rank (2025):** 91 out of 182 countries; score ~39.
5. **Global Trend:** Average score declined to 42.
6. **Economic Impact:** Corruption may cost ~5% of global GDP annually.

Global Practices

Nordic Countries	Strong institutional transparency, independent oversight, low corruption levels.
East Asia	Gradual institutional reforms, regulatory predictability, and accountability mechanisms.
OECD Nations	Digital governance and open data initiatives to reduce discretion.
Comparison	Countries improving CPI rankings have relied on sustained institutional reforms rather than short-term enforcement drives.

Indian Policies / Committees

Digital Governance Initiatives	DBT, e-procurement, GST network to reduce leakages.
RBI Digital Payments Index	Tracks digitisation and financial transparency.
Lokpal & Lokayuktas Act	Institutional anti-corruption mechanism.
Prevention of Corruption Act	Legal framework to address corruption.

Way Forward

1. Strengthen Institutional Independence

- Ensure autonomy of regulatory and oversight bodies.

2. Simplify Compliance Framework

- Reduce regulatory complexity and discretionary powers.

3. Enhance Judicial Efficiency

- Faster resolution of corruption-related cases.

4. Expand Digital Governance

- Increase transparency through digitisation and data-driven systems.

5. Promote Accountability Mechanisms

- Strengthen audit systems and citizen oversight platforms.

Conclusion

Corruption today is not merely a governance concern but an economic constraint. India's growth ambitions require parallel strengthening of institutional frameworks, ensuring that governance credibility evolves in step with economic expansion.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI):

1. It is published by Transparency International.
2. It measures actual corruption cases recorded in a country.
3. Higher scores indicate lower levels of perceived corruption.

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

Mains Question

Q2. Corruption is increasingly being viewed as an economic constraint rather than merely a governance issue. Discuss in the context of India's development trajectory.

Democracy, dissent and the 'national image' debate

Source: The Hindu

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper II (Polity, Governance, Fundamental Rights)

Introduction:

Debates around dissent and “national image” reflect a deeper constitutional question—how a democracy balances unity with the freedom to disagree. In India's context, this tension highlights the need to distinguish between criticism of the government and loyalty to the nation.

Key Issues

- 1. Blurring Line Between Government and Nation**
 - Criticism of government actions often portrayed as anti-national sentiment.
- 2. Criminalisation of Dissent**
 - Legal actions against protestors (e.g., arrests, charges) raise concerns about misuse of law.
- 3. Media Narratives and Polarisation**
 - Mass media amplifies narratives equating dissent with disloyalty.
- 4. Federal Tensions**
 - Centralisation tendencies may interpret regional assertions as threats to unity.
- 5. Impact on Democratic Space**
 - Shrinking space for dissent can weaken checks and balances in governance.

Key Facts for Prelims

- 1. Fundamental Right:** Article 19 of Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression.
- 2. Reasonable Restrictions:** Imposed in the interest of sovereignty, public order, etc.
- 3. Federal Structure:** Division of powers between Union and States (Seventh Schedule).
- 4. Emergency Example:** Emergency 1975 India — curtailment of dissent.
- 5. Protest as Democratic Tool:** Recognised globally as part of participatory governance.

Global Practices

United States & Europe	Strong protection of free speech, though balanced with public order laws.
Nordic Countries	High tolerance for dissent with strong institutional safeguards.
Authoritarian Regimes	Restrict dissent citing national security concerns.
Comparison	Mature democracies institutionalise dissent as part of governance, whereas conflating dissent with disloyalty tends to weaken democratic resilience.

Indian Policies / Committees (Simplified)

Supreme Court Judgments	Uphold free speech while defining reasonable restrictions.
Law Commission Reports	Recommendations on sedition and free speech laws.
Criminal Law Framework	IPC provisions (e.g., sedition—currently under reconsideration).
Parliamentary Oversight	Debates and committees act as forums for dissent.

Way Forward

- Reaffirm Constitutional Values**
 - Clearly distinguish between dissent and anti-national activities.
- Strengthen Institutional Checks**
 - Ensure judiciary and media independence.
- Promote Responsible Media Practices**
 - Encourage balanced and fact-based reporting.
- Encourage Democratic Dialogue**
 - Create platforms for constructive engagement between state and citizens.
- Legal Reforms**
 - Review laws that may disproportionately restrict free speech.

Conclusion

A confident democracy draws strength from its ability to accommodate dissent while preserving unity. The true test of democratic maturity lies not in the absence of disagreement but in the capacity to engage with it constructively within the constitutional framework.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. With reference to freedom of speech in India, consider the following statements:

1. It is guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution.
2. It is an absolute right without any restrictions.
3. Reasonable restrictions can be imposed in the interest of public order.

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

Mains Question

**Q2. "Dissent is integral to democracy, but its expression must be balanced with national interests."
Examine in the context of India's constitutional framework.**

The Transgender Persons Amendment Bill, a flawed fix

Source: The Hindu Editorial

Introduction

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 seeks to modify the 2019 law but raises fundamental concerns about rights, identity, and institutional design. While aiming to streamline governance, the amendments reflect deeper tensions between administrative regulation and the constitutional promise of dignity, autonomy, and equality for gender-diverse communities.

Key Issues

1. Narrowing of Identity Definition

- The Bill restricts “transgender” to certain socio-cultural identities (e.g., hijra), excluding broader gender-fluid identities.

2. Dilution of Self-Identification

- Replaces self-declaration with certification by a medical board, contradicting the spirit of the NALSA judgment.

3. Conflation of Distinct Categories

- Intersex persons are grouped under transgender identity, ignoring biological and legal differences.

4. Institutional Continuity without Reform

- Existing bodies like welfare boards remain unchanged, despite calls for restructuring to reflect diverse identities.

5. Weak Safeguards and Social Protection

- Lack of provisions for minors, trafficking risks, and absence of civil rights (marriage, inheritance, adoption).

Key Facts for Prelims

- Transgender Persons Act, 2019:** Provides legal recognition and prohibits discrimination in education, employment, healthcare.
- Article 14, 15, 21 (Indian Constitution):** Guarantee equality, non-discrimination, and right to life with dignity.
- NALSA Judgment (2014):** Recognised self-identification of gender as a fundamental right.
- UN & WHO Definitions:** Distinguish between gender identity and biological sex characteristics (intersex variations).
- GIESC Framework:** Gender Identity, Expression, and Sex Characteristics as distinct legal categories.

Global Practices

Argentina	Self-identification model without medical certification.
Malta	Recognises intersex rights separately and bans non-consensual surgeries.
UK	Gender Recognition Certificate system (with evolving debates on reform).
Global Trend	Movement towards self-identification + rights-based frameworks , with clear distinction between gender identity and sex characteristics.

Indian Policies / Committees

NALSA v. Union of India (2014)	Foundation for gender self-identification rights.
Transgender Persons Act, 2019	First comprehensive law, but criticised for bureaucratic procedures.

National Council for Transgender Persons	Advisory body for policy formulation.
State Welfare Boards	Provide limited social support but lack uniformity and effectiveness.

Way Forward

- 1. Restore Self-Identification Principle**
 - Align legal processes with constitutional jurisprudence (NALSA).
- 2. Separate Legal Categories Clearly**
 - Distinguish between transgender and intersex persons in law and policy.
- 3. Strengthen Institutional Frameworks**
 - Reform welfare boards into inclusive, representative bodies (GIESC-based).
- 4. Expand Civil and Social Rights**
 - Ensure legal recognition in marriage, inheritance, adoption, and social security.
- 5. Evidence-based Policy Design**
 - Use reliable data, independent research, and stakeholder consultation for policymaking.

Conclusion

The Amendment Bill reflects an attempt to refine an evolving policy space but highlights the complexity of legislating identity. A durable framework must balance administrative clarity with constitutional morality. India's approach should move towards a rights-based, inclusive, and evidence-driven system that respects diversity while ensuring legal certainty.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The NALSA judgment recognises self-identification of gender as a fundamental right.
2. Intersex persons and transgender persons are identical categories under international standards.
3. Article 21 of the Indian Constitution includes the right to dignity.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. "Legal recognition of gender identity must balance administrative feasibility with constitutional rights." Discuss in the context of the Transgender Persons Amendment Bill, 2026.

The key to India's multi-domain deterrence capabilities

Source: The Hindu (Editorial)

GS Paper: GS Paper III

Relevance: Internal Security | Defence Technology | Strategic Affairs

Introduction



Modern warfare is undergoing a structural transformation, shifting from conventional battlefield engagements to **multi-domain operations (MDO)** involving land, air, sea, cyber, and space. For India, particularly in the context of challenges posed by China, the need is not merely capability expansion but **credible deterrence through integration across domains**.

Key Issues

1. Fragmented Capability Development

- India's defence approach remains partly compartmentalised, limiting synergy across domains.

2. Technological Gaps

- Dependence on imports in critical areas like cyber systems, AI, and advanced surveillance weakens deterrence.

3. Budgetary Constraints vs Strategic Needs

- Incremental defence spending may not match the scale of transformation required.

4. Doctrinal Ambiguity

- Lack of clearly articulated and operationalised MDO doctrine delays effective implementation.

5. China's Integrated Military Strategy

- China's rapid advancement in cyber, space, and electronic warfare creates asymmetry.

Key Facts for Prelims

- 1. Multi-Domain Operations (MDO):** Integrated use of military capabilities across domains (land, air, sea, cyber, space).
- 2. Deterrence:** Strategy to prevent adversary action through credible threat of retaliation.
- 3. ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance):** Core to modern warfare decision-making.
- 4. Cyber & Space Warfare:** Emerging domains influencing military superiority.
- 5. China's Military Modernisation:** Focus on informationised and intelligentised warfare.

Global Practices

United States	Pioneer of MDO with strong integration of AI, cyber, and space capabilities; emphasis on joint commands.
China	Focus on "intelligentised warfare" integrating cyber, space, and information dominance.
Russia	Hybrid warfare combining conventional and non-conventional tools (cyber + information warfare).
Comparison Insight	India is transitioning but lacks the institutional integration and technological depth seen in major powers.

Indian Policies / Committees

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) & Theatre Commands (proposed)	Aim to integrate tri-services.
Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020	Focus on indigenisation.
Atmanirbhar Bharat in Defence	Encouraging domestic manufacturing.
Defence Space Agency & Cyber Agency	Initial steps toward multi-domain integration.

Way Forward

1. Institutional Integration

- Fast-track theatre commands and joint operational doctrines.

2. Technology-Led Modernisation

- Invest in AI, cyber security, space assets, and electronic warfare.
- 3. **Indigenisation Push**
 - Strengthen domestic defence industry to reduce import dependence.
- 4. **Clear MDO Doctrine**
 - Develop and operationalise a unified multi-domain strategy.
- 5. **Capacity Building & Training**
 - Upskill armed forces in emerging domains like cyber and space warfare.

Conclusion

India's strategic environment necessitates a shift from incremental capability building to **integrated, multi-domain deterrence**. A balanced approach—combining technological advancement, institutional reform, and doctrinal clarity—will be essential to ensure credible deterrence while maintaining regional stability.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. With reference to Multi-Domain Operations (MDO), consider the following statements:

1. MDO involves integration of capabilities across land, air, sea, cyber, and space domains.
2. MDO is limited only to conventional military warfare.
3. Cyber and space domains are increasingly important in modern deterrence strategies.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. "India's transition towards multi-domain deterrence is essential for addressing emerging security challenges." Discuss the key challenges and suggest a roadmap for effective implementation.

Student Notes 📝

Environment

Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary in News

The **Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary** in Odisha is set to host the **second edition of the two-day 'Indian Bison Fest'**, celebrating the rich biodiversity of the region and promoting eco-tourism centered around the iconic Indian Bison (Gaur).

About Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the **Bargarh district of Odisha**, near the famous Hirakud Dam on the **Mahanadi River**.

Hirakud Dam is notable for being the **longest dam in India** and the **longest earthen dam in the world**.

Historical Significance

1. Closely associated with freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai.
2. During his rebellion against British rule, his base at **Barapathara** was located within this sanctuary.

Vegetation & Flora

1. Dominated by **mixed and dry deciduous forests**.
2. Important tree species include:
 - **Sal**
 - Asana
 - Bija
 - Amla (Aanla)
 - Dhaura

Fauna

The sanctuary is rich in wildlife, including:

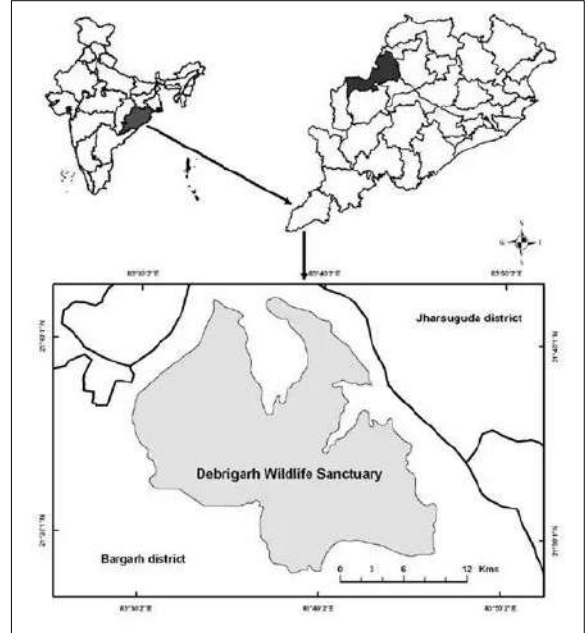
1. Indian Leopard
2. Sloth Bear
3. Chousingha (Four-horned Antelope)
4. Sambar Deer
5. Gaur (Indian Bison)
6. Wild Boar
7. Indian Wild Dog (Dhole)

Avifauna

Debrigarh is a major **wintering ground for migratory birds**.

Notable bird species include:

1. Crested Serpent Eagle



2. Flowerpeckers
3. Red-vented Bulbul
4. Tree Pie
5. Drongo
6. Oriental White-eye

Indian Bison (Gaur)

Key Facts About Indian Bison (Gaur)

Gaur, commonly called the **Indian Bison**, is the **largest species of wild cattle** belonging to the Bovidae family.

Physical Features

1. Strong and heavily built body
2. Prominent **grey ridge on the forehead**
3. Large, curved horns rising upward from the sides

Distribution

1. Native to **South and Southeast Asia**

Habitat

1. Found in:
 - Evergreen forests
 - Semi-evergreen forests
 - Moist deciduous forests with open grasslands
2. Prefer **hilly terrains below 1,500–1,800 meters**
3. Thrive in large, undisturbed forest tracts with abundant water

Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List: Vulnerable**



Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)

News

It has been observed that **India currently lacks specific national emission standards for sulphur dioxide (SO₂)** from certain steel production units such as **sinter plants and mill zones**, even though these are recognized as major SO₂ emission sources.

This has raised concerns regarding **industrial pollution control, air quality regulation, and public health impacts**.

About Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)

Sulfur dioxide is a **colorless gas** with a sharp, irritating smell, commonly associated with a freshly struck match.

Properties of Sulphur Dioxide

1. Exists as a **gas at room temperature**.
2. Can be liquefied under pressure.
3. **Highly soluble in water**, forming sulphurous acid.
4. Has a **pungent and suffocating odor**.

Occurrence of Sulphur Dioxide

Anthropogenic (Human-made) Sources

1. Burning of **coal and oil** in thermal power plants
 2. Emissions from **steel plants and sinter units**
 3. **Copper smelting** and metal processing industries
 4. Combustion of fossil fuels in industrial facilities
- The **largest atmospheric source** of SO_2 is fossil fuel combustion by power plants and heavy industries.

Natural Sources

1. **Volcanic eruptions**, which release large quantities of SO_2 into the atmosphere

Industrial Production

Industrially, SO_2 is produced by:

1. Burning **elemental sulphur** in air or oxygen
2. Roasting sulphide ores such as:
 - Iron pyrite (FeS_2)
 - Copper pyrite (CuFeS_2)

Applications of Sulphur Dioxide

1. Manufacture of **sulphuric acid** and other chemicals
2. **Paper pulping industry**
3. Metal refining processes
4. Food preservation (as a preservative in dried fruits, etc.)

Impacts of Sulphur Dioxide

On Human Health	On Environment	On Climate
1. Irritates respiratory tract 2. Aggravates asthma and bronchitis 3. Causes breathing difficulties	1. Irritates respiratory tract 2. Aggravates asthma and bronchitis 3. Causes breathing difficulties	1. Forms sulphate aerosols that influence atmospheric chemistry 2. Contributes indirectly to climate forcing

Significance of the Current Issue

1. Highlights regulatory gaps in **industrial emission standards**.
2. Important for **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** targets.
3. Critical for achieving **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3 & 13)**.
4. Raises need for stricter environmental compliance in the steel sector.

UPSC Prelims Practice MCQ

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding Sulphur Dioxide (SO_2):

1. It is a colorless gas with a pungent smell and is highly soluble in water.
2. The largest source of SO_2 in the atmosphere is volcanic eruptions.
3. It contributes to the formation of acid rain.

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

World Wildlife Day

News

On **World Wildlife Day (3 March 2026)**, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** reaffirmed India's commitment to wildlife conservation, highlighting India's rich biodiversity, tiger population leadership, and initiatives like the **International Big Cat Alliance**.

Key Facts for the Article

1. India hosts **over 70% of the world's tiger population**.
2. India has the **largest population of the one-horned rhinoceros**.
3. India also holds the **maximum number of Asiatic elephants** globally.
4. **India is the only country where the Asiatic lion survives in the wild**.
5. Government initiatives include establishing the **International Big Cat Alliance** to share conservation practices.
6. Conservation efforts also focus on species like **Great Indian Bustard, Gharial, Sloth Bear, and cheetah translocation projects**.
7. The PM shared a **Sanskrit Subhashitam** highlighting ecological interdependence: forests protect tigers and tigers protect forests.

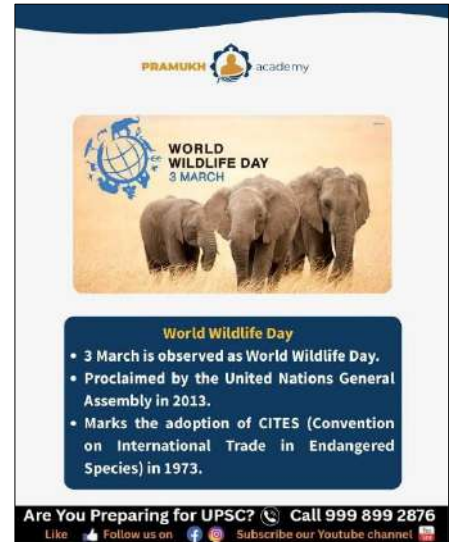
3. Static Information

World Wildlife Day

1. Celebrated on **3 March every year**.
2. Proclaimed by the **United Nations General Assembly in 2013**.
3. Commemorates the signing of the **CITES Convention (1973)** — Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.
4. Aim: raise awareness about **wildlife conservation and biodiversity protection**.

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

1. Launched by India in **2023**.
2. Focuses on conservation of **seven big cat species**:
 - Tiger
 - Lion
 - Leopard
 - Snow Leopard
 - Cheetah
 - Jaguar
 - Puma
3. Promotes **global cooperation, research, funding, and best practices** for big cat conservation.



India's Key Wildlife Highlights

1. Asiatic Lion found only in Gir National Park (Gujarat).
2. One-horned rhinoceros mainly found in Kaziranga National Park (Assam).
3. India has largest wild tiger population (Global Tiger Status Report).

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding wildlife conservation in India:

1. India hosts more than 70% of the world's wild tiger population.
2. Asiatic lions are naturally found in multiple countries across Asia.
3. International Big Cat Alliance aims to protect seven species of big cats worldwide.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Source

- Press Information Bureau (PIB)
- United Nations / CITES official information

India Meteorological Departments

News

The **India Meteorological Department** forecasted an **above-normal number of heatwave days across India between March and May**, highlighting rising temperature risks and the need for preparedness.

Key Facts

1. IMD predicted **above-normal heatwave days in most parts of India during March–May**.
2. The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** is the **national meteorological service of India**.
3. IMD functions under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**.
4. It operates **hundreds of meteorological observation stations across India and Antarctica**.
5. There are **six Regional Meteorological Centres** located in **Mumbai, Chennai, New Delhi, Kolkata, Nagpur, and Guwahati**.
6. IMD is responsible for **forecasting, naming and issuing warnings for tropical cyclones in the Northern Indian Ocean region**.



Static Information

India Meteorological Department (IMD)

1. Established in **1875**.
2. Headquarters: **New Delhi**.
3. Headed by the **Director General of Meteorology (DGM)**.

4. It is the **principal government agency for meteorology and allied sciences** in India.

Mandate of IMD

1. Conduct **meteorological observations and weather forecasting**.
2. Issue **warnings for severe weather events** such as cyclones, dust storms, heavy rainfall, cold waves and heatwaves.
3. Provide **meteorological data for agriculture, water resource management, aviation, shipping and industries**.
4. Conduct **research in meteorology and atmospheric sciences**.

Global Role

1. IMD is one of the **six Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres (RSMCs)** of the **World Meteorological Organization**.
2. Responsible for **cyclone forecasting in the Northern Indian Ocean**, including:
 - **Bay of Bengal**
 - **Arabian Sea**
 - **Strait of Malacca**
 - **Persian Gulf region**

Prelims Practice Question

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding the India Meteorological Department (IMD):

1. It functions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
2. It is responsible for naming tropical cyclones in the Northern Indian Ocean.
3. It is one of the Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres of the World Meteorological Organization.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only

Source

- The Hindu, India Meteorological Department (IMD)
Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)

Musa sikkimensis

News

Researchers at **Nagaland University** highlighted the rich genetic diversity of the wild banana **Musa sikkimensis**, emphasizing its potential for **climate-resilient agriculture and crop improvement** in the Eastern Himalayan region.

Key Facts

1. **Musa sikkimensis** is a **wild banana species** native to the **Eastern Himalayas and Northeast India**.
2. It is commonly known as the **Darjeeling banana** or **Sikkim banana**.
3. The plant is a **tall evergreen perennial** belonging to the **banana family (Musaceae)**.



4. It has **large paddle-shaped leaves** reaching up to **3 m in length** and about **60 cm in width**.
5. The plant produces **pendulous deep maroon flowers** that can grow up to **60 cm long**.
6. It is a **wild-seeded species with strong adaptive traits**, acting as a **valuable genetic reservoir for disease resistance and climate adaptability**.

Static Information

1. **Scientific name:** *Musa sikkimensis*
2. **Family:** Musaceae
3. The **genus Musa** includes both **wild and cultivated bananas**.
4. Bananas originated in the **Indo-Malayan region (Southeast Asia)** and spread globally through cultivation.
5. Wild banana species often contain **seeds**, while most cultivated bananas are **seedless due to parthenocarpy**.
6. Wild banana germplasm is crucial for **banana breeding programs**, particularly for **disease resistance (e.g., Panama disease)** and **climate resilience**.
7. India is the **largest producer of bananas globally**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding *Musa sikkimensis*:

1. It is a wild banana species native to the Eastern Himalayas.
2. It belongs to the Musaceae family.
3. It is widely cultivated globally for edible fruit production.
4. It serves as an important genetic resource for disease resistance and crop improvement.

Which of the statements given above 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

Answer: (a)

Source: DD News

Kappatagudda Wildlife Sanctuary

News / Introduction

The **Karnataka High Court** recently directed the state government to issue an additional notification to include **left-out areas of the Kappatagudda Reserve Forest** within the **Kappatagudda Wildlife Sanctuary** boundary.

Key Facts

1. **Kappatagudda Wildlife Sanctuary** is located in **Karnataka** and contains diverse ecosystems including **dry deciduous forests, grasslands, scrublands, and riverine habitats**.
2. The region is often called the **“Western Ghats of North Karnataka”** due to its biodiversity-rich hill ranges.
3. The sanctuary has **historical and cultural significance**, with ancient temples and ruins scattered across the hills.
4. Architectural heritage includes **Kappatagudda Jain Basadi, Brahma Jinalaya, Trikuteshwara Temple, and Dambala Temple**.

5. The area historically reflects the rule of **Chalukya and Rashtrakuta dynasties**.
6. It acts as an important **catchment area for the Tungabhadra River**.

Static Information

1. **Wildlife Sanctuaries** in India are declared under **Section 18 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
2. Activities such as **hunting and habitat destruction** are **strictly prohibited** within sanctuaries.
3. Limited human activities like **grazing or movement may be allowed under regulated conditions**.
4. Sanctuaries are generally managed by **state forest departments** for biodiversity conservation.
5. India currently has **570+ wildlife sanctuaries** forming a key component of the **Protected Area Network**.
6. Protected areas in India include **National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves, and Community Reserves**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Wildlife Sanctuaries in India:

1. They are declared under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. Grazing and certain regulated human activities may be permitted in some sanctuaries.
3. All wildlife sanctuaries are declared and managed exclusively by the Central Government.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: The Hindu / Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

Moonshot Project**News**

The **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru** recently launched a **Moonshot Project** to develop AI-powered brain co-processors aimed at restoring brain functions and improving rehabilitation for stroke patients.

Key Facts

1. The project aims to develop **brain co-processors combining neuromorphic hardware with artificial intelligence algorithms**.
2. These co-processors are designed to **enhance or restore natural brain functions**.
3. It seeks to build an **AI-powered closed-loop device** that connects with different regions of the brain.
4. The initiative evolved from a pilot under **IISc's Brain, Computation and Data Science (BCDS) initiative**.
5. The project is **funded by the Pratiksha Trust**.
6. The system will **decode neural activity, process signals using AI, and re-encode signals into the brain through neural stimulation or neurofeedback**.

Static Information

1. **Brain-Computer Interface (BCI)** is a technology that enables **direct communication between the brain and external devices**.
2. BCIs typically involve **three main stages**:

- Recording brain signals (using electrodes or sensors).
 - Decoding signals using computational algorithms.
 - Delivering output or stimulation back to the brain or external device.
3. **Neuromorphic computing** mimics the **structure and functioning of biological neural networks**.
 4. Neurotechnology is widely researched for **treating neurological disorders such as paralysis, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, and stroke rehabilitation**.
 5. AI-driven neuro-devices can support **motor recovery, sensory restoration, and cognitive rehabilitation**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Brain–Computer Interface (BCI) technology:

1. It enables direct communication between the human brain and external devices.
2. It can be used in neurorehabilitation for patients with neurological disorders.
3. It works only through non-invasive external sensors and cannot involve implanted devices.

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)

Source: The Hindu / Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

Qeshm Island

News

Iran's Foreign Minister accused the United States of attacking a **desalination plant on Qeshm Island**, located near the **Strait of Hormuz**, raising tensions in the strategically important Persian Gulf region.

Key Facts

1. **Qeshm Island** is the **largest island in the Persian Gulf**.
2. It **belongs to Iran** and lies close to the **Strait of Hormuz**, a major global oil transit chokepoint.
3. The island lies **parallel to the Iranian mainland** and is separated by the **Clarence Strait**.
4. It is located near the mainland port city of **Bandar Abbas** in **Hormozgan Province**.
5. The island covers an area of about **1,491 sq. km**, about **2.5 times larger than Bahrain**, the second-largest island in the Persian Gulf.
6. Qeshm has **rocky coastlines, irregular table-topped hills, and a hot arid climate** typical of the Persian Gulf region.



Static Information

1. **Qeshm Island** lies in the **Strait of Hormuz**, which connects the **Persian Gulf** with the **Gulf of Oman** and the **Arabian Sea**.

2. The island hosts the **Qeshm Geopark**, recognized as a **UNESCO Global Geopark** in **2017**.
3. It contains unique geological formations such as **salt domes, mangrove forests (Hara forests), valleys, and caves**.
4. The **Strait of Hormuz** is one of the **world's most important oil chokepoints**, through which roughly **one-fifth of global petroleum liquids trade passes**.
5. Qeshm is designated as a **free trade zone by Iran**, encouraging tourism and trade.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Qeshm Island:

1. It is the **largest island in the Persian Gulf**.
2. It belongs to **Oman** and lies near the Strait of Hormuz.
3. It hosts a **UNESCO Global Geopark**.

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 (1 and 3 only)

Source: NDTV; Encyclopaedia Britannica; UNESCO Global Geoparks Network.

Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) released the State of India's Environment Report 2026

News /

The **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)** released the **State of India's Environment Report 2026**, highlighting rising extreme weather events, growing human–wildlife conflicts, and major gaps in India's air pollution monitoring.

Key Facts

1. The report notes a **sharp rise in extreme weather events in 2025**, including floods, heavy rainfall, and lightning.
2. **January–November 2025** recorded **99% of days with extreme weather events**.
3. These events affected **4,419 districts**, caused **3,339 deaths**, and damaged **over 2 million hectares of crops**.
4. **Himachal Pradesh** was among the worst-affected states due to extreme weather impacts.
5. Increasing **human–tiger conflicts** were reported, with **43 deaths in tiger reserves in early 2025**.
6. Only **15% of India's population lives within 10 km of an air pollution monitoring station**, leaving most areas without adequate air quality data.

Static Information

1. **Extreme weather events** include floods, heatwaves, cyclones, heavy rainfall, droughts, and lightning (India Meteorological Department).
2. India has a **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** responsible for disaster preparedness and mitigation.
3. The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** operates the **National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP)** across India.

4. India also runs the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** launched in **2019** to reduce particulate pollution in major cities.
5. India hosts **over 50 tiger reserves** under the **Project Tiger programme (launched in 1973)**.
6. **Human–wildlife conflict** is a major conservation challenge, especially near **protected areas and wildlife corridors**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding air pollution monitoring in India:

1. The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** operates the **National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP)**.
2. The **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** was launched to reduce air pollution in major cities.
3. The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** is the statutory authority responsible for enforcing air pollution standards.

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: The Hindu; Centre for Science and Environment (State of India's Environment Report).

National Green Hydrogen Mission

News /

The Government of India notified **Green Ammonia and Green Methanol standards** under the **National Green Hydrogen Mission** to promote low-carbon hydrogen derivatives and accelerate India's clean energy transition and global trade.

Key Facts

1. The standards were notified by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** on **27 February 2026**.
2. **Green Ammonia** must have **total non-biogenic emissions ≤ 0.38 kg CO₂ equivalent per kg of ammonia**.
3. **Green Methanol** must have **total non-biogenic emissions ≤ 0.44 kg CO₂ equivalent per kg of methanol**.
4. Emissions considered include stages such as **green hydrogen production, synthesis, purification, compression and storage**.
5. Carbon dioxide for green methanol production may be sourced from **biogenic sources, Direct Air Capture (DAC), or existing industrial sources**.
6. The standards aim to support **decarbonisation of sectors like fertilisers, shipping and heavy industry** and strengthen India's **green fuel export potential**.



Static Information

1. The **National Green Hydrogen Mission** was approved in **January 2023**.
2. The mission aims to make India a **global hub for production, utilisation and export of green hydrogen and its derivatives**.
3. India targets **production of at least 5 million metric tonnes of green hydrogen per year by 2030**.
4. The mission supports **electrolysis using renewable energy sources** such as solar and wind power.
5. **Green ammonia** is widely used in the **fertiliser industry and as a potential shipping fuel**.
6. **Green methanol** can be used as **transport fuel, chemical feedstock and maritime fuel**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Green Hydrogen and its derivatives:

1. **Green hydrogen is produced using renewable energy through electrolysis of water.**
2. **Green ammonia and green methanol are considered hydrogen derivatives used in energy and industrial sectors.**
3. The **National Green Hydrogen Mission** aims to achieve **5 million tonnes of green hydrogen production annually by 2030**.

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: Press Information Bureau (PIB), Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

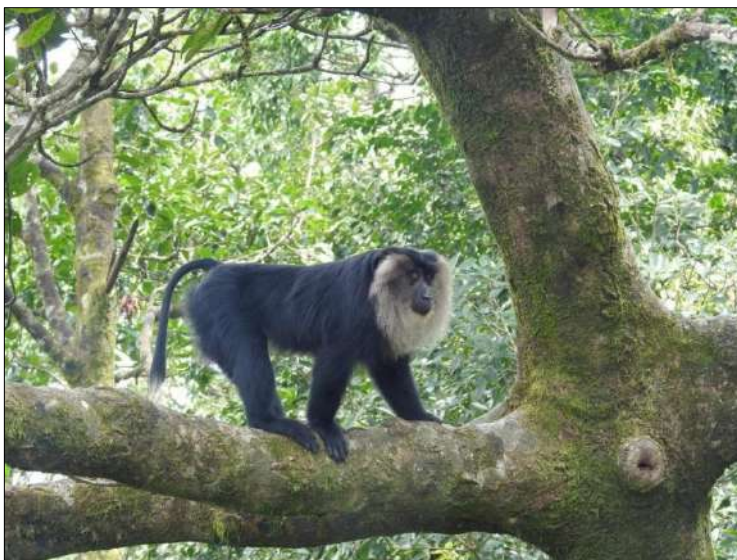
Sharavathi Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary

News

The **Karnataka High Court** directed the state government to halt all ground activities within the **Sharavathi Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary** and its Eco-Sensitive Zone to protect the endangered lion-tailed macaque habitat.

Key Facts

1. The sanctuary is located in **Karnataka**.
2. It lies within the **Western Ghats**, which is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.
3. It was created by merging **Sharavathi Valley Wildlife Sanctuary**, **Aghanashini Lion-Tailed Macaque Conservation Reserve**, and adjoining reserve forest blocks.
4. The sanctuary shares its southwestern boundary with **Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary**.
5. The terrain is **highly undulating**, with elevation ranging from **94 m to 1102 m**.



6. Vegetation includes **tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen forests**, moist deciduous forests, grasslands, and savanna.

Static Information

1. The **lion-tailed macaque (Macaca silenus)** is classified as **Endangered** by the **International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List**.
2. It is **endemic to the Western Ghats** of India.
3. The species is listed in **Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, providing the highest level of protection.
4. Lion-tailed macaques primarily inhabit **tropical evergreen forests** and are arboreal primates.
5. Major threats include **habitat fragmentation, deforestation, and infrastructure development** in the Western Ghats.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements about the Sharavathi Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary:

1. It is located in the Western Ghats of Karnataka.
2. It was created by merging Sharavathi Valley Wildlife Sanctuary and Aghanashini Lion-Tailed Macaque Conservation Reserve.
3. The lion-tailed macaque is classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN.

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)

Source: The New Indian Express (NIE); IUCN Red List; Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Mission Mausam

News

The Government informed **Lok Sabha** about **Mission Mausam**, launched to improve accuracy and timeliness of weather forecasts and strengthen early warning systems for disasters.

Key Facts

1. The mission is implemented by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**.
2. Key implementing institutions include the **India Meteorological Department**, **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology**, and **National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting**.
3. The mission aims to **improve the accuracy, reliability, and lead time of weather forecasts and early warnings**.



- It focuses on **expanding observation networks, improving high-resolution numerical weather prediction models, and increasing high-performance computing capacity.**
- The programme integrates **Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, and advanced modelling systems** for better forecasting.
- It will be implemented in **phases up to 2031** and aims to make India **“Weather Ready and Climate Smart.”**

Static Information

- The **India Meteorological Department**, established in **1875**, is the principal agency for **weather forecasting, cyclone warnings, and meteorological services in India.**
- The **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services** provides **ocean information services such as Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ) advisories.**
- Weather information is disseminated through mobile applications such as **MAUSAM, Meghdoot, and Damini.**
- Automatic Weather Stations (AWS), Automatic Rain Gauges (ARG), and Doppler Weather Radars (DWR)** are key instruments used for weather monitoring.
- Improved forecasting supports **agriculture, disaster management, fisheries, aviation, and water resource management.**

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Mission Mausam:

- It is implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences to improve weather forecasting and early warning systems.
- Institutions such as the India Meteorological Department and IITM are involved in its implementation.
- The mission focuses only on ocean forecasting and fisheries advisories.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB); Ministry of Earth Sciences.

NAURADEHI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

News

Naura-dehi Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh is expected to receive cheetahs within two months under India's Cheetah Reintroduction Project, expanding conservation efforts beyond Kuno National Park.

Key Facts

- Naura-dehi Wildlife Sanctuary** is located in **Madhya Pradesh** and is the **largest wildlife sanctuary in the state.**



- It covers an area of about **1187 sq. km**.
- The sanctuary lies on a **plateau in the upper Vindhyan range**.
- It acts as an **ecological corridor connecting Panna, Satpura, and Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserves**.
- It falls under the **Deccan Peninsula biogeographic region**.
- The sanctuary has been **selected as a site for the Cheetah Reintroduction Project in India**.

Static Information

(Source: Madhya Pradesh Forest Department / ENVIS)

- The sanctuary spans **three districts of Madhya Pradesh – Sagar, Damoh, and Narsinghpur**.
- About **three-fourths of the sanctuary lies in the Yamuna (Ganga) basin**, while **one-fourth falls in the Narmada basin**.
- Major rivers flowing through the sanctuary include **Kopra, Banner, and Bearma**, which are tributaries of the **Ken River**.
- Vegetation mainly consists of **tropical dry deciduous and mixed deciduous forests with grasslands**.
- Dominant flora include **Teak, Saja, Dhaora, Mahua, Amla, Tendu, and Bel**.
- The sanctuary supports wildlife such as **Indian wolf, Bengal tiger, leopard, sloth bear, sambar, nilgai, and chinkara**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Naura-dehi Wildlife Sanctuary:

- It is the largest wildlife sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh.
- It serves as an ecological corridor connecting Panna, Satpura, and Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserves.
- The entire sanctuary lies within the Narmada River basin.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB) / Madhya Pradesh Forest Department

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

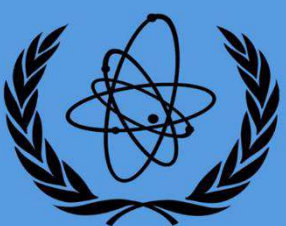
News

Amid global concerns over nuclear non-proliferation, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recently held discussions with Russia's state nuclear corporation Rosatom regarding nuclear cooperation and safeguards.

Key Facts

- The **IAEA is an intergovernmental organization** that promotes scientific and technical cooperation in the nuclear field.

UPSC PRELIMS FACTS : (UN IAEA)



Name: United Nation's International Atomic Energy Agency

Year of Formation: 1957

Headquarters: Vienna, Austria

Sector: Nuclear Energy

Is India a member: Yes

Initially established as 'Atoms for Peace'.

In 2019, the 63rd general conference of the IAEA, India launched a global cancer care network, "NCG-Vishwam Cancer Care Connect" (NCG-Vishwam 3C)

IAEA

2. It was inspired by **US President Dwight D. Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" speech in 1953** at the UN General Assembly.
3. The **IAEA Statute was approved on 23 October 1956** and came into force on **29 July 1957**.
4. The agency works with **member states and partners worldwide to promote safe and peaceful nuclear technology**.
5. The **IAEA reports to both the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council**.
6. The organization currently has **around 180 member countries**.

Static Information**Headquarters:** Vienna, Austria.

1. **Nature:** Autonomous international organization within the **United Nations system**.
2. **Main Objective:** Ensure **nuclear energy is used for peaceful purposes** and not diverted for nuclear weapons.
3. **Institutional Structure:**
 - **General Conference:** All member states; meets annually to approve budget and policies.
 - **Board of Governors:** 35-member body responsible for policy and safeguards oversight.
 - **Secretariat:** Headed by the **Director General**; manages day-to-day operations.
4. **Key Functions:**
 - Promote **peaceful uses of nuclear technology**.
 - Establish **nuclear safety and security standards**.
 - Conduct **inspections and verification to ensure compliance with safeguards agreements**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question**Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA):**

1. It is an autonomous organization within the United Nations system.
2. Its headquarters are located in Geneva, Switzerland.
3. It verifies that nuclear energy is not diverted for military purposes.

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: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Official Website / United Nations****Spotted Hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*)****News**

A recent study has identified the **spotted hyena** as an unexpected "eco-warrior" in **Mekelle, Ethiopia**, where the species helps manage urban waste and carrion, supporting ecological balance in the city.

Key Facts

1. The **spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*)** has emerged as an important scavenger helping manage waste in **Ethiopia's city of Mekelle**.



2. It is also commonly known as the **"laughing hyena."**
3. It is the **largest member of the hyena family** and a strong hunter as well as scavenger.
4. The species is **primarily nocturnal**, hunting at night and resting in dens during the day.
5. Hyenas live in **matriarchal clans** led by a dominant female.
6. Females possess a **pseudo-penis**, making them unique among placental mammals.



Static Information

1. **Scientific Name:** *Crocota crocuta*.
2. **Family:** Hyaenidae.
3. **Habitat:** Savannas, dry woodlands, grasslands, semi-deserts, and mountainous regions.
4. **Geographical Distribution:** Widely found in **sub-Saharan Africa** including Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa.
5. **Diet:** Carnivorous; both **hunter and scavenger**, feeding on carrion and prey.
6. **Social Structure:** Highly organized **clan system dominated by females**.
7. **Conservation Status:** Least Concern (IUCN Red List).

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Spotted Hyena (*Crocota crocuta*):

1. It is the largest member of the hyena family.
2. It exhibits a matriarchal social structure where females dominate the clan.
3. It is endemic to South America.

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) / IUCN Red List / Encyclopaedia Britannica

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

News

A **UNEP report** warned that improper disposal of unused medicines can harm ecosystems and public health, highlighting the need for safe pharmaceutical waste management globally.

Key Facts

1. The report stresses **safe disposal of unused medicines** to avoid environmental contamination.

2. Pharmaceutical residues can affect **water bodies and wildlife**.
3. Improper disposal poses risks to **public health and ecosystems**.
4. The report was released by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.
5. UNEP promotes **global environmental governance and sustainability initiatives**.

UPSC Prelims Facts - UNEP



Name: United Nations
Environment Programme
(UNEP)
Year of formation: 1972
HQ: Nairobi, Kenya
Sector: Environment
Is India a member - Yes

Static Information

1. **UNEP** was established in **1972** after the **Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment**.
2. **Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya.
3. It is the **leading global environmental authority within the UN system**.
4. **United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)** is the highest decision-making body on environmental matters.
5. UNEP supports treaties such as **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), CITES, and Minamata Convention**.
6. It publishes reports like **Global Environment Outlook and Emissions Gap Report**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding UNEP:

1. It was established in 1972 after the Stockholm Conference.
2. Its headquarters are located in Nairobi.
3. United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is the highest decision-making body on environmental matters.

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)

Source: Down To Earth (DTE)

Enhancement of Indigenous Capacity in Nuclear Fuel Cycle

News

On 18 March 2026, the government informed Parliament about measures to strengthen India's indigenous nuclear fuel cycle through uranium mining, fuel fabrication, reprocessing, and waste management expansion.

Key Facts

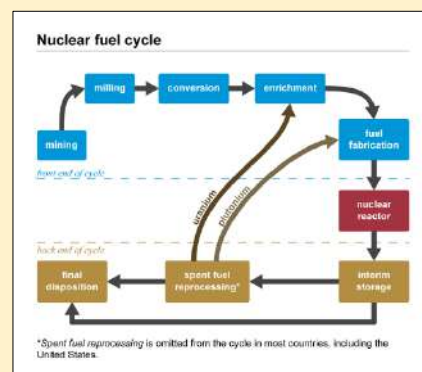
1. Parliament discussion focused on strengthening **indigenous capability across the nuclear fuel cycle**.
2. **Uranium Corporation of India Ltd. (UCIL)** has undertaken projects to increase domestic uranium production.



3. **Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC)** manufactures fuel for reactors such as **PHWRs, BWRs and Fast Breeder Reactors**.
4. India is also expanding **reprocessing and waste management** capabilities as part of the fuel cycle.
5. The effort supports India's long-term **three-stage nuclear power programme** and energy security goals.
6. The Department of Atomic Energy coordinates these activities through its specialised institutions.

Static Information

1. The **nuclear fuel cycle** includes exploration, mining, milling, fuel fabrication, reactor use, spent-fuel reprocessing, and waste management.
2. India follows a **closed fuel cycle**, where spent fuel is reprocessed and reused rather than treated purely as waste.
3. The **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** was established in **1954** under the direct charge of the Prime Minister.
4. India's nuclear programme is based on a **three-stage strategy**, ultimately aiming to utilize the country's large thorium resources.



Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding India's nuclear fuel cycle:

1. India follows a closed nuclear fuel cycle.
2. Nuclear Fuel Complex fabricates fuel for nuclear reactors.
3. Reprocessing of spent fuel is unrelated to India's three-stage nuclear power programme.

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

Nagoya Protocol

News

India has submitted its **first National Report** on implementation of the **Nagoya Protocol** to the CBD Secretariat, highlighting progress on access and benefit sharing of genetic resources.

Key Facts

1. India's first National Report covers the period **1 November 2017 to 31 December 2025**.
2. The report relates to implementation of the **Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)**.
3. It contributes to **Target 13** of India's updated **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)**.



NAGOYA PROTOCOL

- Adopted in 2010, the Nagoya Protocol is an international agreement under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- It promotes fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.
- Ensures prior informed consent from resource-providing countries before access.
- Supports the rights of indigenous communities in biodiversity governance.
- Establishes legal frameworks for benefit-sharing agreements.
- Strengthens global efforts in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- India ratified the protocol in 2014, aligning its biological diversity laws with international standards.

4. India had earlier submitted an **Interim National Report** in **November 2017**.
5. The Protocol deals with **fair and equitable sharing of benefits** arising from the use of genetic resources.
6. It also covers **traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources**, where applicable under the CBD framework.

Static Information

1. The **Nagoya Protocol** is a supplementary agreement to the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**.
2. It was **adopted on 29 October 2010** at **Nagoya, Japan**.
3. It entered into force on **12 October 2014**, 90 days after the 50th ratification.
4. The CBD's three objectives are: **conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources**.

Practice Question

Q1. With reference to the Nagoya Protocol, consider the following statements:

1. It is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
2. It deals with access to genetic resources and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization.
3. It entered into force before the Convention on Biological Diversity came into existence.

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: PIB; Convention on Biological Diversity

Hippopotamus Attack – Shivamogga (Karnataka)

News

A trainee veterinary officer died after a hippopotamus attack at Shivamogga Zoo, Karnataka, highlighting risks in wildlife handling and prompting investigation into safety protocol adherence.

Key Facts

1. Incident at **Tyavarekoppa Lion & Tiger Safari, Shivamogga**.
2. Victim: **27-year-old trainee veterinary officer**.
3. Attack occurred during **temperature check of pregnant hippo**.
4. Cause of death: **Severe injuries and cardiac arrest**.
5. Probe ordered by Karnataka Forest Minister.
6. Emphasis on **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**.

Static Information

1. Hippopotamus:

- Scientific name: *Hippopotamus amphibius*
 - Among **most dangerous large animals**.
 - Native to **Sub-Saharan Africa**.
2. Zoos governed by:
- **Central Zoo Authority (CZA)** (India)
3. Wildlife handling requires:
- Trained personnel
 - Safety protocols & sedation measures



Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Hippopotamus is native to Africa.
2. Central Zoo Authority regulates zoos in India.
3. Hippopotamus is a herbivore but considered dangerous.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Source: The Hindu

MANGROVES

News

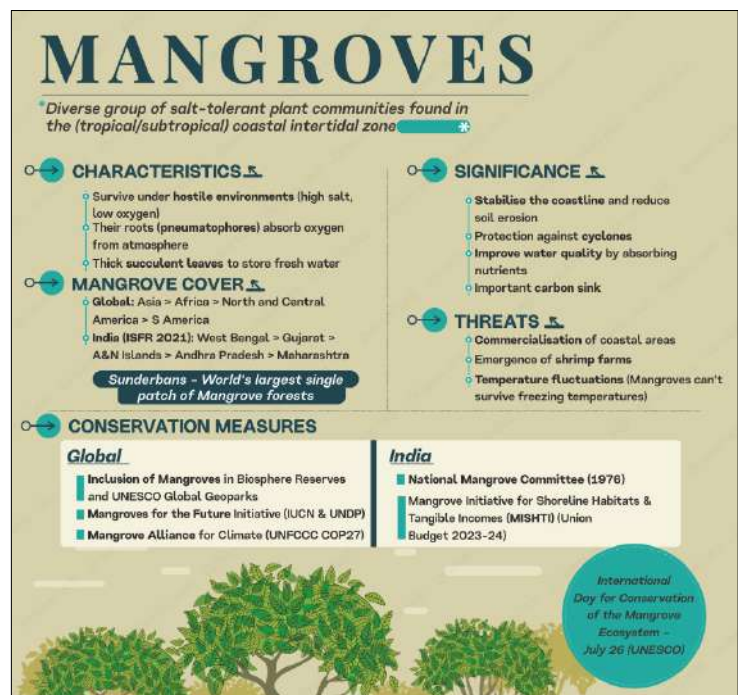
Supreme Court declined to interfere in the Bombay High Court order permitting removal of mangroves for Versova–Bhayandar coastal road project.

Key Facts

1. Mangroves are salt-tolerant coastal vegetation
2. Found in tropical & subtropical regions
3. Adaptations: pneumatophores, prop roots, vivipary
4. Act as carbon sinks (blue carbon)
5. Provide coastal protection & biodiversity habitat

Static Information

1. Major regions in India:
 - Sundarbans (largest)
 - Godavari, Krishna, Mahanadi deltas
 - Pichavaram, Bhitarkanika



- Andaman & Nicobar, Gulf of Kutch
- 2. Protected under CRZ (Coastal Regulation Zone) rules

Practice Question

Q1. Which of the following are characteristics of mangroves?

1. Vivipary
 2. Pneumatophores
 3. Found in freshwater rivers only
- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

Source: IE

SAHIWAL CATTLE & OPU-IVF TECHNOLOGY

News/Introducti

ICAR-IVRI successfully produced indigenous Sahiwal calves using OPU-IVF-ET technology, boosting genetic improvement and conservation of high-yielding indigenous cattle breeds in India.

Key Facts

1. Sahiwal is a **high milk-yielding indigenous breed**.
2. Origin: **Punjab region (Pakistan)**.
3. Known for **heat tolerance and disease resistance**.
4. Average milk yield: **~2325 kg per lactation**.
5. OPU-IVF allows **oocyte collection from live animals**.
6. Embryos transferred to **surrogate mothers**.

Static Information

1. Indigenous cattle breeds: Gir, Red Sindhi, Tharparkar, Sahiwal.
2. OPU-IVF = Ovum Pick-Up + In Vitro Fertilization.
3. Helps in **rapid multiplication of elite germplasm**.
4. Important for **White Revolution 2.0** and dairy productivity.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following:

1. Sahiwal cattle originated in India.
2. OPU-IVF technology allows embryo production outside the body.
3. Sahiwal breed is known for heat tolerance.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: DTE

LITANI RIVER (LEBANON)

News

Israeli airstrikes destroyed a key bridge over the Litani River in Lebanon, highlighting the river's geopolitical and strategic importance in the region.

Key Facts

1. Litani is a **major river in Lebanon**.
2. Originates near **Baalbek** in Bekaa Valley.
3. Flows into **Mediterranean Sea**.
4. Forms a deep **gorge in Lebanon Mountains**.
5. Major dams: **Qaraoun Dam, El Wauroun Dam**.
6. Important for **irrigation, hydropower, water supply**.



Static Information

1. Bekaa Valley: fertile agricultural region of Lebanon.
2. Litani River lies entirely within **Lebanon (unlike Jordan River system)**.
3. Strategic importance in **West Asian geopolitics**.
4. Region influenced by **Israel-Hezbollah tensions**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Litani River flows through multiple countries.
2. It drains into the Mediterranean Sea.
3. It originates near Baalbek.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: NDTV

Centre may add battery storage under revamped PM-KUSUM 2.0

News

The Centre is considering adding battery energy storage to PM-KUSUM 2.0 to address solar power mismatch and has extended timelines for project completion under the scheme.

Key Facts

1. PM-KUSUM scheme currently focuses on solarisation of agricultural pumps without battery storage.
2. Government is planning to introduce battery storage to manage mismatch between solar generation and agricultural demand.
3. Solar generation peaks during the day, while agricultural demand persists beyond sunset.

4. Ministry of Power suggested battery storage up to 4 hours; MNRE proposed 2-hour storage capacity.
5. Battery storage will store surplus solar energy and supply it during demand periods.
6. Timeline for financial closure and project completion under PM-KUSUM has been extended.
7. Scheme includes Components A (solar plants), B (standalone pumps), and C (grid-connected pumps).

The success of PM-KUSUM 2.0 hinges on addressing persistent implementation challenges.



Financial Security

Ensuring timely payments from distribution companies (discoms) to maintain investor confidence and project bankability.



Operational Efficiency

Accelerating feeder separation—an essential prerequisite—and streamlining complex project approval timelines.



State-Level Capacity

Strengthening coordination, technical expertise, and execution capabilities within state-level implementing agencies.

Static Information

1. **PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan):** Launched in 2019.
2. Aim: Promote solar energy in agriculture and increase farmers' income.
3. Component A: Installation of decentralized solar power plants.
4. Component B: Standalone solar agricultural pumps.
5. Component C: Solarisation of existing grid-connected pumps.
6. Implementing Ministry: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
7. Target: Add significant solar capacity in rural/agricultural sector.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding PM-KUSUM Scheme:

1. It includes battery storage provision as a core component since its launch.
2. Component C deals with solarisation of grid-connected agricultural pumps.
3. The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Power.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Source: The Indian Express

Van Dhan Conclave 2026

News

Van Dhan Conclave 2026 was inaugurated in New Delhi to promote sustainable tribal livelihoods, value addition of minor forest produce, and strengthen market linkages for tribal communities.

Key Facts

1. Organized under Bharat Tribes Fest 2026 by TRIFED.
2. Theme: "Sustainable Livelihoods for Tribal India".
3. Focus on value addition of Minor Forest Produce (MFP).
4. Emphasis on entrepreneurship, market access, and tribal income enhancement.

5. Highlighted role of Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) in value chains.
6. Covered topics like legal frameworks, grassroots solutions, and global market expansion.
7. Participation from ministries, states, NGOs, and international organizations.

Static Information

1. **TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India):** Under Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
2. Launched in 1987 to support tribal livelihoods through marketing of tribal products.
3. **Van Dhan Scheme:** Launched in 2018.
4. Aim: Value addition to MFP and skill development of tribal gatherers.
5. VDVks: Clusters of tribal SHGs for processing and marketing forest produce.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. TRIFED operates under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
2. Van Dhan Scheme focuses on value addition of Minor Forest Produce.
3. Van Dhan Vikas Kendras are related to large-scale industrial production.

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)

Source: PIB



Red-Crowned Roofed Turtle

News

The Red-crowned Roofed Turtle, once abundant in the Ganga, is now confined to shrinking habitats, raising conservation concerns due to habitat loss and declining river ecosystems.

Key Facts

1. Freshwater turtle species endemic to South Asia.
2. Belongs to genus *Batagur*.
3. Found in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal.
4. Historically widespread in the Ganga river system.
5. Also present in Brahmaputra basin.
6. Omnivorous and acts as bio-indicator of river health.
7. Plays role in nutrient cycling in aquatic ecosystems.

Static Information



1. **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered.
2. **CITES:** Appendix II.
3. **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I.
4. Major threats: Habitat loss, river pollution, sand mining, and dam construction.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Red-crowned Roofed Turtle is endemic to South Asia.
2. It is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
3. It is classified as Least Concern by IUCN.

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)

Source: DTE

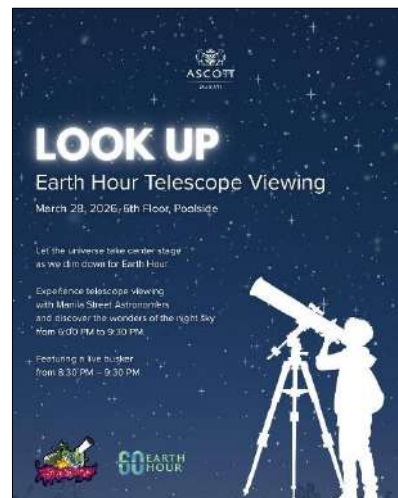
Earth Hour

News

WWF India, in collaboration with MoEFCC, organized awareness activities marking 20 years of Earth Hour to promote energy conservation and climate change awareness.

Key Facts

1. Global grassroots movement for environmental protection.
2. Organized by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).
3. Began in Sydney, Australia in 2007.
4. Observed annually towards the end of March.
5. Participants switch off lights for one hour (8:30–9:30 pm).
6. Encourages reduction of energy consumption.
7. Involves governments, institutions, and individuals globally.



Static Information

1. Symbolic “lights-off” event to highlight climate crisis.
2. Practiced in over 190 countries and territories.
3. Promotes sustainable lifestyle and energy efficiency.
4. Major landmarks worldwide participate annually.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Earth Hour is organized by WWF.
2. It began in Paris in 2007.
3. It promotes energy conservation through symbolic actions.

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)

Source: PIB

LPG Cylinder Crunch Hits Home, Sings Stories of Welfare and Aspiration

Source: *The Hindu – Opinion*

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper II:** Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections
- **GS Paper III:** Energy Security, Environment and Health

Introduction:

Access to clean cooking energy has been a crucial element of India's social welfare and public health policy. The spread of **Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)** through initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana has helped millions of households shift away from traditional biomass fuels. However, supply disruptions, rising import dependence, and affordability issues highlight the continuing challenges in ensuring **equitable access to clean cooking energy across socio-economic groups**.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article

1. Dependence on Imported LPG

- A significant portion of India's LPG supply relies on imports, making domestic availability vulnerable to **global supply disruptions** and **geopolitical developments**.

2. Inequality in Access

- Access to clean cooking fuels varies across **income groups, caste categories, and regions**, with marginalised communities often facing greater barriers.

3. Rural Infrastructure Challenges

- Transportation difficulties and limited distribution infrastructure in rural areas can affect the **availability and affordability of LPG cylinders**.

4. Gender and Health Concerns

- Women and young girls often bear the health burden of **indoor air pollution from biomass fuels**, making clean energy access an important public health issue.

5. Economic and Welfare Implications

Key Facts for Prelims

- **Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG):** A mixture of propane and butane used as a household cooking fuel.
- **India's LPG Consumption:** India is among the **largest LPG consumers globally**, with a large share imported.
- **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY):** Launched in **2016** to provide LPG connections to women from economically weaker households.
- **Health Impact of Biomass Fuels:** Burning solid fuels such as wood and dung contributes to **indoor air pollution**, a major health risk.
- **Gender Dimension:** Women and children are disproportionately affected by exposure to smoke from traditional cooking methods.

- Fluctuations in LPG supply or prices can impact **household welfare and small businesses**, particularly those dependent on LPG for daily operations.

Global Practices: Comparative Perspectives

Indonesia	Implemented large-scale programs to transition households from kerosene to LPG , supported by government subsidies and infrastructure development.
Brazil	Brazil provides targeted support for cooking fuel access through social assistance programs for low-income households .
China	China has expanded electric and gas-based cooking solutions alongside urban energy infrastructure development.
Comparative Insight	Successful clean cooking transitions require strong infrastructure, targeted subsidies, and diversified energy sources .

Indian Policies / Committees

- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)**
 - Provides subsidized LPG connections to women from economically weaker households to promote clean cooking energy.
- Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for LPG**
 - Subsidies are transferred directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts to ensure transparency and reduce leakage.
- Energy Access Programs**
 - Government initiatives aim to expand **rural energy infrastructure and distribution networks**.
- National Health and Environmental Policies**
 - Policies addressing **air pollution and public health** recognise the importance of clean cooking fuels.
- Energy Security Strategy**
 - India's broader energy strategy focuses on **diversification of energy sources and reducing import vulnerability**.

Way Forward

- Strengthen Domestic Energy Infrastructure**
 - Expanding LPG storage, transportation, and distribution networks can improve supply reliability.
- Ensure Affordable Access**
 - Targeted subsidies and pricing mechanisms should ensure that **low-income households can sustain LPG usage**.
- Promote Alternative Clean Energy Solutions**
 - Encouraging technologies such as **electric cooking or biogas systems** can complement LPG availability.
- Improve Last-Mile Delivery**
 - Strengthening rural distribution networks can address **regional disparities in access**.
- Integrate Gender and Health Policies**
 - Clean cooking energy initiatives should be linked with **public health and women's empowerment programs**.

Conclusion

Access to clean cooking energy represents both a welfare measure and a public health priority. While initiatives like the Ujjwala scheme have significantly expanded LPG access, addressing issues related to

affordability, supply reliability, and infrastructure will be essential to ensure sustained benefits for vulnerable households.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) in India:

1. LPG is primarily composed of propane and butane.
2. India imports a significant portion of its LPG consumption.
3. The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana aims to promote LPG access among economically weaker households.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Mains Question

Q2. Access to clean cooking energy is essential for public health and social welfare in India. Discuss the challenges associated with ensuring equitable LPG access and suggest measures to address them.

On Climate Change, Mind the Science–Policy Gap

Source: The Hindu – Editorial

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper III:** Environment and Climate Change
- **GS Paper II:** International Agreements and Global Environmental Governance

Introduction:

Climate science has increasingly provided clear evidence of **accelerating global warming and its severe consequences**. However, policymaking at national and international levels often lags behind scientific findings, creating a **science–policy gap**. Bridging this gap is crucial to ensure that climate policies are aligned with the latest scientific understanding and capable of addressing the growing environmental crisis effectively.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article

1. Accelerating Global Warming

- Recent scientific studies suggest that the **rate of global temperature rise has accelerated in recent years**, indicating increasing climate risks.

2. Natural Variability vs Human Influence

- Phenomena such as **El Niño, volcanic eruptions, and solar irradiance** can affect

Key Facts for Prelims

- **Paris Agreement (2015):** An international treaty aimed at limiting global warming to **well below 2°C, preferably 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels**.
- **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):** A United Nations body that assesses scientific research related to climate change.
- **El Niño:** A periodic warming of ocean surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean that influences global weather patterns.
- **Net-Zero Emissions:** Achieved when the amount of greenhouse gases emitted is balanced by the amount removed from the atmosphere.
- **Sea-Level Rise:** A major consequence of global warming caused by melting glaciers and thermal expansion of seawater.

temperatures, but scientific analysis confirms that long-term warming trends are primarily human-induced.

3. Science–Policy Gap

- Climate diplomacy and policymaking have not fully kept pace with scientific findings, leading to **delays in adopting stronger mitigation measures**.

4. Limitations of Net-Zero Accounting

- Different methodologies for calculating **net-zero emissions** can create inconsistencies and may exaggerate progress in emission reductions.

5. Growing Climate Impacts

- Rising temperatures are already affecting **human health, agriculture, and economic productivity**, particularly in vulnerable regions.

Global Practices: Comparative Perspectives

European Union	The EU has implemented legally binding climate targets , including emissions reduction commitments and renewable energy expansion.
United States	Climate policy combines federal initiatives and state-level actions , focusing on clean energy technologies and emissions reduction programs.
China	China is investing heavily in renewable energy and electric mobility , while simultaneously managing its large industrial economy.
Comparative Insight	Successful climate governance requires alignment between scientific evidence, political commitment, and economic policy frameworks .

Indian Policies / Committees

1. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

- India has committed to reducing **emissions intensity of GDP** and **expanding non-fossil fuel energy capacity**.

2. National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)

- Includes several missions such as **National Solar Mission** and **National Water Mission**.

3. Panchamrit Commitments

- India announced five major climate commitments including **net-zero emissions target by 2070**.

4. National Adaptation Strategies

- Policies focus on strengthening resilience in sectors such as **agriculture, water resources, and disaster management**.

5. Renewable Energy Expansion

- India is promoting **solar, wind, and green hydrogen technologies** to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

Way Forward

1. Strengthen Science-Based Policymaking

- Governments should incorporate **latest scientific findings** into climate strategies and regulatory frameworks.

2. Improve Climate Data and Monitoring

- Better climate data systems can help policymakers make **informed decisions on mitigation and adaptation**.

3. Accelerate Clean Energy Transition

- Investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency should be expanded to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions**.
- 4. **Enhance Global Cooperation**
 - International collaboration is necessary to address climate change through **technology transfer, finance, and knowledge sharing**.
- 5. **Strengthen Climate Adaptation Measures**
 - Countries must build resilience through **climate-resilient infrastructure, agricultural adaptation, and disaster preparedness**.

Conclusion

Climate change represents one of the most significant global challenges of the 21st century. Bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and policy action is essential to ensure effective climate governance. Aligning policymaking with scientific evidence will be crucial for achieving **sustainable development and environmental stability**.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding global climate governance:

1. The Paris Agreement aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels.
2. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) conducts original climate experiments worldwide.
3. Net-zero emissions refer to balancing greenhouse gas emissions with their removal from the atmosphere.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. Discuss the significance of bridging the science–policy gap in addressing climate change. How can governments ensure that climate policies remain aligned with scientific evidence?

Building India's Climate Resilience with Water at the Core

Source: *The Hindu – Opinion*

GS Paper Relevance

- **GS Paper III:** Environment, Climate Change, Water Resources
- **GS Paper II:** Governance, Sustainable Development

Introduction

Climate change impacts are most visibly experienced through **water-related events such as floods, droughts, glacier melt, and erratic monsoons**. The article argues that **water management must be placed at the center of climate resilience strategies**. Global climate frameworks, particularly outcomes from **COP30**, emphasize integrating water systems, sanitation, and infrastructure into adaptation planning.

Key Issues Highlighted

1. **Climate Change Felt Through Water**



Climate change manifests through water-related events:

- Floods damaging infrastructure and cities
- Droughts affecting agriculture and rural economies
- Glacier melt destabilizing Himalayan river systems
- Saline intrusion affecting coastal aquifers
- Agriculture contributes significantly to methane emissions, with **rice cultivation and livestock** playing major roles.

2. **Water Systems at the Centre of Climate Adaptation**

The global adaptation framework now integrates:

- Water supply security
- Sanitation infrastructure
- Flood and drought resilience
- Universal access to safe drinking water
- Water governance therefore becomes a **core pillar of climate resilience**.

3. **India's Existing Institutional Foundations**

- India already has several initiatives that support climate-resilient water management:

4. **Institutional Reforms**

- Integration of water governance under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.

5. **Groundwater Management**

- Implementation of aquifer-based management through **National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme**.

6. **River Rejuvenation**

- Expansion of river conservation efforts under **National Mission for Clean Ganga**.
- These initiatives show that India is **not starting from scratch but building upon existing governance frameworks**.

Key Facts for Prelims

- **United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP):** Annual global meeting under the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** to address climate change.
- **National Mission for Clean Ganga:** Flagship programme for river rejuvenation in India.
- **National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme:** Initiative to map and manage groundwater resources across India.
- **WASH:** Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene systems essential for public health and climate adaptation.

Major Challenges

1. **Persistent Water Scarcity**

- Water availability remains uneven across regions.
- Climate change is expected to intensify water stress.

2. **Weak Adaptation Finance**

- Although global commitments aim to mobilize **\$1.3 trillion annually by 2035**, funding mechanisms remain uncertain.

3. **Fragmented Digital Data Systems**

- India possesses large hydrological and meteorological datasets, but **real-time integration into policy and governance remains limited**.

4. **Infrastructure Stress**

- Water infrastructure must withstand **extreme climate events such as floods and prolonged droughts**.

Global Perspective

The outcomes from **COP30** emphasize measurable indicators for climate adaptation.

Key global adaptation priorities include:

1. Universal water and sanitation coverage
2. Multi-hazard early warning systems
3. Climate-resilient infrastructure
4. Improved hydrometeorological services

Indian Policies / Initiatives

Integrated Water Governance	Creation of the Ministry of Jal Shakti to consolidate water-related policy.
Groundwater Mapping	Expansion of aquifer mapping through National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme .
River Conservation	Strengthening river ecosystems through National Mission for Clean Ganga .
Digital Public Infrastructure	Leveraging digital platforms for real-time hydrological data integration.
Community-Based Water Governance	Local participation in water conservation and management.

Way Forward

1. **Climate-Proof Water Infrastructure**
 - Infrastructure must be designed to withstand floods, droughts, and climate variability.
2. **Strengthen Early Warning Systems**
 - Universal multi-hazard early warning systems should be implemented nationwide.
3. **Integrate Digital Water Data**
 - Real-time hydrological and meteorological data should guide policy and disaster response.
4. **Expand Climate Finance**
 - Dedicated funding for water-related climate adaptation projects is necessary.
5. **Promote Water-Efficient Agriculture**
 - Efficient irrigation techniques and crop diversification can reduce water stress.

Conclusion

Water lies at the heart of climate resilience. Strengthening water governance, improving infrastructure resilience, and integrating climate adaptation into development planning will enable India to manage future climate shocks effectively. By aligning its policies with global frameworks and leveraging its institutional strengths, India can emerge as a **leader in climate adaptation within the Global South**.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme aims to map groundwater resources in India.
2. The National Mission for Clean Ganga focuses only on sewage treatment.
3. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) systems are considered important for climate resilience.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

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

Answer: (a)

Mains Question

Q2. "Climate resilience in India cannot be achieved without strengthening water governance." Discuss in the context of climate change adaptation strategies in India.

A Bit of a Blur over India's New Carbon Credit Plan

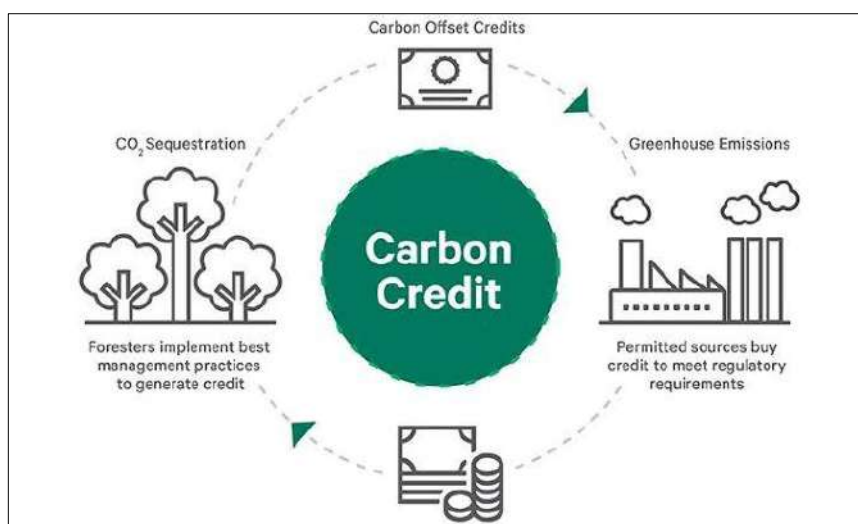
Source: The Hindu – Opinion

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper III:** Environment, Climate Change, Economy
- **GS Paper II:** Governance, Policy Implementation

Introduction

India's recent push towards a carbon credit framework reflects its commitment to **climate mitigation and net-zero goals**. However, ambiguity surrounding the scope of the policy—particularly the distinction between industrial carbon capture and agricultural carbon markets—has created confusion. A clear understanding of these components is essential for effective climate governance.



Key Facts for Prelims

1. **Carbon Credit:** A tradable certificate representing the reduction or removal of one tonne of CO₂ or equivalent greenhouse gases.
2. **Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage:** Technology to capture CO₂ emissions from industrial sources and store or reuse them.
3. **Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR):** Techniques to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere (e.g., afforestation, soil carbon sequestration).
4. **"Hard-to-abate sectors":** Industries like steel, cement, and chemicals where emissions are difficult to eliminate.
5. India has committed to achieving **net-zero emissions by 2070**.

Key Issues

1. **Policy Ambiguity**
 - The article highlights confusion between:
 - Industrial-focused **CCUS funding**
 - Broader **carbon credit mechanisms involving agriculture**
2. **Exclusion of Agriculture from CCUS**

- Official roadmap excludes agriculture from CCUS
- Yet, public discourse suggests farmer participation in carbon markets
- 3. Communication Gap**
 - Use of the term “carbon credit programme” in Budget created **misinterpretation**
 - Policy intent not clearly conveyed to stakeholders
- 4. Parallel Narratives**
 - One narrative: industrial decarbonisation through CCUS
 - Another: farmers earning income via carbon credits
 - Lack of integration between the two
- 5. Untapped Agricultural Potential**
 - India’s vast agricultural land offers **significant carbon sequestration potential**
 - However, absence of structured policy limits benefits to farmers

Global Practices

United States	Combines CCUS incentives with carbon markets (tax credits like 45Q).
European Union	Operates a regulated Emissions Trading System (ETS) focusing on industrial emissions.
Australia	Encourages carbon farming through verified carbon credit schemes.
Lesson for India	Develop clear separation yet coordination between industrial carbon reduction and nature-based solutions.

Indian Policies / Committees

CCUS Roadmap (by DST)	Focus on decarbonising heavy industries.
Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)	Commitments under global climate agreements.
Emerging Carbon Market Framework	India is developing a domestic carbon trading system.
Agricultural Initiatives	Soil health and climate-resilient agriculture programmes (indirect relevance).

Way Forward

- 1. Clarify Policy Architecture**
 - Clearly distinguish between:
 - Industrial CCUS programmes
 - Agricultural carbon credit systems
- 2. Develop Separate Agricultural Carbon Policy**
 - Create a dedicated framework for:
 - Carbon farming
 - Farmer participation
 - Verification mechanisms
- 3. Strengthen Institutional Coordination**
 - Ensure alignment between:
 - Environment Ministry
 - Agriculture Ministry
 - Industry stakeholders
- 4. Build Transparent Carbon Markets**

- Establish credible measurement and verification systems
- Ensure trust in carbon credit trading

5. **Promote Multi-sectoral Approach**

- Integrate:
- Industry decarbonisation
- Nature-based solutions
- Climate finance mechanisms

Conclusion

India's carbon credit strategy represents an important step towards climate responsibility, but clarity in design and communication is essential. A balanced approach that simultaneously advances industrial decarbonisation and agricultural participation can unlock both environmental and economic benefits, ensuring a coherent and effective climate policy framework.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) is primarily used in hard-to-abate industrial sectors.
2. Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) includes methods like afforestation and soil carbon sequestration.
3. Agriculture is a major focus area in India's CCUS roadmap.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. "Clarity in policy design is essential for effective climate governance." Discuss in the context of India's emerging carbon credit framework.

On climate change, India has a good story to tell

Source: Editorial Page Indian express

GS Paper: GS Paper III

Relevance: Climate Change, Energy Transition, Environment, International Relations

Introduction:

India's updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) reflect a calibrated and pragmatic approach to climate action—balancing developmental needs with environmental responsibility. In a challenging global context marked by weakening multilateralism, India's progress offers a constructive and credible climate pathway.

Key Issues

1. Gap Between Capacity and Generation

- Non-fossil installed capacity is high, but actual generation share remains lower (~20%).



- Intermittency of renewables remains a challenge.
- 2. **Carbon Sink Concerns**
 - Afforestation targets include plantations, which may have ecological limitations.
 - Questions on biodiversity and long-term sustainability.
- 3. **Adaptation Underemphasised Globally**
 - Climate discourse often focuses on mitigation; adaptation needs more emphasis.
 - India faces high vulnerability (heatwaves, floods, glacial risks).
- 4. **Climate Finance Constraints**
 - Developed countries have not fully delivered promised \$100 billion annually.
 - Limits developing countries' transition capabilities.
- 5. **Energy Poverty Challenge**
 - Low per capita consumption implies rising future demand.
 - Transition must ensure affordability and accessibility.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **Paris Agreement**
 - Adopted in 2015 to limit global temperature rise to well below 2°C.
2. **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):**
 - Voluntary national targets for emission reduction and climate action.
3. **India's Key Targets:**
 - 45% reduction in emissions intensity of GDP by 2030 (from 2005 levels).
 - ~50% non-fossil fuel installed capacity target (already exceeded ~52.5%).
 - Carbon sink expansion via afforestation.
4. **Energy Mix Reality:**
 - Renewables form ~20% of actual electricity generation despite higher installed capacity.
5. **Per Capita Electricity Consumption:**
 - India: ~1,460 kWh vs Global average: ~3,800 kWh.

Global Practices

European Union	Aggressive renewable targets and carbon pricing (ETS).
China	Large-scale solar and wind expansion alongside coal dependence.
United States	Focus on clean energy innovation and subsidies (IRA Act).
Lesson for India	Balanced mix of energy security, affordability, and sustainability is essential.

Indian Policies / Committees

National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)	Framework for climate missions.
National Green Hydrogen Mission	Promotes clean hydrogen production.
National Solar Mission	Expanding solar capacity.
Heat Action Plans	Local adaptation strategies.
Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Technology (SHANTI) Act	Enables private participation (up to 49% FDI) in nuclear energy.

Way Forward

1. **Bridge Capacity–Generation Gap**
 - Invest in storage technologies (battery, pumped hydro) for renewable stability.
2. **Strengthen Climate Adaptation**
 - Expand Heat Action Plans, flood management, and coastal protection.
3. **Enhance Regional Cooperation**
 - Collaborate on Himalayan glacier monitoring and marine ecosystems.

4. Promote Clean Energy Mix

- Scale up green hydrogen and nuclear (including SMRs) alongside renewables.

5. Mobilise Climate Finance

- Strengthen global advocacy and domestic green financing mechanisms.

Conclusion

India's climate strategy reflects a pragmatic balance between growth and sustainability. While challenges remain, especially in adaptation and financing, India's trajectory offers a credible model for the Global South—anchored in responsibility, realism, and resilience.

Prelims MCQ**Q1. Consider the following statements:**

1. India has already achieved more than 50% non-fossil fuel installed capacity.
2. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are legally binding targets under international law.
3. Afforestation contributes to carbon sink enhancement.

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. "India's climate policy reflects a balance between developmental needs and environmental commitments." Examine in light of its updated NDCs and energy transition strategy.

We need a green exit from the urea trap

Source: Editorial Page

GS Paper: GS Paper III

Relevance: Agriculture, Fertiliser Subsidy, Sustainable Farming, Environment

Introduction:

India's fertiliser policy, particularly the heavy subsidisation of urea, has ensured food security but at significant environmental and fiscal costs. The current system incentivises excessive nitrogen use, distorting soil health and cropping patterns. A transition towards balanced and sustainable fertilisation is therefore essential.

Key Issues**1. Overuse of Urea (Nutrient Imbalance)**

- Excessive nitrogen use due to high subsidy leads to skewed NPK ratio.
- Long-term degradation of soil fertility and productivity.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **Urea:** Nitrogen-based fertiliser, most widely used in India.
2. **NPK Ratio:** Ideal nutrient ratio (Nitrogen: Phosphorus: Potassium) should be balanced (4:2:1 recommended).
3. **Neem-Coated Urea:** Reduces diversion and improves nitrogen-use efficiency.
4. **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in Fertilisers:** Subsidy provided to companies, not directly to farmers.
5. **Soil Health Card Scheme:** Provides soil nutrient status and fertiliser recommendations.



2. Environmental Externalities

- Nitrogen runoff causes water pollution (eutrophication).
- Emission of nitrous oxide (N₂O), a potent greenhouse gas.

3. Fiscal Burden on Government

- Fertiliser subsidy bill remains high and unsustainable.
- Limits fiscal space for other agricultural investments.

4. Distorted Farmer Incentives

- Cheap urea encourages overuse and discourages balanced fertilisation.
- Reduced adoption of organic and alternative inputs.

5. Inefficiencies in Subsidy Delivery

- Leakage, diversion, and misuse despite neem-coating reforms.
- Subsidy benefits not optimally targeted.

Global Practices

European Union	Promotes precision farming and strict nutrient management regulations.
China	Shifted towards reducing fertiliser intensity and improving efficiency.
Lesson	Balanced nutrient use and technological interventions improve both productivity and sustainability.

Indian Policies / Committees

Neem-Coated Urea Policy	Enhances efficiency and reduces diversion.
Soil Health Card Scheme	Promotes scientific fertiliser use.
PM-PRANAM Scheme	Incentivises states to reduce fertiliser consumption.
National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)	Focus on eco-friendly practices.

Way Forward

1. Rationalise Fertiliser Subsidy

- Move towards nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) for urea.

2. Promote Balanced Fertilisation

- Encourage use of phosphatic and potassic fertilisers along with bio-fertilisers.

3. Adopt Precision Agriculture

- Use technology (AI, sensors) for optimal fertiliser application.

4. Strengthen Extension Services

- Educate farmers on long-term soil health and productivity.

5. Encourage Sustainable Alternatives

- Organic farming, green manure, and nano-fertilisers.

Conclusion

India's fertiliser strategy must evolve from quantity-driven subsidies to efficiency and sustainability-oriented policies. A balanced nutrient approach will ensure long-term soil health, environmental protection, and fiscal prudence while sustaining agricultural productivity.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Urea is a nitrogen-based fertiliser.

2. Excessive use of urea can lead to soil degradation.
3. Neem-coated urea completely eliminates fertiliser misuse.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. "India's fertiliser subsidy regime has led to ecological and economic distortions." Examine and suggest a roadmap for sustainable fertiliser use.

Student Notes

Science and Tech

Light Combat Helicopter 'Prachand'

The President of India recently undertook a sortie in the indigenously developed **Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) 'Prachand'** at Air Force Station Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. The event highlights India's growing self-reliance in advanced defence aviation technology.

About HAL Light Combat Helicopter Prachand

1. An indigenously developed **Light Combat Helicopter (LCH)**.
2. Developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
3. Designed specifically for **high-altitude warfare**.
4. It is the **only attack helicopter in the world capable of landing and taking off at altitudes of 5,000 metres (16,400 ft)**.



Key Features of Prachand

Engine & Performance	Combat Capabilities	Survivability & Protection	Operational Customisation
1. Powered by twin Shakti engines (5.8-tonne class). 2. Maximum Speed: 268 km/h 3. Range: 550 km 4. Endurance: Over 3 hours 5. Optimised for operations in high-altitude and desert terrains.	1. Equipped with a 20 mm nose-mounted gun, capable of firing 800 rounds per minute (range up to 2 km). 2. Fitted with countermeasure dispensing systems to evade enemy radar and infrared-guided missiles. 3. Features dark-mode attack capability, advanced stealth, and reduced radar/IR signature.	1. Armoured shield systems for enhanced protection. 2. Crash-resistant landing gear for better survivability. 3. Pressurised cabin offering protection against nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) threats.	1. Customised to meet the requirements of the Indian Armed Forces. 2. Suitable for deployment in both desert regions and high-altitude sectors like the Himalayas.

Source: PIB

Statement-Based MCQ

Q.1 With reference to the Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) Prachand, consider the following statements:

1. It has been developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.
2. It is capable of operating at altitudes of 5,000 metres.

3. It is powered by a single-engine system designed for naval warfare.

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

(Statement 3 is incorrect as Prachand is a twin-engine helicopter designed primarily for high-altitude and land-based combat operations.)

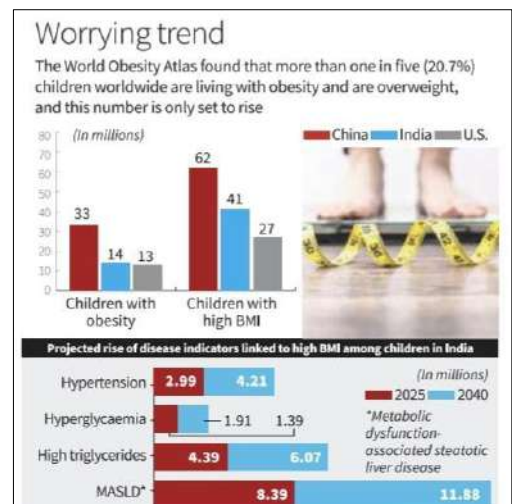
India Ranks Second Globally in Childhood Obesity

Introduction

According to the **World Obesity Atlas 2026**, India ranks second globally in childhood obesity, highlighting rising health risks among children due to sedentary lifestyles and poor nutrition.

Key Facts

- Nearly **15 million** children aged **5–9** and **over 26 million** aged **10–19** in India were **overweight or obese** in 2025.
- India ranks **second globally** after **China** in the number of children with high **Body Mass Index (BMI)**.
- About **41 million** children in India have high BMI, including around **14 million** with obesity.
- Globally, **over one in five children (20.7%)** are living with overweight or obesity.
- World Obesity Federation** predicts that **507 million** children worldwide could be overweight or obese by **2040**.
- Key risk factors identified include **low physical activity**, **high consumption of sugary drinks**, and **sub-optimal breastfeeding**.
- In India, **74% of adolescents** aged **11–17** do not meet recommended physical activity levels.



Static Information

Body Mass Index (BMI)

- Body Mass Index** is calculated as **weight (kg) / height² (m²)**.
- It is widely used to classify **underweight**, **normal weight**, **overweight**, and **obesity** in adults and children.
- According to the **World Health Organization**, obesity increases the risk of **diabetes**, **cardiovascular diseases**, **hypertension**, and **metabolic disorders**.

Global Initiative

- The **World Obesity Federation** publishes the **World Obesity Atlas** to track global obesity trends and policy responses.
- World Obesity Day** is observed annually on **4 March** to raise awareness about obesity prevention.

Practice Question

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding Body Mass Index (BMI):

1. It is calculated by dividing weight in kilograms by the square of height in meters.
2. It is used as a standard indicator to classify overweight and obesity.
3. It directly measures body fat percentage.

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)

Source: The Hindu.

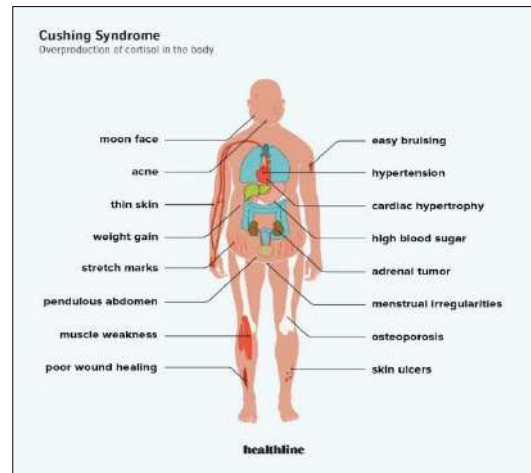
Cushing's Syndrome

News

Recent medical studies have reported expanding treatment options for **Cushing's syndrome**, a disorder caused by prolonged excess cortisol production, highlighting improved management approaches for patients suffering from hormonal imbalance.

Key Facts

1. **Cushing's syndrome** occurs due to prolonged exposure to **high levels of cortisol hormone** in the body.
2. **Cortisol** is produced by the **adrenal glands** and regulates metabolism, blood pressure, immunity, and stress response.
3. The **most common cause** is long-term use of **steroid medications** prescribed for asthma, autoimmune diseases, arthritis, or after organ transplants.
4. It may also occur when the **body produces excess cortisol due to a pituitary gland tumour** (called **Cushing's disease**).
5. Common symptoms include **weight gain around abdomen and face, thin skin, purple stretch marks, acne, and excess body hair**.
6. Patients may develop **high blood pressure, high blood sugar, diabetes, osteoporosis, and psychological symptoms** such as depression and mood swings.



Static Information

1. **Cortisol** is a **glucocorticoid hormone** produced by the **adrenal cortex**.
2. Its secretion is controlled by the **Hypothalamus–Pituitary–Adrenal (HPA) axis**.
3. The **pituitary gland releases ACTH (Adrenocorticotropic Hormone)** which stimulates adrenal glands to produce cortisol.
4. Excess cortisol conditions are categorized as:
 - **Exogenous Cushing's syndrome** – due to steroid medication use.
 - **Endogenous Cushing's syndrome** – due to tumours in the pituitary gland, adrenal gland, or ectopic ACTH production.
5. The **pituitary gland** is often called the **“master gland” of the endocrine system**.

6. Long-term cortisol excess affects **metabolism, immune system, cardiovascular system, and bone density**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding Cushing's Syndrome:

1. It is caused due to prolonged exposure to high levels of cortisol in the body.
2. Cortisol hormone is produced by the pancreas.
3. Long-term use of steroid medicines can lead to this condition.
4. Excess cortisol may also result from a tumour in the pituitary gland.

Which of the statements given above 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

Answer: (a)

Source; World Health Organization (WHO) / NIH / Endocrine Society / Standard Medical References.

Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD)

News

A recent study warned that **over one-third of Africa is at risk from Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD)**, threatening cassava production and food security across several **sub-Saharan African countries**.

Key Facts

1. **Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD)** is a **viral plant disease** that severely affects **cassava root (tuber) yield and quality**.
2. It is caused by **two viruses**: *Cassava Brown Streak Virus (CBSV)* and *Ugandan Cassava Brown Streak Virus (UCBSV)*.
3. The disease was **first identified in the coastal regions of East Africa in the mid-20th century**.
4. CBSD is now reported across **eastern, central, and southern Africa**, including **Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, DRC, South Sudan, Malawi, and Zambia**.
5. It is primarily **transmitted by the whitefly *Bemisia tabaci***, a pest with several genetically distinct groups.
6. Symptoms include **leaf chlorosis, brown streaks on stems, root necrosis, and dry rot**, often causing **complete crop loss**.

Static Information

1. Cassava (*Manihot esculenta*)

- A **tropical root crop** belonging to the **Euphorbiaceae family**.
- Native to **South America** but widely cultivated in **Africa, Asia, and Latin America**.
- It is a **major staple food crop** for more than **800 million people globally**.

2. Importance

- High **carbohydrate content** and tolerant to **drought and poor soils**.
- Used in **food, animal feed, starch, biofuel, and industrial products**.

3. Major Cassava Producers

- **Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Thailand, Indonesia, and Brazil**.



4. Whitefly (*Bemisia tabaci*)

- A major agricultural pest that transmits many plant viruses affecting crops like **cassava, cotton, and tomato**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD):

1. It is a viral disease affecting cassava plants.
2. It is transmitted primarily by the whitefly *Bemisia tabaci*.
3. The disease was first identified in South America.
4. It can cause necrosis and rot in cassava roots leading to severe crop loss.

Which of the statements given above 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

Answer: (a)

Source: Down To Earth (DTE) / FAO / International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA).

GPS spoofing**News /**

Recent reports indicate **GPS spoofing incidents near UAE and Iran**, creating a “digital fog of war” for aircraft by transmitting false satellite signals that mislead onboard navigation systems.

Key Facts

1. **GPS spoofing (GPS simulation)** manipulates a GPS receiver by broadcasting **false navigation signals**.
2. It **alters navigation data deliberately with malicious intent** to mislead the target system.
3. Unlike **GPS jamming**, which blocks signals, spoofing **overrides real satellite signals with counterfeit ones**.
4. Aircraft systems may calculate **incorrect position, altitude, time, and speed** after receiving fake signals.
5. Amplified spoofed signals appear **stronger than genuine satellite signals**, making receivers treat them as authentic.
6. Commonly reported in **conflict zones such as the Black Sea region, West Asia, and other electronic warfare areas**.

Static Information

1. **Global Positioning System (GPS)** is a **satellite-based navigation system** developed by the United States and operated by the **U.S. Space Force**.
2. **GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite Systems)** include:
 - GPS (USA)
 - GLONASS (Russia)
 - Galileo (European Union)
 - BeiDou (China)
 - NavIC (India).
3. Aviation uses **GNSS-based navigation systems** like **RNAV and RNP** for precise route guidance.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding GPS spoofing:

1. It involves broadcasting fake satellite signals to mislead GPS receivers.
2. It blocks GPS signals completely so that receivers cannot detect satellites.
3. It can lead to incorrect calculation of aircraft position and speed.

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)

Source: Indian Express

breast cancer incidence in India

News

A recent analysis in **The Lancet Oncology**, based on Global Burden of Disease data, highlights that **breast cancer incidence in India has more than doubled in three decades**, raising major public health concerns.

Key Facts

1. **Breast cancer is now the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Indian women.**
2. The **age-standardised incidence rate** increased from **13 per lakh women in 1990 to 29.4 per lakh in 2023.**
3. **Mortality rate** rose from **8.9 to 15.5 per lakh women**, indicating about **74% increase.**
4. Cases are rising particularly among **women aged 20–54 years**, especially in urban areas.
5. **Lifestyle factors** such as delayed childbirth, obesity, and high blood sugar contribute to increased risk.
6. **Mammography screening remains extremely low**, with only **1.3% of women aged 45+ undergoing mammography** according to **NFHS-5 and LASI Wave-1 data.**

Static Information

1. **Breast cancer** originates from uncontrolled growth of cells in breast tissue, most commonly in the **milk ducts (ductal carcinoma).**
2. According to **WHO**, breast cancer is the **most common cancer globally among women.**
3. Key **risk factors** include:
 - Increasing age
 - Family history of breast cancer
 - Obesity and sedentary lifestyle
 - Alcohol consumption
 - Hormonal and reproductive factors (late childbirth, early menstruation, late menopause).
4. **Early detection methods** include:
 - Breast self-examination
 - Clinical breast examination
 - Mammography screening.
5. In India, cancer data is monitored through the **National Cancer Registry Programme (NCRP)** under **ICMR.**

Practice Question



Q1. Consider the following statements regarding breast cancer:

1. Breast cancer is currently the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women globally.
2. Mammography is one of the important screening methods used for early detection of breast cancer.
3. The National Cancer Registry Programme in India is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: The Lancet Oncology / The Hindu / WHO / ICMR.

Janaushadhi Saptah 2026

News

The Government highlighted the progress of the **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)** during **Janaushadhi Saptah 2026**, promoting affordable generic medicines through Jan Aushadhi Kendras across India.

Key Facts

1. More than **18,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras (JAKs)** provide **quality generic medicines at 50–80% lower prices**.
2. The government plans to expand the network to **25,000 Kendras by March 2027** to improve access in rural and remote areas.
3. **Women, SC/ST, Divyangjan, and ex-servicemen** receive **special incentives up to ₹2 lakh** to open Kendras.
4. **Jan Aushadhi Suvidha sanitary napkins** are provided at **₹1 per pad** to promote menstrual hygiene.
5. The **Sugam mobile app** helps citizens locate nearby Jan Aushadhi Kendras and check medicine availability.
6. **Janaushadhi Saptah 2026** included nationwide health check-up camps at **250+ locations** organised by the **Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI)**.



Static Information

1. **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)** was launched by the **Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**.
2. The scheme aims to **provide quality generic medicines at affordable prices** through dedicated **Jan Aushadhi Kendras**.
3. It promotes **generic drug prescriptions** to reduce healthcare expenditure.
4. **Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI)** is the implementing agency for the scheme.
5. **Generic medicines** contain the **same active ingredients, dosage, safety and efficacy** as branded medicines but are sold at lower prices.
6. **7 March** is observed as **Jan Aushadhi Divas** every year to promote awareness about generic medicines.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP):

1. It is implemented by the **Department of Pharmaceuticals** under the **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**.
2. It aims to provide **quality generic medicines at affordable prices** through Jan Aushadhi Kendras.
3. The scheme is implemented by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.

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: Press Information Bureau (PIB); Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.

Exercise LAMITIYE – 2026

News

An Indian Armed Forces contingent departed for Seychelles to participate in the joint military exercise LAMITIYE-2026, aimed at strengthening bilateral defence cooperation, interoperability and maritime security collaboration between the two countries.

Key Facts

1. Exercise LAMITIYE-2026 is a joint military exercise between India and Seychelles.
2. The exercise is conducted at the Seychelles Defence Academy (SDA) from 9–20 March 2026.
3. “Lamitiye” means “Friendship” in Creole language, highlighting strong bilateral ties.
4. The Indian contingent includes 55 personnel, mainly from the Indian Army, along with personnel from the Indian Navy and Indian Air Force.
5. Indian naval participation includes INS Talwar and C-17 aircraft for operational support.
6. The exercise focuses on joint training in counter-insurgency operations and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HADR) in a semi-urban environment.



Static Information

1. Seychelles is an archipelago nation in the western Indian Ocean, northeast of Madagascar.
2. Capital: Victoria.
3. It lies close to important Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean.
4. India and Seychelles maintain strong maritime security cooperation under India's Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) doctrine.
5. India has assisted Seychelles in coastal surveillance radar systems and defence capacity building.
6. Seychelles is strategically important for anti-piracy operations and maritime domain awareness in the western Indian Ocean.



Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Exercise LAMITIYE:

1. It is a joint military exercise between India and Seychelles.
2. The term "Lamitiye" means friendship in Creole language.
3. The exercise primarily focuses on mountain warfare training.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB)

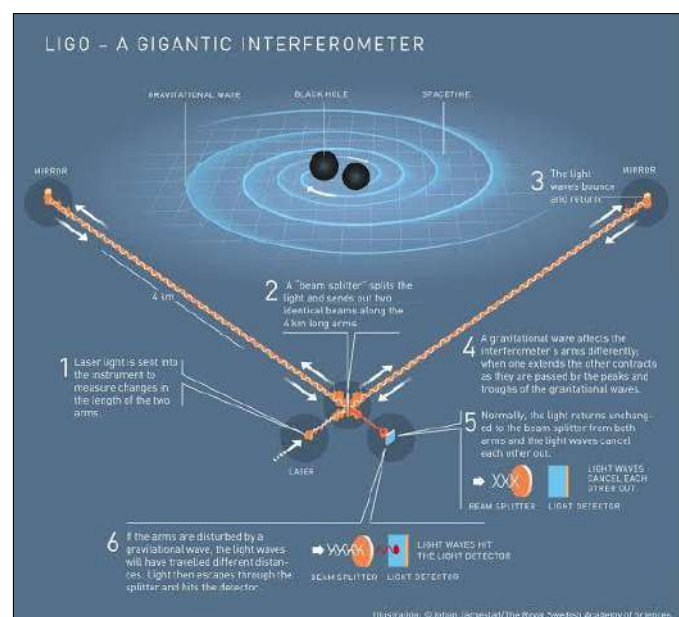
LIGO-India Gravitational Wave Observatory

News

The ₹1,600-crore LIGO-India gravitational wave observatory project in Hingoli district, Maharashtra, remains delayed as the construction tender floated in April 2025 is yet to be awarded.

Key Facts

1. The Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO)-India project is planned in Hingoli district, Maharashtra.
2. The project cost is approximately ₹1,600 crore.
3. The construction tender floated in April 2025 has not yet been awarded, delaying progress.



4. The project is being implemented by India's Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) in collaboration with the LIGO Laboratory (USA).
5. LIGO-India will work in synchronization with two existing LIGO detectors in the United States.
6. The project aims to be completed by around 2030, strengthening global gravitational wave detection networks.

Static Information

1. Gravitational waves are ripples in spacetime caused by massive cosmic events such as black hole mergers or neutron star collisions.
2. They were first detected in 2015 by LIGO in the United States.
3. The discovery confirmed a prediction of Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity (1915).
4. LIGO uses laser interferometry to detect extremely small distortions in spacetime.
5. Major gravitational wave observatories worldwide include:
 - LIGO (USA)
 - Virgo (Italy)
 - KAGRA (Japan)
6. LIGO-India will enhance the global network's ability to pinpoint the source of gravitational waves.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding gravitational waves:

1. They are ripples in spacetime predicted by Einstein's General Theory of Relativity.
2. Gravitational waves were first directly detected in 2015 by the LIGO observatory.
3. The LIGO-India project is being implemented by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

Source: *The Indian Express* / Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).

Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth (RAV) – 29th Convocation & Shishyopanayaniya Samskara

News

The **Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth** held its **29th Convocation and Shishyopanayaniya Samskara Ceremony** at **Banaras Hindu University**, highlighting Ayurveda's global potential and the Guru-Shishya tradition.

Key Facts

1. The event was held at **Swatantrata Bhawan, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi**.
2. It celebrated scholars trained under the **Certificate of Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth (CRAV)** programme.
3. **Union Minister of State (IC) for Ayush Prataprao Jadhav** addressed the gathering virtually.
4. The ceremony emphasized the **Guru-Shishya tradition**, a traditional mentorship system in Ayurveda education.



5. **Lifetime Achievement Awards** were conferred on eminent Ayurveda practitioners for contributions to the field.
6. The programme also highlighted initiatives to strengthen research, education, and global recognition of AYUSH systems.

Static Information

1. **Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth** is an autonomous organization under the **Ministry of Ayush**, established in **1988**.
2. Its objective is to **promote and preserve traditional Ayurvedic knowledge through training and research**.
3. It conducts programmes such as **CRAV (Certificate of Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth)** and **MRAV (Member of Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth)** for advanced training of Ayurvedic practitioners.
4. The institution promotes the **Guru–Shishya parampara** by enabling young physicians to train under experienced **Vaidyas**.
5. Ayurveda is one of the six recognized systems under **AYUSH: Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, and Homoeopathy**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth (RAV):

1. It is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Ayush.
2. It promotes the Guru–Shishya tradition in Ayurveda training.
3. It functions as the statutory regulator of medical education for all AYUSH systems.

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)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB); Ministry of AYUSH.

National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP)

News

The Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare informed the **Rajya Sabha** about the implementation and objectives of the **National Leprosy Eradication Programme** aimed at eliminating leprosy transmission in India.

Key Facts

1. **NLEP** is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** implemented under the **National Health Mission**.
2. The programme focuses on **early detection and prompt treatment** to control leprosy.

National Leprosy
Eradication Programme

- It provides **free services for prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation** through public health facilities across India.
- The scheme offers **technical and financial support to States and Union Territories** for implementation of activities such as surveillance and disability prevention.
- It uses the **Nikusth 2.0 digital platform** for surveillance, monitoring, and reporting of leprosy cases.
- The programme is aligned with the **World Health Organization Global Leprosy Strategy**, targeting **zero transmission, zero disability, and zero discrimination by 2027**.

Static Information

- The **Leprosy** (Hansen's disease) is caused by the bacterium **Mycobacterium leprae**.
- India achieved **leprosy elimination as a public health problem in 2005** (prevalence <1 case per 10,000 population), though cases still occur in some regions.
- The disease mainly affects **skin, peripheral nerves, mucosa of the upper respiratory tract, and eyes**.
- Treatment is provided through **Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT)** recommended by the **World Health Organization**.
- In India, **leprosy is a notifiable disease**, requiring mandatory reporting of cases.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP):

- It is implemented under the National Health Mission.
- It provides free diagnosis and treatment of leprosy through public health facilities.
- It aims to eliminate leprosy transmission and reduce stigma associated with the disease.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB); Ministry of Health & Family Welfare; WHO Global Leprosy Strategy

Pradhan Mantri–Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM)

News

The Government of India is strengthening public health infrastructure through **PM-ABHIM**, investing ₹64,180 crore to establish Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, Urban Health Centres, and Block Public Health Units to build a resilient healthcare system.

Key Facts

- ₹64,180 crore investment** is being utilised to strengthen India's public health infrastructure under PM-ABHIM.
- 9,519 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, 5,456 Urban Health Centres, and 2,151 Block Public Health Units** are being created.



3. The scheme focuses on **developing integrated public health laboratories and critical care infrastructure**.
4. **National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)** and **ICMR institutions** are being strengthened to improve disease surveillance.
5. Establishment of **Health Emergency Operation Centres and mobile hospitals** to handle future pandemics.
6. The mission aims to **detect and respond to public health emergencies effectively and improve health system resilience**.

Static Information

1. **Launched:** October **2021**.
2. **Announced by:** Prime Minister of India.
3. **Total Outlay:** ₹64,180 crore.
4. **Implementation Period:** 2021–22 to 2025–26.
5. **Objectives:**
 - Strengthen **public health infrastructure** at **primary, secondary, and tertiary levels**.
 - Improve **disease surveillance and diagnostic capacity**.
 - Prepare India for **future pandemics and health emergencies**.
6. **Key Components:**
 - Establishment of **Integrated Public Health Labs in districts**.
 - **Block Public Health Units** in all districts.
 - **Critical Care Hospital Blocks** in district hospitals.
 - Strengthening **NCDC and regional branches**.
 - Expansion of **Health Emergency Operation Centres**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding PM-ABHIM:

1. It aims to strengthen India's public health infrastructure and pandemic preparedness.
2. The mission includes establishment of Integrated Public Health Laboratories in districts.
3. It is implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB) / Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Van Allen Probe A (NASA)

News

NASA's **Van Allen Probe A**, a 600-kg satellite launched to study Earth's radiation belts, is reportedly falling back to Earth after completing its mission, raising discussions about possible re-entry risks.

Key Facts

1. **Van Allen Probes mission** was the first to use **two identical spacecraft (Probe A and Probe B)** to study Earth's radiation belts.



2. The spacecraft were **launched on 30 August 2012** for an initial two-year mission.
3. The probes studied **charged particles trapped in Earth's magnetic field** inside the Van Allen radiation belts.
4. The mission provided insights into **how particles are accelerated and lost within the radiation belts**.
5. The belts protect Earth from **cosmic radiation, solar storms, and harmful solar wind particles**.
6. The mission ended when the spacecraft **ran out of fuel and could no longer orient themselves toward the Sun**.

Static Information

1. **Mission Name:** Van Allen Probes Mission (formerly Radiation Belt Storm Probes – RBSP).
2. **Space Agency:** NASA.
3. **Objective:** Study the **structure and dynamics of Earth's Van Allen radiation belts**.
4. **Location of Radiation Belts:** Two torus-shaped zones of energetic charged particles surrounding Earth.
5. **Scientific Importance:**
 - Protect satellites and astronauts by improving **space weather prediction**.
 - Understanding **particle acceleration and magnetic field interactions**.
6. **Mission Duration:** 2012 – 2019 (extended beyond original two-year plan).

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Van Allen Probes Mission:

1. It was launched by NASA to study Earth's radiation belts.
2. The mission used two identical spacecraft operating in tandem.
3. The Van Allen radiation belts protect Earth from harmful charged particles from space.

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: NASA / NDTV News

National Additive Manufacturing Symposium (NAMS) 2026**News**

The **National Additive Manufacturing Symposium (NAMS) 2026** was organized on **6 March 2026** in **New Delhi** to promote digital manufacturing through additive manufacturing and strengthen India's advanced manufacturing ecosystem.

Key Facts

1. The symposium was organized by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.
2. It brought together **industry leaders, researchers, startups, and policymakers** to discuss developments in additive manufacturing.
3. The event aimed to promote **innovation, collaboration, and adoption of 3D printing technologies** across sectors.
4. Discussions focused on **applications in aerospace, healthcare, automotive, and defence manufacturing**.

5. The symposium highlighted the role of **digital manufacturing in strengthening India's industrial competitiveness**.
6. It also emphasized **skill development, research, and technology transfer** in additive manufacturing.

Static Information**1. Additive Manufacturing (AM):**

- Also known as **3D printing**, it creates objects by **adding material layer by layer using digital design models**.

2. National Strategy for Additive Manufacturing (NSAM):

- Released by the **Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY)** in 2022.

3. Key Targets under NSAM:

- Achieve **5% share in the global additive manufacturing market by 2025**.
- Create **50 India-specific technologies** and **100 new startups**.
- Develop **500 new products** and generate **skilled manpower** in the sector.

4. Applications: Aerospace, healthcare implants, automotive components, construction, defence equipment, and customized manufacturing.**UPSC Prelims Practice Question****Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Additive Manufacturing (3D Printing):**

1. It is a manufacturing process where objects are created layer by layer from digital models.
2. The National Strategy for Additive Manufacturing in India was released by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
3. Additive manufacturing is mainly used only in the aerospace sector.

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: Press Information Bureau (PIB) / Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)

INS Trikand's Port Call at Mauritius**News**

Indian Naval Ship INS Trikand concluded a port call at Port Louis, Mauritius, participating in Mauritius' 58th National Day celebrations and conducting maritime cooperation activities to strengthen India–Mauritius bilateral maritime partnership.

Key Facts

1. INS Trikand participated in the 58th Mauritius National Day Parade (12 March 2026) at Champ de Mars, Port Louis with a marching contingent, naval band and helicopter fly-past.
2. The ship was commanded by Captain Sachin Kulkarni during the visit.
3. The ship hosted a cultural evening onboard attended by Mauritian ministers and officials, with Dr. Mahend Gungapersad (Minister of Education and Human Resources) as Chief Guest.



4. Training capsules were conducted for Mauritius National Coast Guard personnel on harbour and sea watchkeeping, firefighting and damage control.
5. The warship was opened to visitors on 12 March 2026 and received more than 500 visitors.
6. After departure, INS Trikand carried out a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) and joint EEZ surveillance with CGS Valiant.

Static Information

1. INS Trikand is a Talwar-class stealth guided missile frigate of the Indian Navy.
2. It was commissioned in 2013 and built in Kaliningrad, Russia.
3. The Talwar-class ships are designed for surface, air and submarine warfare.
4. They are equipped with BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, anti-submarine rockets and advanced radar systems.
5. The visit aligns with India's maritime vision MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) aimed at strengthening maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
6. India and Mauritius maintain close maritime cooperation including coastal surveillance, EEZ monitoring and training support.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements about INS Trikand:

1. It is a Talwar-class stealth guided missile frigate of the Indian Navy.
2. It was built in Russia and commissioned in 2013.
3. It is designed only for anti-submarine 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)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB)

Acrylonitrile

News

Recent computer simulations suggest that acrylonitrile, an organic compound found on Saturn's moon Titan, may self-assemble into cell-like membrane structures, raising possibilities about potential forms of life in extraterrestrial environments.

Key Facts

1. Acrylonitrile has been detected in the atmosphere of Titan, Saturn's largest moon.
2. Computer models indicate that it can self-assemble into membrane-like structures similar to cell walls.
3. These structures could form azotosomes, potential cell membranes in extremely cold environments.
4. Titan has methane and ethane lakes, making it a candidate for studying exotic forms of life.
5. The compound is also widely used in industrial chemical production on Earth.

Static Information

1. Acrylonitrile (C_3H_3N) is an organic compound produced by catalytic reaction of propylene with ammonia (ammonoxidation process).
2. It is a colorless, volatile liquid with a sharp onion-like odor.
3. It is used to manufacture acrylic fibers, plastics, nitrile rubber and ABS plastics.
4. Acrylonitrile vapour is heavier than air and highly flammable.
5. Combustion of acrylonitrile produces toxic nitrogen oxides.
6. Exposure can cause skin, eye and respiratory irritation and severe toxic effects.

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

1. It is produced by catalytic reaction of propylene with ammonia.
2. It is used in manufacturing plastics and synthetic rubber.
3. Its vapour is lighter than air.

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

Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome (HGPS)

News

U.S.-based Sentyln Therapeutics, part of Zydus Lifesciences, signed a deal with South Korea's PRG S&T to develop **Progerinin**, an oral drug candidate for Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome.

Key Facts

1. HGPS is an **extremely rare genetic disorder** causing rapid ageing in children.
2. It occurs in about **1 in 4 million live births** worldwide.
3. It is caused by a mutation in the **LMNA gene**.
4. The mutation produces an abnormal protein called **progerin** instead of normal lamin A.
5. Most cases arise from a **new spontaneous mutation**, usually without family history.
6. Death often occurs due to complications of **severe atherosclerosis**, leading to heart attack or stroke at a young age.

Static Information

1. **LMNA gene** encodes lamin A and lamin C, which are structural proteins of the **nuclear lamina**.
2. HGPS is classified as a **rare genetic laminopathy**.
3. Children with HGPS usually appear normal at birth, with symptoms beginning in **early childhood**.
4. Major clinical problems include **growth failure, hair loss, aged-looking skin, and cardiovascular disease**.
5. There is **no complete cure**, and management focuses on supportive care and reducing cardiovascular complications.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome (HGPS):

1. It is caused by mutation in the LMNA gene.
2. It is a communicable disease affecting only adults.
3. Cardiovascular complications are a major cause of death in affected persons.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 3 only

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

Answer: (a)

Source: National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD); MedlinePlus Genetics.

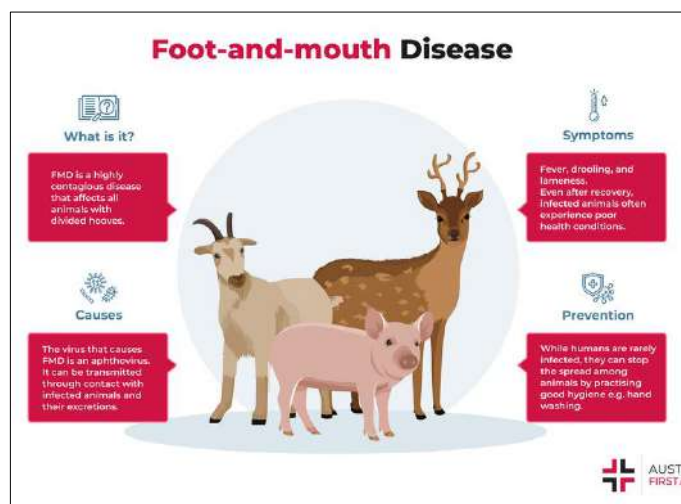
Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)

News

Recently, Gujarat launched an intensive statewide vaccination campaign to control **Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)**, aiming to protect livestock health, productivity, and farmer incomes across the state.

Key Facts

1. **Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)** is a **highly contagious viral disease** affecting **cloven-hoofed animals** such as cattle, buffaloes, sheep and goats.
2. It is caused by an **Aphthovirus** of the family **Picornaviridae**.
3. The disease causes fever and **blister-like lesions** in the mouth, on the tongue, feet and teats.
4. Though adult mortality is usually low, FMD leads to **serious production losses** and may be severe in young animals.
5. It is a **transboundary animal disease (TAD)** with major impact on livestock trade.
6. Vaccination is the principal preventive tool against the disease.



Static Information

1. The disease affects domestic and wild **cloven-hoofed animals**; pigs are also highly susceptible.
2. FMD virus has **seven immunologically distinct serotypes**: **O, A, C, SAT1, SAT2, SAT3 and Asia1**.
3. Infection spreads through direct contact, contaminated materials, and movement of infected animals or animal products.
4. It is considered one of the most economically important livestock diseases globally.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD):

1. It is a bacterial disease affecting only cattle.

2. It is classified as a transboundary animal disease.
3. Vaccination is an important preventive measure against it.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 3 only

Source: DD News;

NavIC / ISRO Second-Generation Satellites

News

NavIC is facing operational stress as multiple satellites have degraded or failed, raising concerns over India's regional navigation capability before the launch of additional second-generation NVS satellites.

Key Facts

1. NavIC is India's regional Position, Navigation and Timing (PNT) system.
2. The constellation has suffered from satellite depletion and clock failures, affecting service reliability.
3. First-generation IRNSS satellites used rubidium atomic clocks, some of which reportedly faced failures.
4. NVS-01 marked the beginning of the second-generation NavIC satellites.
5. Second-generation satellites are designed to improve service continuity and interoperability.
6. India's effort to build NavIC was shaped partly by the strategic need for an indigenous navigation system after denial of GPS data during the Kargil conflict.



Static Information

1. NavIC was earlier known as IRNSS (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System).
2. It provides two types of services: Standard Positioning Service (SPS) for civilian users and Restricted Service (RS) for authorised users.
3. NavIC has coverage over India and up to about 1500 km beyond its boundary.
4. NavIC satellites transmit signals in L1, L5 and S bands.
5. Applications include terrestrial, aerial and marine navigation, disaster management, vehicle tracking and timing services.

Practice Question

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

1. It is India's indigenous regional satellite navigation system.
2. It provides coverage over India and areas extending beyond its borders.
3. It provides only military navigation services.

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 / ISRO

PRODUCTION LINKED INCENTIVE (PLI) SCHEME – PHARMACEUTICALS

News

The government highlighted strong progress of the PLI scheme for pharmaceuticals, with investments exceeding targets and significant domestic production of APIs, reducing import dependence and boosting exports.

Key Facts

1. Approved in **2021** to boost domestic pharma manufacturing.
2. Investment reached **₹41,943 crore** (exceeding target ₹17,275 crore).
3. Sales generated: **₹3.35 lakh crore**, including exports worth ₹2.15 lakh crore.
4. **1988 products** manufactured; **191 produced for first time in India**.
5. Bulk Drugs PLI (2020) aims to reduce dependence on imports.
6. Manufacturing capacity of **56,800 metric tonnes/year** created.

Static Information

1. PLI Scheme launched in **2020** for multiple sectors.
2. Objective: **Enhance manufacturing & exports**.
3. Key focus: **APIs, KSMs, Drug Intermediates**.
4. Administered by: **Department of Pharmaceuticals**.
5. Bulk drug units classified as **Red Category industries** (environmental regulation).

Practice Question

Q1. With reference to the PLI Scheme for Pharmaceuticals, consider the following:

1. It focuses on APIs and drug intermediates.
2. It was launched before 2015.
3. It aims to reduce import dependence.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: PIB



AYUSH & GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY

News

Union Budget 2026–27 and India-EU FTA highlight expansion of AYUSH systems globally, emphasizing need for scientific validation and regulatory harmonisation.

Key Facts

1. AYUSH budget increased significantly (~₹4,400 crore)
2. Plan to establish All India Institutes of Ayurveda
3. EU FTA may allow AYUSH services in Europe
4. Emphasis on scientific validation & global standards
5. Need for independent clinical trials
6. Focus on integrating traditional & modern medicine

Static Information

1. AYUSH includes:
 - Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy
2. Governed by Ministry of AYUSH
3. Promotes holistic healthcare
4. WHO supports traditional medicine integration

Practice Question

Q1. Which systems are included under AYUSH?

1. Ayurveda
 2. Siddha
 3. Allopathy
- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

Source: The Hindu

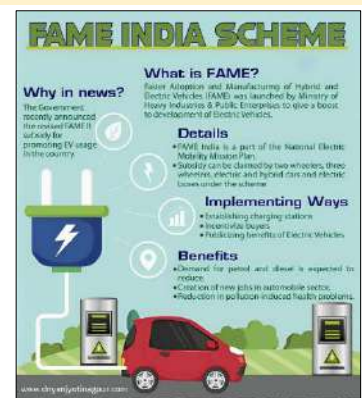
FAME India Scheme (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles)

News

The Government informed **Lok Sabha** about progress under the **FAME India Scheme**, highlighting achievements in EV adoption, charging infrastructure, and domestic manufacturing promotion.

Key Facts

1. The scheme was implemented in **two phases**: Phase-I (2015–2019) and Phase-II (2019–2024).



2. **Phase-I** supported about **2.8 lakh electric and hybrid vehicles** and sanctioned **425 e-buses** and **520 charging stations**.
3. **Phase-II** had a total outlay of **₹11,500 crore**, supporting **over 16.7 lakh electric vehicles**.
4. Around **5,195 electric buses** were deployed under Phase-II till January 2025.
5. A total of **9,159 EV public charging stations** have been installed under FAME-II.
6. Under the **PM E-DRIVE Scheme (from April 2024)**, funds are allocated for **R&D, e-bus deployment, EV charging infrastructure, and localization of EV components**.

Static Information

1. The **FAME India Scheme** was launched in **2015** under the **Ministry of Heavy Industries**.
2. It is part of the **National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020**.
3. The scheme aims to promote **electric mobility through demand incentives, technology development, and charging infrastructure**.
4. It focuses on **public and shared transport electrification**, including buses, three-wheelers, and two-wheelers.
5. It also encourages **domestic manufacturing of EV components and batteries** to reduce import dependence.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the FAME India Scheme:

1. It is implemented by the Ministry of Heavy Industries to promote electric mobility in India.
2. It provides incentives for electric vehicles and supports charging infrastructure development.
3. It is a component of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan.

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)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB); Ministry of Heavy Industries

National AI Skilling Initiative

News

The Government launched the **National AI Skilling Initiative** to strengthen AI capabilities and train 15,000 individuals in creative sectors like AVGC and media technologies.

Key Facts

1. The initiative is launched by the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** in partnership with **Google and YouTube**.
2. It aims to **train 15,000 participants** from creative and media sectors.
3. Implementation is carried out through the **Indian Institute of Creative Technologies**.
4. The programme will be conducted in **two phases**—foundational and advanced training.

- Phase I focuses on **AI fundamentals and generative AI learning paths**, including courses like AI Essentials and Prompting Essentials.
- Phase II emphasizes **advanced, hands-on and project-based specialization** for industry applications.

Static Information

- The initiative supports the **AVGC sector (Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics)**, a key focus area under India's digital economy push.
- AI skilling initiatives align with broader government programmes like **Digital India Programme**.
- India is promoting AI through policy frameworks such as **National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence by NITI Aayog**.
- AI applications are expanding in sectors like **media, healthcare, agriculture, governance, and education**.
- Skill development in emerging technologies is a priority under schemes like **Skill India Mission**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the National AI Skilling Initiative:

- It aims to train individuals in AI skills, particularly in creative sectors like animation and gaming.
- It is implemented in partnership with global technology companies such as Google.
- It focuses only on theoretical learning without practical or project-based training.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB); Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

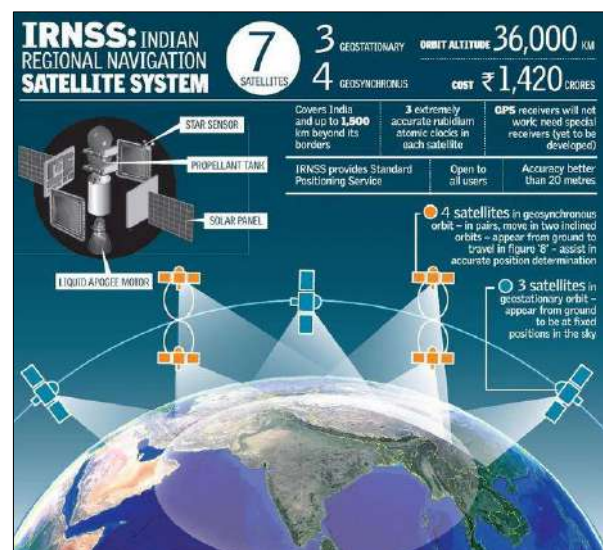
Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (Navic) – Issues & Launch Delays

News

ISRO faces technical and systemic challenges in its Navic programme, including atomic clock failures and satellite shortages, delaying next-generation launches aimed at strengthening India's indigenous navigation system.

Key Facts

- NavIC constellation requires **24 satellites**, but only **4 operational satellites** are currently functional.
- First-generation satellites (IRNSS-1A to 1I)** faced repeated failures of **rubidium atomic clocks**.
- Indigenous atomic clocks were introduced in **NVS-01 (2023)**, but concerns over reliability persist.
- Procurement delays** and lack of a dedicated agency (like GPS Directorate) affect system efficiency.



5. Limited **user equipment adoption** (tracking, receivers) hampers NavIC's widespread usage.
6. Planned integration with **L1 frequency signals** aims to improve interoperability with global systems.

Static Information

1. **NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation)** is India's **independent regional navigation satellite system**.
2. It provides **Position, Navigation and Timing (PNT)** services over India and up to **1500 km beyond**.
3. Managed by: **ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation)**.
4. Consists of satellites in:
 - **Geostationary Orbit (GEO)**
 - **Geosynchronous Orbit (GSO)**
5. Two types of services:
 - **Standard Positioning Service (SPS)** – for civilian use
 - **Restricted Service (RS)** – encrypted for military use
6. Works similar to:
 - USA's GPS
 - Russia's GLONASS
 - EU's Galileo
7. Atomic clocks are crucial for **precise time measurement**, which determines accurate positioning.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding NavIC:

1. NavIC provides global navigation coverage similar to GPS.
2. It uses both geostationary and geosynchronous satellites.
3. Atomic clocks are essential for accurate navigation signals.

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, ISRO Official Website, PIB India

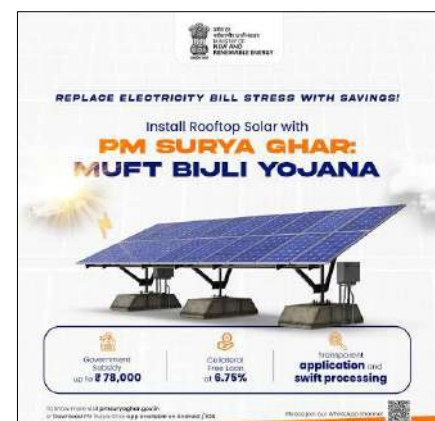
Pm Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana –Rooftop Solar Expansion

News

PM Surya Ghar Yojana accelerates India's energy transition, achieving 9.56 GW rooftop solar capacity addition by March 2026, promoting household solar adoption and reducing electricity costs and carbon emissions.

Key Facts

1. **9.56 GW rooftop solar capacity** installed under the scheme by March 2026.



2. Scheme aims to provide **free electricity up to 300 units/month** for households.
3. Targets installation in **1 crore households** across India.
4. Focus on **subsidy support and simplified application process** via National Portal.
5. DISCOMs play a key role in **implementation and grid integration**.
6. Promotes **domestic manufacturing** and job creation in solar sector.

Static Information

1. **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana** launched in **2024**.
2. Implemented by: **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**.
3. Key objectives:
 - Increase share of **renewable energy** in energy mix
 - Reduce **household electricity bills**
 - Promote **decentralized solar energy production**
4. Financial assistance:
 - Central subsidy directly transferred to beneficiaries
5. Rooftop Solar System:
 - Installed on residential rooftops
 - Connected to grid via **net metering**
6. Contributes to India's target of:
 - **500 GW non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030**

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana:

1. It aims to provide up to 300 units of free electricity per month to households.
2. It is implemented by the Ministry of Power.
3. It promotes decentralized renewable energy generation.

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 India, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), The Hindu

QADER CRUISE MISSILE**News**

Recently, Iran reportedly fired Qader cruise missiles targeting the USS Abraham Lincoln, highlighting rising maritime tensions and showcasing its naval strike capabilities in strategic waters.

Key Facts

1. Qader is a **medium-range, shore-based anti-ship cruise missile** developed by Iran.
2. It is an **upgraded version of the Noor missile**, derived from Chinese designs.
3. Reported range varies between **120–300 km**.
4. Designed to target **warships and oil tankers** at sea.



5. Carries a **~200 kg high-explosive warhead**.
6. Uses a **turbojet engine** and follows a **sea-skimming trajectory** to evade radar detection.

Static Information**About Cruise Missiles:**

1. A cruise missile is a **guided missile** that flies at **low altitude** to avoid radar detection.
2. Powered by **jet engines** (turbojet/turbofan).
3. Equipped with advanced guidance systems:
 - **GPS navigation**
 - **Inertial Navigation System (INS)**
 - **Terrain Contour Matching (TERCOM)**
4. Speed ranges from **subsonic to supersonic (Mach 0.8–3)**.
5. Range classification: **Short to medium range (50–2500 km)**.
6. Launch platforms: **land, sea, and air-based systems**.

Examples:

1. BrahMos
2. Nirbhay
3. Tomahawk

Practice Question ()

Q1. With reference to cruise missiles, consider the following statements:

1. They generally fly at low altitudes to avoid radar detection.
2. They are powered only by rocket engines.
3. They can be launched from land, sea, and air platforms.
4. They use guidance systems such as GPS and inertial navigation.

Which of the statements given above is/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: The Economic Times (ET) + Defence Research sources

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP)**News**

The Government of India has opened nominations for Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2026 to recognize outstanding contributions in science, technology, and innovation across various categories.

Key Facts

1. National award for achievements in science and technology.
2. Open to scientists, technologists, and innovators.
3. Includes Indian origin individuals abroad.
4. Four categories: Vigyan Ratna, Vigyan Shri, Vigyan Yuva-SSB, Vigyan Team.
5. Encourages young scientists (up to 45 years).



6. Recognizes both individual and team contributions.

Static Information

1. Administered by RVP Secretariat under CSIR.
2. Under Ministry of Science & Technology.
3. Guided by Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.
4. Replaced earlier science awards to streamline recognition system.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar is administered by CSIR.
2. Vigyan Yuva award is meant for scientists above 60 years.
3. It recognizes contributions in science and innovation.

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)

Source: DD News

IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX)

News

Indian Navy hosted IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) TTX 2026 at Kochi to enhance coordination among regional navies and address non-traditional maritime security threats in the Indian Ocean Region.

Key Facts

1. Conducted at **Maritime Warfare Centre, Southern Naval Command, Kochi.**
2. Focused on **non-traditional maritime security threats.**
3. Aimed to improve **coordination, information sharing, and decision-making** among navies.
4. Included **table-top exercise (TTX)** format for operational planning.
5. Participating countries included **Bangladesh, France, Indonesia, Kenya, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Timor-Leste.**
6. Strengthens **regional maritime security frameworks.**
7. Reinforces **IONS as key platform for cooperation in Indian Ocean Region.**



Static Information

1. **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)**
 - Launched in **2008** by Indian Navy.

- A **voluntary initiative** for cooperation among Indian Ocean littoral states.
- Aims to enhance **maritime security and regional collaboration**.
- 2. **Structure of IONS**
 - Based on **rotating chairmanship**.
 - Includes **biennial meetings of naval chiefs** and working groups.
- 3. **Objectives**
 - Promote **maritime cooperation and mutual understanding**.
 - Address issues like **HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief)** and maritime security.
- 4. **Significance of IMEX**
 - Builds **interoperability among navies**.
 - Enhances **collective response to maritime threats** such as piracy, trafficking, and disasters.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) was launched by the Indian Navy in 2008.
2. IONS is a legally binding military alliance among Indian Ocean countries.
3. IMEX is conducted to enhance coordination among participating navies.

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)

India must use the AYUSH opportunity

Source: The Hindu

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper II (Health, Governance), GS Paper III (Economy, Science & Technology)

Introduction:

India's renewed push towards AYUSH systems signals a strategic attempt to integrate traditional medicine into mainstream healthcare and global markets. With rising budgetary support and international trade opportunities, the challenge lies in balancing heritage with scientific credibility.

Key Issues

1. **Scientific Validation Gap**
 - AYUSH systems often lack rigorous, peer-reviewed clinical evidence required for global acceptance.
2. **Regulatory Challenges**

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **AYUSH:** Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy.
2. **Ministry:** Ministry of AYUSH oversees policy and promotion.
3. **National AYUSH Mission:** Focuses on infrastructure, education, and service delivery.
4. **Traditional Medicine Term:** TCAM (Traditional, Complementary, and Alternative Medicine).
5. **Global Regulation:** European markets require strict safety, efficacy, and quality standards.

- Entry into EU markets demands compliance with strict pharmaceutical standards, which many AYUSH products may not yet meet.
- 3. Conflict of Interest in Research**
 - Studies are often funded or overseen by the same institutions promoting AYUSH, affecting credibility.
- 4. Narrative vs Evidence Debate**
 - Public discourse sometimes frames scientific scrutiny as cultural bias, complicating objective evaluation.
- 5. Integration vs Parallel Systems**
 - Difficulty in harmonizing AYUSH with modern medicine without undermining either system.

Global Practices

China	Successfully globalised Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) with strong state-backed research and standardisation.
European Union	Emphasises evidence-based approval and pharmacovigilance.
USA	Allows complementary medicine but under strict regulatory oversight (FDA norms).
Comparison	India is transitioning from cultural legitimacy to scientific validation, unlike China which invested early in standardisation.

Indian Policies / Committees

National AYUSH Mission (NAM)	Infrastructure and service expansion.
AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres	Integration with primary healthcare.
All India Institutes of Ayurveda (AIIA)	Advanced education and research.
Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine	Standard-setting body.

Way Forward

- 1. Strengthen Evidence Base**
 - Promote independent, peer-reviewed clinical trials for AYUSH therapies.
- 2. Regulatory Harmonisation**
 - Align AYUSH standards with global benchmarks (EU, WHO).
- 3. Institutional Independence**
 - Separate research funding and evaluation from promotional bodies.
- 4. Integrated Healthcare Model**
 - Encourage complementary use alongside modern medicine with clear protocols.
- 5. Global Branding with Credibility**
 - Position AYUSH as evidence-backed wellness systems, not just traditional alternatives.

Conclusion

AYUSH represents both a cultural asset and an economic opportunity for India. Its global success will depend not on assertion of tradition alone, but on the ability to meet scientific and regulatory expectations. A balanced approach can enable India to lead in integrative healthcare while maintaining credibility.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding AYUSH systems:

1. AYUSH includes Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy.

2. AYUSH products entering European markets are exempt from regulatory standards.
3. National AYUSH Mission focuses on strengthening infrastructure and service delivery.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: A

Mains Question

Q2. Discuss the challenges and opportunities in integrating AYUSH systems into global healthcare frameworks.

The evolving diagnostic landscape for tuberculosis

Source: The Hindu

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper II (Health), GS Paper III (Science & Technology)

Introduction:

India's fight against tuberculosis is witnessing a significant shift with the integration of new diagnostic technologies. From traditional sputum microscopy to AI-enabled imaging and molecular testing, the focus is now on early, accurate, and accessible detection to accelerate TB elimination.

Key Issues

1. **Uneven Access to Molecular Diagnostics**
 - Despite availability of CBNAAT and TrueNat, access remains limited in remote and vulnerable areas.
2. **Diagnostic Delays**
 - Delays in sputum collection, transportation, and testing affect early treatment initiation.
3. **Challenges in Detecting Asymptomatic TB**
 - Symptom-based screening misses a significant proportion of TB cases.
4. **Difficulty in Diagnosing Special Groups**
 - Children and elderly often cannot produce sputum; extra-pulmonary TB remains hard to detect.
5. **Infrastructure and Human Resource Gaps**
 - Need for trained personnel and stronger primary healthcare systems to support new technologies.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **World TB Day:** Observed on World Tuberculosis Day.
2. **WHO Recommendation:** Use of near point-of-care molecular tests (NAAT).
3. **National Programme:** National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP).
4. **CBNAAT:** Cartridge-Based Nucleic Acid Amplification Test for TB detection and drug resistance.
5. **TrueNat:** Indigenous molecular diagnostic platform developed in India.
6. **TB Burden:** India accounts for the highest TB burden globally.

Global Practices

WHO-led Strategy	Emphasis on rapid molecular diagnostics and "test and treat" approach.
Africa	Use of GeneXpert systems for decentralised TB testing.
High-income countries	Integration of digital tools and AI for screening and surveillance.
Comparison	India is progressing toward decentralised and AI-assisted diagnostics but still faces scale and access challenges compared to developed systems.

Indian Policies / Committees

NTEP (National TB Elimination Programme) Aims to eliminate TB by 2025.

Pradhan Mantri TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan	Community participation and support.
ICMR Role	Evaluation and validation of diagnostic technologies.
Nikshay Portal	Digital platform for TB patient tracking and management.

Way Forward

- 1. Universal Access to Rapid Diagnostics**
 - Expand molecular testing facilities at primary healthcare level.
- 2. Adoption of Non-Sputum Tests**
 - Promote saliva-based and biomarker-driven diagnostics for vulnerable groups.
- 3. Strengthen Last-Mile Delivery**
 - Improve sample transport systems and mobile diagnostic units.
- 4. Integrate AI and Digital Tools**
 - Scale AI-enabled chest X-ray screening for early detection.
- 5. Invest in Research & Innovation**
 - Support indigenous technologies and operational research for real-world effectiveness.

Conclusion

India's evolving TB diagnostic ecosystem reflects a transition toward precision, speed, and inclusivity. Strengthening this ecosystem through innovation, accessibility, and system integration will be crucial for achieving TB elimination goals in a sustainable manner.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding tuberculosis diagnosis:

1. CBNAAT can detect both TB infection and drug resistance.
2. TrueNat is an indigenous molecular diagnostic tool developed in India.
3. Symptom-based screening alone is sufficient to detect all TB cases.

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

Mains Question

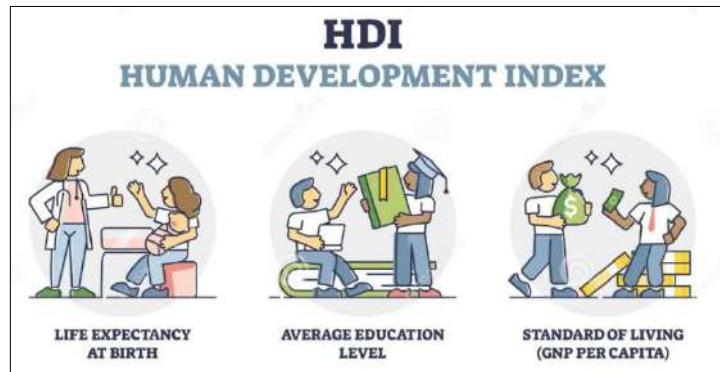
Q2. Examine the role of emerging diagnostic technologies in strengthening India's tuberculosis elimination strategy. Discuss associated challenges.

Student Notes 📝

Society, History and Miscellaneous

Human Development Index (HDI)

The **Human Development Index (HDI)**, developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), measures development by focusing on **people's well-being** rather than just economic growth. It evaluates how countries perform in health, education, and living standards, offering a broader perspective than GDP alone.



What is HDI?

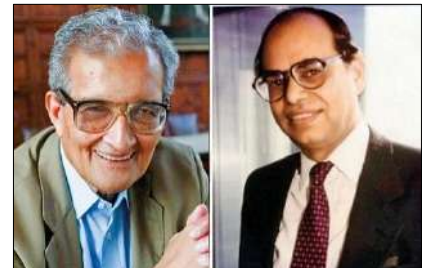
HDI is a composite index that measures average achievement in three key dimensions:

1. **Long and Healthy Life**
 - Measured by *Life Expectancy at Birth*
2. **Access to Knowledge**
 - Measured by *Mean Years of Schooling* (adults aged 25+)
 - *Expected Years of Schooling* (for children entering school)
3. **Decent Standard of Living**
 - Measured by *Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (PPP)*

The HDI score ranges between **0 and 1**, calculated using the **geometric mean** of the three dimension indices.

Historical Background

HDI was introduced in **1990** in the first Human Development Report by UNDP. It was inspired by economist **Dr. Mahbub ul Haq** and Nobel laureate **Amartya Sen**, who argued that development should expand people's freedoms and choices, not merely increase income. Since then, HDI has been a central component of UNDP's annual Human Development Reports (HDRs).



Classification of Countries (UNDP)

1. **Very High Human Development:** 0.800 and above

Inequality and Related Indices

To address HDI limitations, UNDP introduced supplementary indices:

1. **Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI)** – Adjusts HDI for inequality in health, education, and income.
2. **Gender Development Index (GDI)** – Compares HDI between men and women.
3. **Gender Inequality Index (GII)** – Measures gender disparities in health, empowerment, and labour participation.

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) – Measures overlapping deprivations

2. **High Human Development:** 0.700–0.799
3. **Medium Human Development:** 0.550–0.699
4. **Low Human Development:** Below 0.550

Components of HDI

1. **Health Dimension**
 - Life expectancy reflects overall health conditions, nutrition, and healthcare quality.
2. **Education Dimension**
 - Combines mean and expected years of schooling, capturing knowledge and skill levels.
3. **Standard of Living**
 - Measured through GNI per capita (PPP), reflecting purchasing power and income access.

India and Inequality

1. IHDI shows **~31% loss** in HDI value due to inequality.
2. India ranked **108th in GII (UNDP 2024)**.
3. Women's labour participation remains below 30%.

India's HDI Performance

1. **HDI 2023:** 0.685 (Rank: 130 out of 193 countries, HDR 2025)

State-Level Variation

1. High HDI: Kerala, Goa, Himachal Pradesh
2. Lower HDI: Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand

Government Initiatives to Improve HDI

1. Ayushman Bharat Yojana – Free healthcare coverage
2. National Education Policy – Education reforms
3. Skill India Mission – Vocational training
4. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi – Income support
5. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Housing assistance
6. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao – Girls' education
7. Digital India – Digital inclusion

Challenges of HDI

1. Oversimplifies complex realities into a single score
2. Data lag and quality concerns
3. Does not directly measure sustainability, governance, or informal work
4. Comparability issues across time due to methodology changes

Practice MCQ

Q.1 With reference to the Human Development Index (HDI), consider the following statements:

1. HDI uses the arithmetic mean of health, education, and income indices.
2. It was introduced in 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme.
3. The Income dimension is measured using GNI per capita adjusted for PPP.

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: B. 2 and 3 only

(Statement 1 is incorrect because HDI uses the geometric mean.)

LEADERBOARD		
HDI ranking and value (2023)		
Rank	Country	HDI value
1	Iceland	0.972
2	Norway	0.970
2	Switzerland	0.970
4	Denmark	0.962
5	Germany	0.959
5	Sweden	0.959
7	Australia	0.958
8	Hong Kong, China (SAR)	0.955
8	Netherlands	0.955
17	United States	0.938
130	India	0.685

HDI: Human Development Index
Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2025

Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended greetings on the occasion of Attukal Pongala

News / Introduction

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** extended greetings on the occasion of **Attukal Pongala**, highlighting its importance for **Nari Shakti** and praying for prosperity, health, harmony and social togetherness.

Key Facts fro the article

1. The Prime Minister conveyed greetings on the sacred occasion of **Attukal Pongala**.
2. The festival holds **special significance for women (Nari Shakti)**.
3. It symbolizes **prosperity, good health, harmony and togetherness in society**.
4. The greetings emphasized the **cultural and spiritual importance of the festival**.

3. Static Information

Attukal Pongala Festival

1. Celebrated annually at **Attukal Bhagavathy Temple** in **Thiruvananthapuram**.
2. Dedicated to **Goddess Attukal Bhagavathy**, believed to be an incarnation of **Kannaki** (from Tamil epic **Silappatikaram**).
3. Considered **one of the largest gatherings of women for a religious activity**.
4. The festival is famous for the ritual "**Pongala**", where women cook a sweet offering made of **rice, jaggery and coconut**.
5. Recognized in **Guinness World Records** (2009) for **largest gathering of women for a religious event**.
6. Usually held during **February–March** (**Malayalam month of Kumbham**).

Prelims Practice Question

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding Attukal Pongala:

1. It is celebrated at Attukal Bhagavathy Temple in Tamil nadu.
2. The ritual involves women preparing offerings made mainly of rice and jaggery.
3. It is associated with the worship of Goddess Durga at Kamakhya Temple.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: 2 only

Source

- Press Information Bureau (PIB)



Repatriation of Thirumangai Alvar Bronze Statue

Introduction

The **Ashmolean Museum** in **Oxford** has returned a 16th-century bronze statue of **Thirumangai Alvar** to the Government of India.

Key Facts

1. The statue belongs to the **Sundararaja Perumal Temple** in **Tamil Nadu**.
2. The artifact was handed over during a ceremony at the **High Commission of India in London**.
3. The **Ashmolean Museum** had acquired the bronze statue in **1967** through a private collector.
4. A **1957 photograph** from temple archives helped establish the statue's provenance and confirm it originally belonged to the temple.
5. In **2020**, temple authorities filed a police complaint after discovering that a **modern replica had replaced the original idol**.
6. The Indian High Commission formally sought its return, leading to the statue's repatriation after provenance research.

Static Information

Thirumangai Alvar

1. **Thirumangai Alvar** was one of the **12 Alvars**, Tamil poet-saints devoted to **Vishnu**.
2. Lived around the **8th century CE** and contributed extensively to the **Nalayira Divya Prabandham**.
3. Alvars played a major role in the **Bhakti movement in South India**.

Ashmolean Museum

1. The **Ashmolean Museum** is the **University of Oxford's** museum of art and archaeology, established in **1683**.
2. It is considered **one of the world's oldest public museums**.

Practice Question

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding the Alvars:

1. They were Tamil poet-saints devoted primarily to Lord Vishnu.
2. Their hymns are compiled in the Nalayira Divya Prabandham.
3. They were associated with the spread of the Bhakti movement in South India.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Source: The Hindu



Tamil Nadu Women Entrepreneur Empowerment Scheme (TWEES)

News

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister **M.K. Stalin** launched the **Tamil Nadu Women Entrepreneur Empowerment Scheme (TWEES)** to encourage **one lakh women entrepreneurs over five years** and strengthen women-led enterprises in the state.

Key Facts

1. The initiative focuses on **supporting women-led micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** in the state.
2. Along with the scheme launch, the government **inaugurated welfare centres for construction workers and elderly citizens**.
3. The Chief Minister also **laid the foundation for three new Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)** in the state.
4. Several **infrastructure and development projects across sectors such as fisheries and warehousing** were also announced.

Static Information

1. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)

- Defined under the **MSME Development Act, 2006**.
- Revised classification (2020):

Category	Investment Limit	Turnover Limit
Micro Enterprise	Up to ₹1 crore	Up to ₹5 crore
Small Enterprise	Up to ₹10 crore	Up to ₹50 crore
Medium Enterprise	Up to ₹50 crore	Up to ₹250 crore

1. Importance of MSMEs in India

- Contribute around **30% to India's GDP**.
- Account for about **45% of exports**.
- Provide employment to **over 110 million people**.

2. Women Entrepreneurship Promotion (Government initiatives)

- **Stand-Up India Scheme (2016)**
- **PM Mudra Yojana**
- **Mahila Coir Yojana**

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding MSMEs in India:

1. The classification of MSMEs is based on both **investment and annual turnover**.
2. The MSME sector contributes significantly to India's exports and employment generation.
3. The MSME Development Act was enacted in **1995**

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, only

Answer: (d)

Source: The Hindu / Government of Tamil Nadu / Ministry of MSME.

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) will host a breakout session on Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana and Divyangjan Sahara

News

The **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)** will host a **breakout session on Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana and Divyangjan Sahara Yojana** during the **Post-Budget Webinar 2026–27**.

. Key Facts

1. The session is part of the **Post-Budget Webinar Series 2026–27** organized following the **Union Budget 2026–27**.
2. It will focus on initiatives to **strengthen inclusion, accessibility, and economic empowerment of persons with disabilities (Divyangjan)**.
3. Special emphasis will be placed on **Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana** (skill development) and **Divyangjan Sahara Yojana**.
4. The webinar aligns with the theme **“Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas – Fulfilling Aspirations of People.”**
5. Participants will include **policymakers, industry leaders, disability rights advocates, training institutions, and entrepreneurs**.
6. Discussions will also focus on **assistive technology ecosystem and expanding employment opportunities for persons with disabilities**.

Static Information

1. The **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)** functions under the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**.
2. It is responsible for **policy formulation, implementation of programmes, and welfare of persons with disabilities in India**.
3. The **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016** replaced the **Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995**.
4. The RPwD Act expanded the **number of recognized disabilities from 7 to 21 categories**.
5. It provides **4% reservation in government jobs and 5% reservation in higher education institutions** for persons with benchmark disabilities.
6. Major schemes include **Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)**, **Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)**, and **Unique Disability ID (UDID)**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016:

1. It increased the number of recognized disabilities from **7 to 21 categories**.
2. It provides **4% reservation in government jobs for persons with benchmark disabilities**.
3. The Act is implemented by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.

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: Press Information Bureau (PIB), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

International Recognition and Promotion of Durga Puja

News

The Government of India is promoting Durga Puja globally through cultural outreach, funding and the Incredible India 2.0 campaign, highlighting the festival's recognition as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Key Facts

1. Grant-in-aid is provided to international organizations to promote Durga Puja globally under the Global Engagement Scheme of the Ministry of Culture.
2. In September 2025, Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) collaborated with Ippan Shadan Houjin Indojinno Tsudoi, representing the Indian Bengali community in Tokyo, to showcase Durga Puja celebrations.
3. During the Intergovernmental Committee Meeting (8–13 December 2025) at Red Fort, Delhi, a Dhunchi Naach performance was presented before representatives from 190+ countries and UNESCO officials.
4. The government is promoting Durga Puja internationally through digital marketing, global media outreach and cultural showcases under Incredible India 2.0.
5. Sangeet Natak Akademi formed an expert committee to document the festival's rituals, artistic traditions and socio-cultural practices.



Static Information

1. Durga Puja was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2021.
2. It is one of the largest public festivals in India, mainly celebrated in West Bengal, especially Kolkata.
3. The festival marks the victory of Goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasura, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil.
4. UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) includes traditions, rituals, performing arts, festive events, knowledge systems and craftsmanship.
5. Sangeet Natak Akademi is the nodal agency for safeguarding India's Intangible Cultural Heritage elements under the Ministry of Culture.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Durga Puja:

1. Durga Puja is included in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
2. Sangeet Natak Akademi is the nodal body for safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage elements in India.
3. Durga Puja celebrates the victory of Goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasura.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: D

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB) / Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

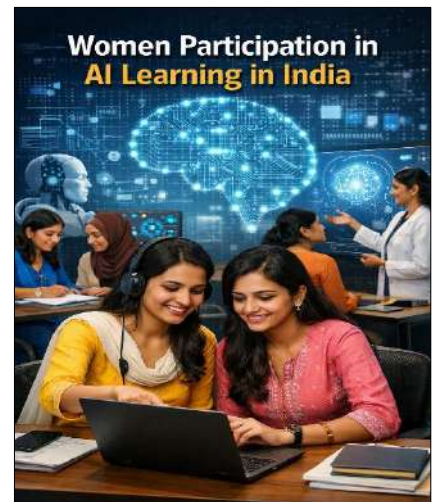
Women Participation in AI Learning in India

News

A Coursera report revealed that 31.2% of AI learners in India are women, highlighting progress in digital skill adoption but also indicating a gender gap compared with the global average of 36%.

Key Facts

1. Women constituted 31.2% of AI course learners in India on online platforms in the last year.
2. The global share of women in AI courses is 36%, indicating a gender gap in India.
3. In 2024, women's participation in AI learning was 2.2 percentage points lower than the current level.
4. The findings highlight how the digital gender divide influences access to emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.
5. Women are more likely than men to complete Generative AI (GenAI) courses once enrolled, reflecting higher persistence.
6. The share of women completing courses is about 3 percentage points higher than men in India.



Static Information

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks that normally require human intelligence such as learning, reasoning and problem-solving.
2. Generative AI (GenAI) is a subset of AI that can generate new content such as text, images, audio and code using machine learning models.
3. The National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (2018) was released by NITI Aayog to promote AI development in India.
4. India focuses on AI in key sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, education, smart mobility and smart cities.
5. The government has launched initiatives like IndiaAI Mission (2024) to strengthen AI research, infrastructure and skills.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) initiatives in India:

1. The National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence was released by NITI Aayog.
2. Generative AI refers to AI systems capable of creating new content such as text, images or audio.
3. The IndiaAI Mission aims to strengthen AI research, infrastructure and talent in India.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: C

Source: *The Hindu* / Coursera Global Skills Report.

Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), 2026

News

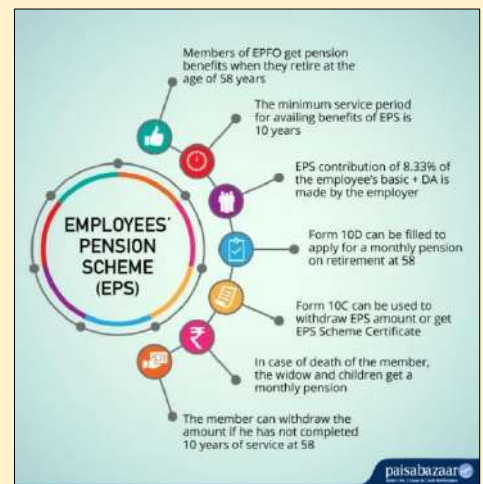
The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation** approved the **Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), 2026**, removing a clause that earlier allowed employees limited time to opt for higher pension contributions above the ₹15,000 wage ceiling.

Key Facts

1. The **Central Board of Trustees of EPFO** approved the new **EPS-2026** framework.
2. The pensionable salary ceiling under the scheme remains **₹15,000 per month**.
3. The clause was originally introduced during **EPS amendments in 2014** replacing an earlier unlimited option for higher pension contributions.
4. In **November 2022**, the **Supreme Court of India** allowed eligible employees and pensioners to apply for **higher pension based on actual salary**.
5. About **15.24 lakh applications** for higher pension were submitted to EPFO by **January 31, 2025**, with many already processed.

Static Information

1. **Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS)** was launched in **1995** and is administered by the **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation** under the **Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952**.
2. It provides **pension benefits to employees in the organised sector** after retirement.
3. **Employer contribution** to EPF is **12% of wages**, of which **8.33% goes to EPS** (subject to wage ceiling).
4. Pension benefits include **superannuation pension, early pension, disability pension, and family pension**.
5. The scheme is overseen by the **Central Board of Trustees**, which is a **tripartite body representing government, employers, and employees**.



Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS):

1. It is administered by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation.
2. The scheme operates under the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.
3. The entire 12% employer contribution to EPF is transferred to the Employees' Pension Scheme.

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)

Source: The Hindu; Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) website.

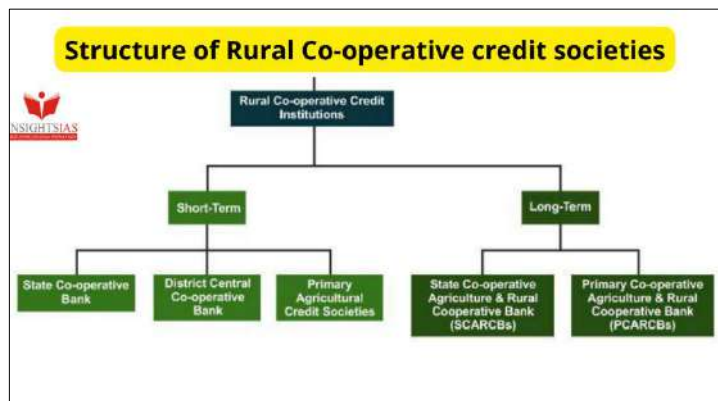
World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector

News

The Government informed the **Rajya Sabha** about the implementation of the **World's Largest Grain Storage Plan** to expand decentralized foodgrain storage through **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)**.

Key Facts

- Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)** are selected through **District Cooperative Development Committees (DCDCs)** under the plan.
- Identification of PACS is done in locations with storage demand identified by agencies like **Food Corporation of India, NAFED, and NCCF**.
- Selected PACS must have **positive net worth for the last two years** and **profitability for the last three financial years**.
- The **minimum storage capacity** of proposed godowns should preferably be **500 metric tonnes or more**.
- The plan converges multiple schemes including **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)**, **Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure (AMI)**, **Sub Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)**, and **PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME)**.
- 33% subsidy** is provided under AMI for foodgrain storage construction, while AIF provides **interest subvention benefits**.



Static Information

- The **World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector** was announced by the Government of India in **2023** to strengthen **decentralized foodgrain storage infrastructure**.
- The initiative is implemented under the **Ministry of Cooperation**.
- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development** acts as the **subsidy channelizing agency** for projects under the Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure scheme.
- State Cooperative Banks (StCBs)** and **District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs)** serve as primary lending institutions for PACS.
- The plan aims to **reduce post-harvest losses, strengthen food security, and enable farmers to store produce and access credit against it**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector:

1. It aims to create decentralized foodgrain storage infrastructure at the level of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies.
2. NABARD acts as the subsidy channelizing agency under the Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure scheme.
3. The plan is implemented exclusively through the Food Corporation of India.

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)

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

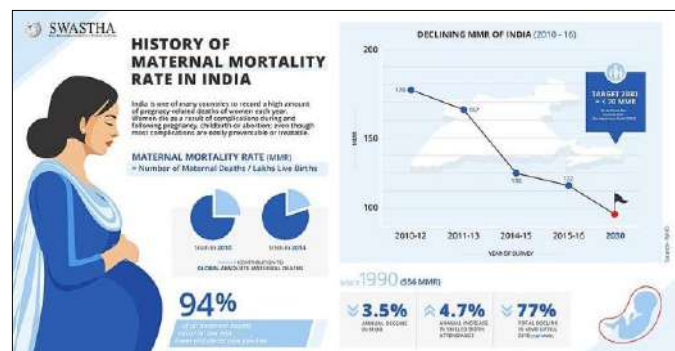
Steps Taken for Reducing Maternal Mortality in India

News

The Government of India reported that the **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** has declined to **88 per lakh live births**, supported by institutional deliveries, cash incentives, specialist care, and strengthened maternal health infrastructure.

Key Facts

1. India's **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** declined to **88 per 1 lakh live births** according to recent government data.
2. Over **5.93 crore institutional deliveries** have been conducted under government health initiatives.
3. **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)** and **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK)** promote institutional deliveries through financial incentives.
4. **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)** ensures **free antenatal check-ups and specialist care** for pregnant women.
5. **LaQshya programme** aims to improve **quality of care in labour rooms and maternity operation theatres**.
6. Infrastructure improvements include **First Referral Units (FRUs)**, **maternal health wings**, and **birth waiting homes**.



Static Information

1. **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR):** Number of maternal deaths per **100,000 live births** during a given time period.
2. **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY):**
 - Launched in **2005** under the **National Health Mission (NHM)**.
 - Provides **cash incentives to promote institutional deliveries**, especially among poor pregnant women.

3. Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK):

- Launched in **2011**.
- Ensures **free delivery services, drugs, diagnostics, blood, and transport** for pregnant women and sick infants.

4. Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA):

- Provides **free antenatal check-ups on the 9th day of every month** by specialist doctors.

5. LaQshya Programme:

- Launched in **2017** to improve **quality of care during labour and childbirth** in public health facilities.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding maternal health initiatives in India:

1. Janani Suraksha Yojana provides cash incentives to promote institutional deliveries.
2. Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan provides free antenatal check-ups on the 9th day of every month.
3. LaQshya programme focuses on improving labour room and maternity operation theatre quality.

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: Press Information Bureau (PIB) / Ministry of Health & Family Welfare / Sample Registration System (SRS)

Gajapati Empire Inscription Discovery

News

A Telugu medieval inscription linked to the Gajapati rulers of Odisha has been discovered on a stone pillar at the Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.

Key Facts

1. The inscription was found at the Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Ramachandrapuram Agraharam, Guntur.
2. It is associated with the Gajapati dynasty of Odisha.
3. The Gajapati Empire ruled from 1434 to 1541 CE.
4. It was founded by Kapilendra Deva of the Suryavamsa lineage.
5. The dynasty succeeded the Eastern Ganga rulers.
6. At its peak, the empire extended from the Ganges (near Hooghly) to the Kaveri River.



Static Information

1. The Gajapati Empire was a major medieval power in eastern India.
2. The capital was initially Cuttack.
3. Under Prataparudra Deva, the capital shifted to Kataka (near Konark region).
4. The dynasty patronized Odia literature, architecture and performing arts.
5. The Sun Temple at Konark (UNESCO World Heritage Site) reflects the architectural heritage of the region.
6. The empire declined due to conflicts with Vijayanagara and Golconda Sultanate.

Practice Question

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the Gajapati Empire:

1. It succeeded the Eastern Ganga dynasty in Odisha.
2. It was founded by Kapilendra Deva.
3. At its peak, its territory extended from the Ganges to the Kaveri.

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)

Source: Deccan Chronicle

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

News

The government informed Parliament that **PMKVY 4.0** is currently being implemented to enhance youth employability, with over **1.64 crore candidates trained across more than 35 sectors**.

Key Facts

1. PMKVY is implemented by the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**.
2. The scheme provides **short-term training, upskilling and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**.
3. Over **1.64 crore candidates** have been trained under the programme.
4. Training has been provided across **35 sectors**.
5. **PMKVY 4.0** is the current phase of the scheme.
6. A **NITI Aayog evaluation** indicated that about **94% of employers were willing to hire PMKVY-trained candidates**.

Static Information

1. **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** was launched in **2015**.
2. It is the flagship scheme of the **Skill India Mission**.
3. Objective: Provide **industry-relevant skill training to youth**.
4. It is implemented through **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)**.
5. Training focuses on **industry-based standards and certification**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):

1. It was launched in 2015.
2. It is implemented by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
3. It is a component of the Skill India Mission.

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)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB)

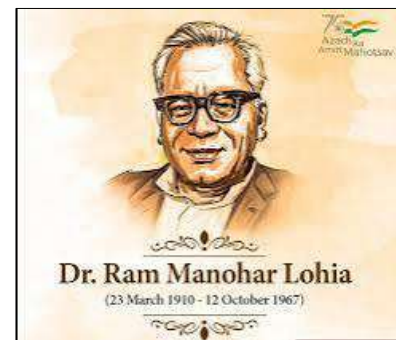
Tribute To Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia

News

Prime Minister paid tribute to Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia on his birth anniversary, highlighting his role in social justice, anti-colonial struggle, and participatory governance.

Key Facts

1. Socialist leader and freedom fighter
2. Strong advocate of social justice and equality
3. Promoted anti-caste politics and gender equality
4. Associated with Congress Socialist Party
5. Critic of centralized governance



Static Information

1. Born: 1910
2. Known for "Sapta Kranti" (Seven Revolutions) concept
3. Influenced post-independence socialist politics
4. Emphasized decentralisation and Panchayati Raj

Practice Question

Q1. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia is associated with:

1. Socialist movement
2. Sapta Kranti
3. Swadeshi Movement

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: PIB

DIAGNOSTIC LANDSCAPE FOR TUBERCULOSIS

News/Introduction

On World TB Day, experts highlighted advancements in TB diagnostics including AI-based X-rays, molecular tests, and need for improved access, early detection, and innovation in India.

Key Facts

1. WHO recommended **point-of-care molecular tests (NAAT)**.
2. Increased use of **AI-enabled chest X-rays (CXR)** for screening.
3. Indigenous **Truenat technology** adopted in India.
4. Shift from sputum microscopy to **molecular diagnostics**.
5. Challenges in **diagnosing pediatric and extra-pulmonary TB**.
6. Emphasis on **biomarkers and non-sputum-based tests**.

Static Information

1. TB caused by **Mycobacterium tuberculosis**.
2. Spread via **airborne droplets**.
3. India runs **National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP)**.
4. Target: TB elimination by **2025 (India)** vs WHO target 2030.
5. BCG vaccine provides limited protection.
6. MDR-TB and XDR-TB are major global concerns.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. TB is caused by a virus.
2. Truenat is an indigenous molecular diagnostic tool.
3. TB spreads through airborne transmission.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: The Hindu Editorial

Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026

News

The **Lok Sabha** passed the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026** amid Opposition walkout, proposing changes to gender identification provisions and strengthening protections for transgender persons.

Key Facts

1. The Bill was passed by **voice vote in Lok Sabha** amid a walkout by Opposition parties.
2. It proposes **removal of the right to self-determination of gender**, replacing it with a **medical board-based examination**.



3. The Bill introduces provisions to **prevent forced or compelled gender transition through medical interventions**.
4. It aims to **strengthen punishments for crimes against transgender persons**.
5. Several political parties and civil society groups **criticized the Bill as unjust**.
6. The government stated that the Bill seeks to **empower and protect the transgender community**.

Static Information

1. The original **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** prohibits discrimination in **education, employment, healthcare, and access to public services**.
2. It provides for a **certificate of identity** issued by the District Magistrate.
3. The Act established the **National Council for Transgender Persons** to advise the government.
4. In the **NALSA v. Union of India**, the Supreme Court recognized **transgender persons as a third gender** and upheld the **right to self-identification**.
5. The Act includes provisions for **welfare measures, rehabilitation, and social inclusion of transgender persons**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding transgender rights in India:

1. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 prohibits discrimination against transgender persons.
2. The NALSA judgment (2014) recognized the right to self-identification of gender.
3. The National Council for Transgender Persons is a constitutional body.

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)

Source: The Hindu; Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Beavers & Climate Change Mitigation

News

A study by University of Birmingham highlights that beavers can help mitigate climate change by creating wetlands that reduce carbon dioxide release and enhance ecosystem-based climate regulation mechanisms.

Key Facts

1. Beavers can **engineer riverbeds and wetlands**, helping trap carbon.
2. Their dams **slow water flow**, reducing soil erosion and carbon release.
3. Wetlands created by beavers act as **carbon sinks**.
4. Study emphasizes **nature-based solutions** for climate change mitigation.
5. Research conducted by **University of Birmingham**.
6. Highlights role of biodiversity in **ecosystem resilience and climate regulation**.



Static Information

Scientific name: **Castor spp. (Castor fiber, Castor canadensis).**

1. Habitat:
 - Freshwater ecosystems like **rivers, streams, marshes, and ponds**
2. Known as “**ecosystem engineers**” due to their ability to modify habitats.
3. Key features:
 - Build dams using **wood, mud, and stones**
 - Create wetlands that support biodiversity
4. Distribution:
 - Found in **North America, Europe, and parts of Asia**
5. Conservation status:
 - **IUCN Red List: Least Concern**
6. Ecological importance:
 - Improve water retention
 - Enhance groundwater recharge
 - Support diverse flora and fauna

Practice Question (UPSC Prelims Pattern)

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding beavers:

1. Beavers are known as ecosystem engineers due to their ability to construct dams.
2. They are primarily found in marine ecosystems.
3. Beaver-created wetlands can act as carbon sinks.

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: Down To Earth (DTE), IUCN, WWF

SONOWAL KACHARIS**News**

A recent study documented 39 medicinal plants used by the Sonowal Kachari tribe of Assam, highlighting their rich indigenous knowledge in treating various ailments.

Key Facts

1. Sonowal Kacharis are an **indigenous community of Northeast India**.
2. Majority population resides in **Assam**, where they are the **third-largest plains tribe**.
3. Smaller populations are found in Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya.
4. Recognized as a **Scheduled Tribe (Plains)** in Assam.
5. They belong to **Mongoloid origin** and linguistically fall under the **Tibetan language family**.
6. Traditionally associated with **gold washing (panning)** during the Ahom period.
7. Presently engaged mainly in **agriculture** (rice, betel nut, cotton, sweet potatoes).

Static Information

1. Sonowal Kacharis are part of the larger **Bodo-Kachari ethnic group**.
2. Their traditional belief system blends **Hinduism with animistic practices**.
3. Worship includes **nature spirits and village deities**, along with Hindu gods.
4. **Lord Shiva** is regarded as their principal deity.
5. They maintain **village shrines** rather than formal temple worship.
6. Language spoken: primarily **Assamese**, with influences from Tibeto-Burman languages.
7. They are listed under **Scheduled Tribes (ST)** by the Government of India (Ministry of Tribal Affairs).

Practice Question (UPSC Prelims Pattern)

Q1. With reference to the Sonowal Kachari tribe, consider the following statements:

1. They are recognized as a Scheduled Tribe in Assam.
2. They belong to the Dravidian linguistic family.
3. Traditionally, they were associated with gold panning.
4. Lord Vishnu is their primary deity.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Source: The Times of India (TOI) + Ministry of Tribal Affairs (Government of India)

GRUHA SUGAM PORTAL**News**

The National Housing Bank launched the Gruha Sugam Portal to enable seamless digital home loan access for government and defence personnel, promoting financial inclusion and efficient housing finance delivery.

Key Facts

1. Portal is designed specifically for **defence personnel, paramilitary forces, and government employees** (central & state).
2. Enables **digital application for home loans** through administrative units.
3. Eliminates the need to **physically visit banks or financial institutions**.
4. Acts as a **unified digital marketplace** ensuring transparency and best loan options.
5. Provides **seamless integration with NHB and lending institutions**.
6. Includes features like **grievance redressal, consumer protection, and online chat support**.

Static Information**About National Housing Bank (NHB):**

1. Established under the **National Housing Bank Act, 1987**.
2. Functions as the **apex financial institution for housing finance** in India.
3. Fully owned by the **Government of India** since 2019.
4. Works under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Finance**.
5. **Regulation of Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)** is done by Reserve Bank of India.

6. Key roles:
 - Promotion and development of housing finance institutions
 - Refinancing support to HFCs
 - Supervision and grievance redressal
7. Headquarters: **New Delhi**

Practice Question (UPSC Prelims Pattern)

Q1. With reference to the Gruha Sugam Portal, consider the following statements:

1. It is launched by the Reserve Bank of India.
2. It provides a unified digital platform for housing loan access.
3. It is exclusively designed for private sector employees.
4. It eliminates the need for physical visits to banks for loan processing.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 2 and 4 only

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB) + National Housing Bank (NHB)

LAQSHYA SCHEME –

News

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare reported expansion of LaQshya Scheme, with over 1244 labour rooms and 917 maternity operation theatres certified, enhancing maternal and newborn care quality nationwide.

Key Facts

1. **1244 Labour Rooms (LRs) and 917 Maternity Operation Theatres (MOTs)** certified under LaQshya.
2. **151 LRs and 107 MOTs** have undergone **recertification**.
3. Certification involves **200+ measurable elements across 70 standards**.
4. Facilities are assessed by **independent evaluators** for infrastructure and service quality.
5. Focus areas include **infection control, patient rights, clinical care, and quality management**.
6. Requires **minimum 70% score overall and in each key area** for certification.

Static Information

About LaQshya Scheme:

1. Launched in **2017** under the **National Health Mission (NHM)**.
2. Aim: **Improve quality of care in labour rooms and maternity OTs**.
3. Focus on **reducing maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity**.
4. Implements **Labour Room Quality Improvement Initiative**.
5. Aligns with **Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS 2022)**.
6. Covers:
 - **Public health facilities (district hospitals, CHCs, medical colleges)**
7. Key components:

- Infrastructure strengthening
- Skilled human resources
- Standardized protocols
- Continuous monitoring through **Common Review Missions (CRM)**

Practice Question

Q2. With reference to the LaQshya Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. It aims to improve the quality of care in labour rooms and maternity operation theatres.
2. It is implemented under the National Health Mission.
3. It applies only to private hospitals.
4. Certification under the scheme requires meeting defined quality standards.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1, 2 and 4 only

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB) + Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Shyamji Krishna Varma

News

Prime Minister paid tribute to freedom fighter Shyamji Krishna Varma on his death anniversary, highlighting his contributions to India's freedom struggle and nationalist activities abroad.

Key Facts

1. Born on **4 October 1857** in Mandvi, Kachchh (Gujarat).
2. Indian **freedom fighter, lawyer, and journalist**.
3. Founder of **Indian Home Rule Society (1905, London)**.
4. Established **India House in London** to promote nationalist ideas.
5. Published nationalist journal **"The Indian Sociologist"**.
6. First President of **Bombay Arya Samaj**; follower of **Dayanand Saraswati**.
7. Promoted **self-rule (Swaraj)** among Indians in Britain.



Static Information

1. **Indian Home Rule Society (IHRS)**
 - Founded in **1905 in London**.
 - Aimed to **mobilize support for Indian independence abroad**.
2. **India House**
 - A **student residence in London (1905–1910)**.
 - Became a hub for **revolutionary nationalist activities**.
3. **The Indian Sociologist**
 - Monthly journal advocating **Indian nationalism and political reform**.
4. Associated with leaders like **Bhikaji Cama, Dadabhai Naoroji, and S.R. Rana**.

5. Part of the extremist nationalist movement outside India.**Practice Question****Q1. Consider the following statements:**

1. Shyamji Krishna Varma founded the Indian Home Rule Society in London.
2. India House was established to promote nationalist ideas among Indian students abroad.
3. The journal "Kesari" was published by Shyamji Krishna Varma.

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)

Protecting Women's Rights Amid Conflict and Instability

Source: The Hindu (International Women's Day Editorial)

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper II** – International Relations, Human Rights, Role of International Institutions
- **GS Paper I** – Women Issues, Social Empowerment
- **GS Paper IV** – Ethics, Justice and Human Dignity

Introduction:

International Women's Day, observed annually on March 8, has evolved from its early labour movement roots into a global platform advocating gender equality and women's rights. Recognised officially by the United Nations in 1977, the day now represents both celebration and a call for action.

However, rising global conflicts, displacement and political instability have intensified vulnerabilities faced by women and girls. The editorial highlights that protecting women's rights in conflict zones is not merely a humanitarian issue but a matter of justice, peacebuilding and sustainable development.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article**1. Gender-Based Violence in Conflict Zones**

- Women and girls often face sexual violence, exploitation and abuse during armed conflicts, sometimes used deliberately as a weapon of war.

2. Displacement and Loss of Livelihoods**Key Facts for Prelims**

1. **International Women's Day:** Celebrated on **8 March** annually; recognised by the **United Nations in 1977**.
2. **2026 Theme:** *"Rights, Justice, Action: For All Women and Girls."*
3. **UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000):** Focuses on **Women, Peace and Security (WPS)**, emphasising women's participation in peacebuilding and protection in conflict zones.
4. **UN Women:** United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment.
5. **Geneva Conventions (1949):** International humanitarian law protecting civilians during war.
6. **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5):** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

- Wars and instability lead to displacement, disrupting families and depriving women of livelihood opportunities and social protection.
- 3. Mental Health and Trauma**
 - Women in conflict zones frequently suffer from depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to violence and displacement.
- 4. Exclusion from Peace Negotiations**
 - Despite evidence that women's participation strengthens peace agreements, their representation remains extremely limited in global peace processes.
- 5. Weak Implementation of Global Commitments**
 - Although frameworks such as **UNSCR 1325** exist, the gap between commitments and implementation remains significant.

Global Practices

Nordic Countries (Norway, Sweden)	Actively promote women's participation in peace negotiations and diplomatic mediation.
Rwanda	After the genocide, women played a major role in reconstruction and governance, with one of the highest female parliamentary representations globally.
Colombia Peace Process	Women's groups were formally included in peace negotiations with the FARC, influencing gender-sensitive provisions.
United Nations Peacekeeping	The UN increasingly deploys female peacekeepers , improving community trust and protection outcomes.
Comparative Insight	Peace processes that include women often produce more durable agreements and more inclusive governance outcomes.

Indian Policies / Committees

1. **National Policy for Women (Draft)** – Focuses on gender justice and empowerment.
2. **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005** – Safeguards women against violence.
3. **National Commission for Women (NCW)** – Statutory body advocating women's rights.
4. **India's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (under discussion)** – Aims to align with UNSCR 1325 principles.
5. **Indian Women in UN Peacekeeping Missions** – India has deployed female peacekeepers in several missions, including Liberia.

Way Forward

1. **Ensure Women's Participation in Peace Processes**
 - Mandate inclusion of women negotiators in international and national peace dialogues.
2. **Strengthen Legal Protection Mechanisms**
 - Enforce international humanitarian law to prevent gender-based violence.
3. **Provide Comprehensive Support Systems**
 - Expand healthcare, mental health services and livelihood programmes for women in conflict zones.
4. **Promote Women's Leadership in Reconstruction**
 - Encourage women's representation in governance and rebuilding institutions.
5. **Improve Monitoring and Accountability**

- Strengthen UN and national monitoring systems to track implementation of Women, Peace and Security commitments.

Conclusion

Women's rights cannot be separated from global peace and stability. Conflicts disproportionately affect women, yet their voices remain underrepresented in peacebuilding processes. Strengthening legal protections, ensuring meaningful participation and translating global commitments into real action are essential steps toward building inclusive and lasting peace.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 deals with Women, Peace and Security.
2. International Women's Day was officially recognised by the United Nations in 1977.
3. The Geneva Conventions focus primarily on regulating international trade during conflicts.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. "Armed conflicts disproportionately affect women, yet their participation in peacebuilding remains limited." Discuss the significance of women's involvement in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. (250 words)

Obesity Complicates the Nutrition Challenge

Source: *The Hindu* (Editorial)

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper II – Health, Nutrition & Human Development

Introduction:

India's nutrition landscape is undergoing a structural shift where **undernutrition and obesity coexist**, creating a complex public health challenge. While food insecurity and inadequate calorie intake persist among many children, rising consumption of ultra-processed foods and sedentary lifestyles have increased obesity levels. This **"double burden of malnutrition"** complicates policymaking and poses long-term risks for India's demographic and economic potential.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article

1. Double Burden of Malnutrition

- India faces both **calorie deficiency and rising obesity** among children.

Example: Many children still lack sufficient calories while others consume high-sugar and high-fat processed foods.

Key Facts for Prelims

- The **World Obesity Federation** releases the **World Obesity Atlas**, which monitors global obesity trends.
- According to the **World Obesity Atlas**, **over 40 million children in India are overweight or obese**.
- India ranks **second globally in the number of overweight and obese children**.
- Childhood obesity significantly increases the risk of **Type 2 Diabetes** and **Cardiovascular Disease** later in life.
- Nutritional deficits are often intergenerational and linked to maternal dietary patterns.

2. Rapid Dietary Transition

- Urbanisation and increased availability of processed foods have shifted dietary patterns in a short time span.
- Unlike developed countries where the transition occurred gradually, India experienced this shift within **about 15 years**.

3. Lifestyle Changes and Sedentary Behaviour

- Reduced physical activity, screen exposure and sedentary habits among children contribute significantly to obesity.

4. Limited Nutrition Awareness

- The article highlights the **lack of reliable information on healthy diets**, leading to poor dietary choices.

5. Socioeconomic Dimension of Obesity

- Obesity is no longer limited to affluent households.
- Example: Families with limited resources often rely on **cheap, calorie-dense processed foods**, increasing obesity risks.

Global Practices

United Kingdom	The government introduced sugar taxes on sugary drinks and mandatory calorie labelling to discourage unhealthy consumption.
Japan	Schools implement comprehensive nutrition education programmes and balanced school meal systems.
Mexico	A national tax on sugar-sweetened beverages was introduced to reduce obesity rates.

These examples show that **regulation, awareness, and school-based interventions** are widely used strategies.

Indian Policies / Committees

POSHAN Abhiyaan	Launched to address malnutrition through improved nutrition services, monitoring, and awareness campaigns.
Central Board of Secondary Education Directive	Schools have been advised to display information about recommended sugar intake to promote awareness.
UNICEF Studies	Research indicates that poor nutrition outcomes among children are often linked to maternal dietary habits and awareness levels .
Food Safety Regulations	The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) promotes initiatives such as Eat Right India to encourage healthy eating.

Way Forward

- Strengthen Nutrition Awareness** Promote large-scale public education campaigns on balanced diets and healthy food choices.
- Regulate Junk Food Marketing** Introduce stricter regulations on advertising and availability of ultra-processed foods targeting children.
- Promote Healthy School Environments** Expand nutrition education, physical activity programmes, and healthy meal initiatives in schools.
- Improve Access to Healthy Foods** Encourage affordability and accessibility of fruits, vegetables, and protein-rich foods for low-income households.
- Integrate Nutrition with Public Health Policy** Address obesity within broader strategies tackling non-communicable diseases and maternal health.

Conclusion

India's nutrition challenge is evolving from a singular focus on undernutrition to a **more complex double burden involving both deficiency and excess**. Addressing childhood obesity requires a comprehensive approach that integrates awareness, regulatory interventions, and improved access to healthy food. Balanced policies that recognise socioeconomic realities will be essential to safeguard the health of future generations.

Prelims Practice MCQ

Q1. With reference to the “double burden of malnutrition,” consider the following statements:

1. It refers to the simultaneous presence of undernutrition and obesity within a population.
2. Childhood obesity increases the risk of non-communicable diseases in adulthood.
3. It occurs only in high-income countries.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: B

Mains Practice Question

Q2. India increasingly faces a “double burden of malnutrition.” Examine the causes of rising childhood obesity and suggest policy measures to address the issue. (250 words)

Bitter Milk – Detecting Violation of Rules in Time is Better than Stringent Penalties

Source: *The Hindu* (Editorial)

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper II – Governance, Public Health & Food Safety Regulation

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper II – Governance, Public Health & Food Safety Regulation

Introduction:

Food safety is a critical component of public health governance in India. The recent incident in Rajamahendravaram, Andhra Pradesh, where milk contaminated with a toxic industrial chemical led to multiple deaths and hospitalisations, highlights the importance of effective regulatory oversight. The editorial argues that timely detection of violations and preventive regulation are more effective than imposing severe penalties after harm has already occurred.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article

1. Failure of Early Detection Mechanisms

- The contamination reportedly continued despite complaints about a bitter taste in the milk. This indicates weak surveillance and delayed regulatory response.

Key Facts for Prelims

- The incident involved milk contaminated with Ethylene Glycol, a toxic substance used in antifreeze and industrial applications.
- Police have invoked Sections 103 (punishment for murder) and 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.
- Food safety in India is regulated by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.
- Milk distribution in India occurs through both organised cooperatives and large informal

2. Weak Oversight in Informal Supply Chains

- A large share of milk in India is distributed by small vendors and local dairies where cold-chain monitoring and hygiene inspections are limited.

3. Regulatory Lapses and Institutional Accountability

- The article raises concerns that the dairy unit allegedly operated without a safety licence for over a decade, pointing to failures by both local authorities and regulators.

4. Risk of Over-Criminalisation

- Strict criminal charges against small vendors could drive informal operators out of the formal market or further into unregulated channels.

5. Impact on Consumer Trust

- Milk is a staple in Indian households. Contamination incidents can erode public confidence in local dairy supplies and shift demand towards large organised producers.

Global Practices

European Union	The EU maintains strict food traceability systems allowing authorities to track food products across the supply chain.
United States	The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) conducts routine inspections and mandates safety standards for dairy products.
New Zealand	Advanced dairy-export systems rely on integrated farm-to-processing monitoring to ensure quality and safety.

These systems emphasise preventive regulation, traceability, and continuous monitoring.

Indian Policies / Committees

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India	Responsible for setting food standards, licensing food businesses, and enforcing food safety regulations.
Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006	Provides the legal framework for regulating food manufacturing, storage, distribution, and sale.
National Dairy Development Board Initiatives	Promote improved milk collection, quality testing, and cooperative-based dairy systems.
Cooperative Dairy Networks	Large dairy cooperatives such as Amul demonstrate structured quality control through organised supply chains.

Way Forward

1. Strengthen Early Detection Systems

- Expand regular testing and monitoring of milk quality at local collection centres.

2. Improve Regulation of Informal Dairy Supply Chains

- Provide affordable testing kits and training for small dairy operators.

3. Enhance Institutional Accountability

- Ensure regular inspections and strict enforcement of licensing norms by local authorities.

4. Encourage Safe Reporting Mechanisms

- Introduce safe-harbour provisions to encourage early reporting of contamination incidents.

5. Promote Cooperative and Traceable Supply Chains

- Strengthen organised dairy networks with transparent quality control systems.

Conclusion

The Rajamahendravaram incident highlights systemic weaknesses in food safety monitoring. While strict penalties signal seriousness, they cannot substitute effective regulatory oversight. A preventive approach that emphasises timely detection, strong inspections, and accountable institutions is essential to protect public health and maintain trust in essential food supplies.

Prelims Practice MCQ

Q1. With reference to food safety regulation in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India regulates food safety under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
2. Ethylene glycol is a toxic industrial chemical that can cause poisoning if ingested.
3. Food safety regulation in India is primarily the responsibility of the Reserve Bank of India.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: B

Mains Practice Question

Q2. Food safety governance requires strong preventive regulation rather than only punitive action. Discuss in the context of India's food supply chains. (250 words)

Should men get paternity leave in India?

Source: The Hindu (Editorial)

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper II – Governance, Social Justice, Welfare Policies

Introduction:

The debate on paternity leave in India reflects a broader shift in understanding family roles, labour participation, and gender equity. Traditionally, caregiving has been seen as a maternal responsibility, but evolving socio-economic realities—such as increasing female workforce participation and nuclear family structures—have brought attention to the need for shared parental responsibilities. The issue is no longer merely a welfare provision but intersects with labour rights, gender justice, and child development outcomes.

Key Issues**1. Gendered Division of Labour**

- Caregiving continues to be disproportionately assigned to women, reinforcing traditional stereotypes.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended 2017):** Provides **26 weeks of paid maternity leave** in India.
2. **Paternity Leave (India):**
 - No universal legal provision in private sector.
 - Central government employees get **15 days of paternity leave**.
3. **ILO Perspective:** Encourages shared parental leave to promote gender equality.
4. **Nordic Countries (e.g., Sweden, Norway):** Have structured **parental leave systems**, including “use-it-or-lose-it” paternity quotas.
5. **Labour Force Participation:** Female participation in India remains relatively low, partly due to caregiving burdens.

- Lack of paternity leave institutionalises this imbalance.
- 2. Impact on Women's Workforce Participation**
 - Women face career breaks and slower progression due to childcare responsibilities.
 - Employers may perceive women as "costlier hires".
- 3. Absence of Legal Mandate**
 - Unlike maternity leave, paternity leave is not uniformly codified.
 - Leads to inconsistency across sectors and organisations.
- 4. Child Development Concerns**
 - Early parental bonding is crucial.
 - Limited paternal involvement affects holistic child development.
- 5. Informal Sector Exclusion**
 - A large portion of India's workforce is informal, where even maternity benefits are weakly implemented.
 - Extending paternity leave becomes more complex in such contexts.

Global Practices

Sweden	Offers ~480 days of parental leave, with a fixed portion reserved for fathers.
Norway	Provides dedicated "father's quota" to encourage paternal participation.
Japan	Legally generous paternity leave, though cultural uptake remains low.
USA	No universal paid parental leave; relies on employer-based provisions.
Insight	Countries combining legal mandates + cultural incentives show higher male participation in childcare.

Indian Policies / Committees

Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017	Focused on women; indirectly highlighted need for balanced caregiving.
Second National Commission on Labour	Recommended gender-neutral leave policies.
Draft Paternity Benefit Bill (2017)	Proposed 15 days leave for all sectors, but not enacted.
Labour Codes (recent reforms)	No explicit universal provision for paternity leave.

Way Forward

- 1. Introduce a Legal Framework**
 - Enact a **gender-neutral parental leave policy** applicable across sectors.
- 2. Incentivise Employer Adoption**
 - Provide tax or compliance incentives to firms offering paternity benefits.
- 3. Gradual Expansion Model**
 - Start with formal sector → extend to gig and informal sectors via social security mechanisms.
- 4. Awareness and Behavioural Change**
 - Promote shared parenting through campaigns to address cultural resistance.
- 5. Integrate with Labour Codes**
 - Embed paternity/parental leave within broader labour reforms for uniform implementation.

Conclusion



The question of paternity leave in India is not solely about extending a benefit to men; it is about redefining caregiving as a shared societal responsibility. A balanced approach—combining legal reform, institutional support, and cultural change—can enhance gender equity, improve workforce outcomes, and support child development. As India aspires toward inclusive growth, aligning family policies with contemporary realities will be an important step forward.

Prelims MCQ**Q1. Consider the following statements:**

1. The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 provides 26 weeks of paid leave to all working women in India.
2. There is currently no universal statutory provision for paternity leave in the private sector in India.
3. Nordic countries have adopted parental leave models that include reserved quotas for fathers.

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: (b) 2 and 3 only

(Statement 1 is not universally applicable to all categories of women workers.)

Mains Question

Q2. "Paternity leave is not merely a welfare measure but a tool for advancing gender equality and labour market efficiency." Discuss in the Indian context.

Beyond the rhetoric of the north-south divide

Source: Editorial Page the hindu

GS Paper: GS Paper II & III

Relevance: Federalism, Regional Inequality, Inclusive Development, Political Economy

Introduction:

India's development story is increasingly marked by a structural divergence between the northern and southern regions. While earlier narratives emphasised convergence, recent economic, demographic, and political trends suggest a deepening divide—raising concerns about federal balance, representation, and long-term national cohesion.

Key Issues**1. Economic Divergence**

- Southern states have higher per capita income and human development.
- Northern states lag in social indicators, creating uneven development patterns.

2. Political Representation Imbalance**Key Facts for Prelims**

1. **Indian Federal Structure:** Constitutionally federal with a strong unitary bias.
2. **Finance Commission:** Recommends tax devolution; uses criteria like population, income distance, area, etc.
3. **Delimitation Exercise:** Redistribution of parliamentary seats based on population (next expected post-2026 freeze).
4. **Per Capita Income Variation:** Southern states generally have higher per capita incomes than northern states.
5. **Human Development Indicators:** States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu perform better in literacy, health, and life expectancy.



- Delimitation based on population may reduce the South's parliamentary influence.
- Raises concerns of "representation vs contribution" imbalance.

3. Fiscal Federalism Concerns

- Prosperous states feel penalised for better population control and governance.
- Redistribution mechanisms may create political friction.

4. Internal Inequality within Regions

- Even within southern states, inequality persists (e.g., urban vs rural, elite vs labour).
- Growth benefits are not uniformly distributed.

5. Migration and Social Tensions

- Migration from North to South creates "internal outsider" dynamics.
- Limited political integration of migrants affects social cohesion.

Global Practices

United States	Wealthy states like California contribute more but retain strong representation balance via Senate.
Germany	Fiscal equalisation (Länderfinanzausgleich) ensures redistribution while maintaining cooperative federalism.
China	Strong centralised redistribution with targeted regional development programs.
Lesson for India	Balance between equity (redistribution) and efficiency (rewarding performance) is essential.

Indian Policies / Committees

Finance Commission Transfers	Address horizontal imbalances among states.
GST Council	Promotes cooperative federalism in indirect taxation.
NITI Aayog	Focus on cooperative and competitive federalism.
Delimitation Commission	Determines seat allocation based on population.

Way Forward

1. Balanced Delimitation Formula

- Combine population with development indicators to ensure fair representation.

2. Reform Fiscal Transfers

- Incentivise performance (health, education, governance) along with need-based allocation.

3. Strengthen Cooperative Federalism

- Enhance Centre-State dialogue through institutional platforms like GST Council.

4. Address Intra-State Inequality

- Focus on inclusive growth within states, especially rural and marginalised regions.

5. Promote National Integration Policies

- Ensure social and political inclusion of migrants to reduce regional tensions.

Conclusion

India's north-south divide is not merely a regional issue but a structural challenge to its federal design. A balanced approach—combining equity, efficiency, and inclusivity—can transform this divide into a foundation for cooperative growth rather than conflict.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Delimitation in India is based solely on population.
2. Finance Commission uses income distance as a criterion for tax devolution.
3. Southern states generally have lower human development indicators than northern states.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Mains Question

Q2. "The emerging north-south divide in India reflects deeper structural challenges in federalism and development." Discuss with suitable examples and suggest measures to address it.

The West Bengal puzzle — social gains have not translated into higher incomes

Source: Editorial Page (From Plate to Plough)

GS Paper: GS Paper III

Relevance: Inclusive Growth, State Economy, Human Development vs Income Growth

Introduction:

West Bengal presents a nuanced case where notable progress in social indicators—health, education, and welfare delivery—has not translated into commensurate income growth or employment generation. This divergence highlights structural constraints in converting human development gains into sustained economic expansion.

Key Issues

- 1. Stagnant Income Growth Despite Social Gains**
 - Improvements in education and health have not led to higher per capita income levels.
 - Indicates weak linkage between human capital and productive employment.
- 2. Low Industrialisation and Investment Deficit**
 - Limited expansion of manufacturing and industrial base.
 - Private investment remains subdued due to policy and perception challenges.
- 3. Employment Generation Constraints**
 - Job creation has not kept pace with the workforce.
 - Migration to other states reflects lack of local opportunities.
- 4. Agrarian and Rural Economic Stress**
 - Agriculture remains significant but low in productivity and income returns.
 - Limited diversification into high-value sectors.

Key Facts for Prelims

- 1. Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP):** Indicator of a state's economic output.
- 2. Human Development Indicators (HDI):** Health, education, and living standards.
- 3. Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):** Measures active workforce engagement.
- 4. Structural Transformation:** Shift from agriculture to industry and services.
- 5. Informal Sector Dominance:** Large share of employment without formal security.

5. Policy Tilt Towards Welfare over Growth Drivers

- Strong welfare delivery systems exist.
- However, insufficient complementary focus on infrastructure, industry, and enterprise growth.

Global Practices

East Asian Economies (e.g., South Korea, Taiwan)	Combined human capital investment with export-led industrialisation.
China	Synchronized infrastructure development with manufacturing expansion.
Lesson	Social development yields economic dividends only when aligned with job-intensive growth strategies.

Indian Policies / Committees

Make in India	Encourages manufacturing growth.
Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme	Incentivises domestic production.
Skill India Mission	Enhances workforce employability.
PM Gati Shakti	Infrastructure-led economic integration.
National Logistics Policy	Reduces logistics cost to boost competitiveness.

Way Forward

1. **Strengthen Industrial Ecosystem**
 - Develop sector-specific clusters (textiles, MSMEs, food processing).
2. **Improve Investment Climate**
 - Ensure policy stability, ease of doing business, and faster clearances.
3. **Link Skills with Industry Demand**
 - Align education and vocational training with market needs.
4. **Promote Rural Non-Farm Economy**
 - Encourage agro-processing, rural enterprises, and value chains.
5. **Balanced Policy Approach**
 - Integrate welfare schemes with long-term growth and productivity enhancement.

Conclusion

West Bengal's experience underlines that social progress, while necessary, is not sufficient for economic transformation. A calibrated strategy that integrates human development with industrial growth and employment generation is essential for achieving sustainable and inclusive prosperity.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Improvements in human development indicators always lead to proportional income growth.
2. Industrialisation plays a crucial role in large-scale employment generation.
3. Welfare schemes alone can ensure long-term economic growth.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. "Human development gains do not automatically translate into economic growth." Examine this statement with reference to the experience of West Bengal. Suggest measures for balanced development.

Student Notes 

Economy

Sixteenth Finance Commission — Misses and Concerns

Source: The Hindu (Opinion)

GS Paper Relevance:

- GS II – Federalism, Centre–State Financial Relations
- GS III – Indian Economy (Fiscal Federalism, Tax Devolution)

Introduction:

The Sixteenth Finance Commission (SFC) operates in a context of evolving fiscal federalism, marked by rising cesses and surcharges, GST reforms, and changing inter-state equity considerations. While the Commission has flexibility in its recommendations, concerns have emerged regarding its approach to vertical and horizontal devolution, revenue projections, and equalisation objectives.

The article evaluates whether the Commission's recommendations adequately protect the constitutional spirit of fiscal federalism and address disparities among States.

Key Issues

1. Rising Cesses and Surcharges

- A growing proportion of Central revenue is collected through cesses and surcharges.
- These are excluded from the divisible pool, reducing States' effective share.

2. Vertical Devolution Stability

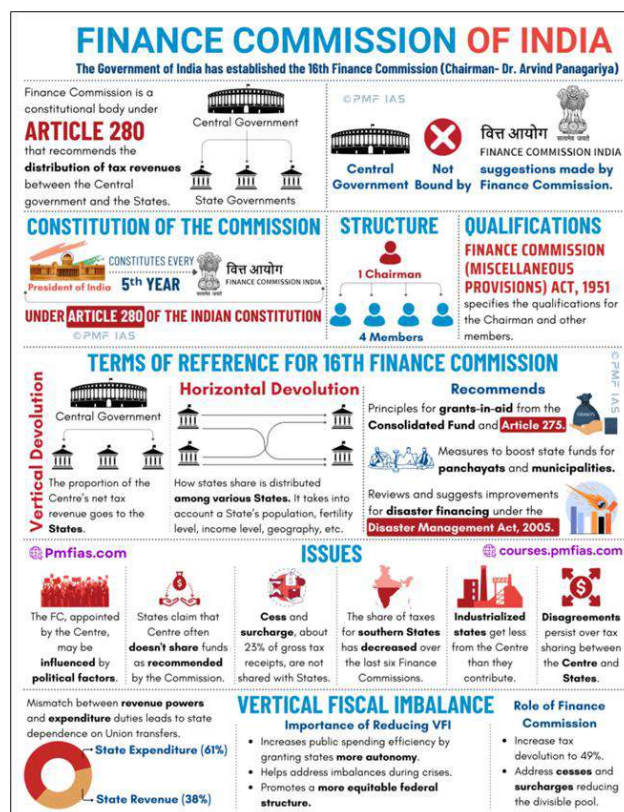
- Though headline devolution percentages may appear stable, effective transfers fluctuate depending on revenue composition.

3. Revenue Projections and Overestimation

- Concerns raised regarding optimistic GDP and revenue assumptions.
- Overestimation may compress actual transfers.

4. Horizontal Devolution Criteria Changes

- Use of income distance, demographic factors, and efficiency criteria affects distribution outcomes.



Key Facts for Prelims

1. Finance Commission is constituted under **Article 280** of the Constitution.
2. It recommends:
 - Distribution of net tax proceeds between Centre and States (vertical devolution).
 - Distribution among States (horizontal devolution).
3. Articles 270 and 280 govern tax devolution and Commission's functions.
4. Cesses and surcharges are not shareable with States.
5. The Fifteenth Finance Commission covered the period 2020–21 to 2025–26.

- States with stronger fiscal performance may feel penalised.

5. Decline in Equalisation Grants

- Revenue deficit grants have reduced over time.
- Raises question whether fiscal equalisation objectives are adequately addressed.

Global Practices

Country	Fiscal Federalism Approach
Australia	Strong equalisation transfers through Commonwealth Grants Commission
Canada	Formal equalisation formula to reduce inter-provincial disparities
Germany	Constitutionally entrenched fiscal equalisation mechanism
South Africa	Transparent formula-based intergovernmental transfers
Observation	Advanced federations institutionalise clear equalisation principles to balance fiscal autonomy and equity.

Indian Policies / Committees

1. GST Council (Article 279A) – cooperative fiscal federalism mechanism.
2. Finance Commissions (periodic constitutional bodies).
3. Revenue Deficit Grants (post-devolution support).
4. Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) as conditional transfers.

The debate centres on balancing formula-based devolution with targeted grants.

Way Forward

1. Rationalise Cesses and Surcharges

- Limit their expansion or bring select cesses into the divisible pool.

2. Enhance Transparency in Revenue Projections

- Use conservative macro assumptions to protect States' fiscal planning.

3. Strengthen Equalisation Mechanisms

- Ensure revenue gap grants address structural disparities.

4. Institutionalise Predictable Transfer Framework

- Reduce ad hoc fiscal adjustments and mid-cycle changes.

5. Promote Cooperative Federal Dialogue

- Continuous Centre–State consultation beyond formal Commission cycles.

Conclusion

Fiscal federalism remains central to India's constitutional design. The effectiveness of the Sixteenth Finance Commission will ultimately be judged by its ability to balance equity, efficiency, and fiscal sustainability. While revenue-sharing formulas are inherently complex, transparency, predictability, and adherence to constitutional principles must guide recommendations. A calibrated approach that safeguards States' fiscal space while maintaining macroeconomic stability is essential for cooperative federalism to function effectively.

Prelims MCQ

Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. Cesses and surcharges form part of the divisible pool of central taxes.
2. The Finance Commission is constituted under Article 280 of the Constitution.

3. Revenue deficit grants are recommended by the Finance Commission.

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

Q.2 Examine the challenges in India's fiscal federalism in light of recent Finance Commission recommendations. How can the balance between equity and efficiency be maintained? (250 words)

IIP Growth in January Slows Down to 4.8%

Source: The Hindu

What In News

India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) growth slowed to **4.8% in January** due to broad-based moderation across manufacturing, mining, and electricity sectors. (22 words)

Major Key Facts From Image

1. IIP growth slowed to **4.8% in January**, a three-month low.
2. December growth was revised upward to **7.6%**.
3. Manufacturing sector growth declined to **4.8%**.
4. Mining grew at **7%**, while electricity slowed to **5.1%**.
5. Capital goods growth moderated to **4.3%**, indicating investment slowdown.



Index Of Industrial Production (Iip)

What is IIP?

1. Measures short-term changes in industrial output.
2. Compiled and released by **National Statistical Office (NSO)** under Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation.
3. Published monthly.

Base Year

1. Current Base Year: **2011–12**
2. Reflects structural changes in industrial economy.

Importance of IIP

1. Early indicator of economic activity
2. Used in GDP estimation
3. Influences monetary policy decisions
4. Signals business cycle trends



Prelims Practice Question

Q.1 With reference to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), consider the following statements:

1. IIP is released on a monthly basis.
2. Manufacturing sector carries the highest weight in IIP.
3. IIP is compiled by the Reserve Bank of India.

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

Explanation:

- Statement 1 — Correct (Monthly release)
- Statement 2 — Correct (Manufacturing has highest weight)
- Statement 3 — Incorrect (Compiled by NSO, not RBI)

India, Canada Ink Uranium Deal as Carney Meets Modi

Source: The Hindu

What In News

India and Canada agreed to a \$1.9 billion uranium supply deal and pledged to rebuild bilateral ties amid diplomatic tensions. (20 words)

Major Key Facts

1. India and Canada signed a **\$1.9 billion uranium supply agreement**.
2. Agreement linked to the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** negotiations.
3. Both sides discussed energy, LPG cooperation, and emerging technologies.
4. Diplomatic tensions persist over the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.
5. Leaders emphasized diplomacy and restoration of bilateral relations.



India-Canada Relations

Nature of Bilateral Relations

India and Canada share cooperation in:

1. Civil nuclear energy
2. Trade & investment
3. Education and migration
4. Agriculture & food security

5. Energy security

However, relations have seen periodic diplomatic tensions.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

1. Canada is a major uranium producer.
2. India imports uranium to fuel its nuclear reactors.
3. Cooperation strengthened after India received **NSG waiver (2008)**.
4. Uranium supply supports India's clean energy and energy security goals.

CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement)

1. Proposed trade agreement to reduce tariffs and enhance investment flows.
2. Negotiations aimed at diversifying supply chains and boosting bilateral trade.
3. CEPA discussions were earlier paused due to diplomatic strains.

Areas of Strategic Cooperation

- | |
|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Energy (Uranium, LPG, renewables) |
| 2. Critical minerals |
| 3. Emerging technologies |
| 4. Education mobility |
| 5. Indo-Pacific cooperation |

Diplomatic Challenges

1. Allegations linked to Khalistani separatist activities.
2. Strained political trust.
3. Importance of diplomacy in managing strategic partnerships.

Prelims Practice Question

Q.1 With reference to India–Canada civil nuclear cooperation, consider the following statements:

1. Canada is one of the major uranium suppliers to India.
2. India imports uranium due to insufficient domestic uranium reserves.
3. India is a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

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

✓ **Correct Answer: A — 1 and 2 only**

Explanation:

1. Statement 1 ✓ Correct
2. Statement 2 ✓ Correct



3. Statement 3 **X** Incorrect (India is not an NSG member)

The Union Government released over ₹299 crore as Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV-FC)

News

The Union Government released over ₹299 crore as **Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV-FC)** grants to **Rural Local Bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions in Assam** for the financial year **2025–26**.

Key Facts

- The released amount includes the **2nd installment of Untied Grants** for FY **2025–26** amounting to about **₹256.60 crore**.
- Funds will be distributed among **27 District Panchayats, 182 Block Panchayats, and 2192 Gram Panchayats** in Assam.
- Grants also cover **three Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)** — **Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), and Dima Hasao Autonomous Council (DHAC)**.
- An additional **₹42.70 crore** from the **1st installment of untied grants** has been released to these ADCs.
- Grants are recommended by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Ministry of Jal Shakti**, and released by the **Ministry of Finance**.
- Untied grants** are used for **location-specific needs** under subjects listed in the **Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution**.



Static Information

- The **Finance Commission** is a constitutional body under **Article 280** of the Indian Constitution.
- It recommends **distribution of tax revenues between the Union and States** and grants-in-aid to states and local bodies.
- The **15th Finance Commission (2021–26)** was chaired by **N.K. Singh**.
- It recommended **grants to Rural and Urban Local Bodies** to strengthen grassroots governance.
- Local body grants are broadly categorized into:
 - **Untied Grants** – for local development priorities.
 - **Tied Grants** – mainly for **drinking water, sanitation, and solid waste management**.
- The **Eleventh Schedule** (added by the **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992**) lists **29 subjects** for Panchayati Raj Institutions.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Finance Commission grants to Local Bodies:

- The Finance Commission is constituted under Article 280 of the Constitution.

2. The **Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution** lists subjects related to Panchayati Raj Institutions.
3. **Untied grants** to local bodies can only be used for **drinking water and sanitation services**.

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: Press Information Bureau (PIB), Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

RBI Open Market Operations (OMO) – Purchase of Government Securities

News

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced Open Market Operations (OMO) to purchase ₹1,00,000 crore worth of Government Securities (G-Secs) in two tranches to inject liquidity into the banking system.

Key Facts

1. RBI conducted OMO purchases of ₹50,000 crore worth of Government Securities in the second tranche.
2. The total planned OMO purchase is ₹1,00,000 crore, executed in two tranches on March 9 and March 13.
3. The move aims to inject liquidity into the banking system and address liquidity constraints.
4. Liquidity pressures emerged due to advance tax outflows and financial market conditions.
5. Open Market Operations (OMOs) are monetary policy tools used by RBI to buy or sell government securities in the market.
6. The Indian rupee weakened to around ₹92.36 per US dollar, influenced by rising crude oil prices and geopolitical tensions in West Asia.



Static Information

1. Open Market Operations (OMOs) refer to the buying and selling of government securities by the central bank in the open market.
2. OMO Purchase → Injects liquidity into the banking system.
3. OMO Sale → Absorbs excess liquidity from the system.
4. Other RBI monetary policy tools include:
 - Repo Rate
 - Reverse Repo Rate
 - Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)

- Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)
 - Marginal Standing Facility (MSF)
5. Government securities (G-Secs) are debt instruments issued by the Government of India to borrow funds from the market.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Open Market Operations (OMO):

1. They involve the buying and selling of government securities by the Reserve Bank of India.
2. OMO purchases increase liquidity in the banking system.
3. OMOs are conducted exclusively by commercial banks.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

Source: *The Hindu* / Reserve Bank of India (RBI) notifications.

Fiscal Health Index (FHI), 2026

News

The **NITI Aayog** released the **second edition of the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026**, assessing fiscal performance of Indian states and promoting data-driven fiscal policymaking.

Key Facts

1. The **Fiscal Health Index** provides a **comprehensive and comparable assessment of the fiscal performance of states**.
2. It is designed as a **data-driven framework** to evaluate fiscal soundness and guide fiscal reforms.
3. The **first edition assessed 18 major states**, while the **second edition includes 10 North-Eastern and Himalayan states**, making the analysis more inclusive.
4. **North-Eastern and Himalayan states are ranked separately** from major states due to structural differences.
5. The index highlights **significant variation in fiscal outcomes across states**, reflecting fiscal pressures in 2023–24.
6. It recommends improving **revenue mobilisation, quality of capital expenditure, fiscal transparency, and monitoring of off-budget borrowings**.

Sub-Indices of FHI	
MAJOR SUB-INDICES	MINOR SUB-INDICES
 1. Quality of Expenditure	Total Developmental Expenditure/Total Expenditure
	Total Capital Outlay/ GSDP*
 2. Revenue Mobilization	State Own Revenue/ GSDP*
	State Own Revenue/ Total Expenditure
 3. Fiscal Prudence	Gross Fiscal Deficit/GSDP*
	Revenue Deficit/GSDP*
 4. Debt Index	Interest Payments/Revenue Receipts
	Outstanding Liabilities/ GSDP*
 5. Debt Sustainability	Growth Rate of GSDP* - Growth Rate of Interest Payments

*GSDP at current prices for the year 2022–23

Static Information

1. **NITI Aayog** was established in **2015**, replacing the **Planning Commission**.
2. It acts as the **Government of India's premier policy think tank**, providing strategic and technical advice to the Centre and States.
3. The institution promotes **cooperative and competitive federalism**.
4. It is chaired by the **Prime Minister of India**, with a **Vice-Chairperson and CEO** appointed by the government.
5. NITI Aayog releases several indices such as the **SDG India Index, Multidimensional Poverty Index, Export Preparedness Index, and School Education Quality Index**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Fiscal Health Index (FHI):

1. It is released by NITI Aayog to assess the fiscal performance of Indian states.
2. The index evaluates fiscal indicators such as revenue mobilisation, expenditure quality, and debt sustainability.
3. It is prepared by the Finance Commission to recommend tax devolution to states.

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)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB); NITI Aayog.

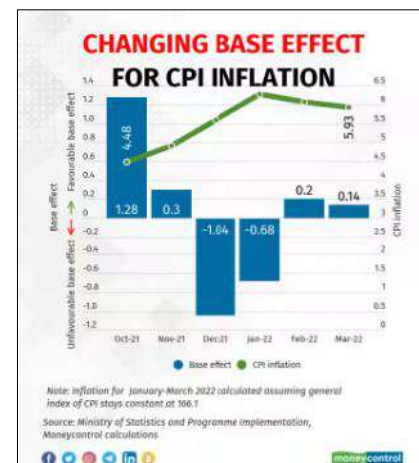
CPI INFLATION – FEBRUARY 2026

News

India's retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose to **3.2% in February 2026**, the highest in ten months, mainly driven by rising food and beverages prices.

Key Facts

1. **Retail inflation increased to 3.2% in February 2026**, compared to **3% in January 2026**.
2. This is the **highest CPI inflation level in the last ten months**.
3. **Food and Beverages (F&B)** category accounted for **about 44 basis points** of the increase.
4. **Food inflation rose to 3.35% in February** from **2.1% in January**.
5. Inflation in **clothing & footwear, housing, personal care, and household goods** also increased between January and February.
6. The **core inflation** (excluding food and fuel) increased to **1.96% in February** from **1.02% in January**.



Static Information

1. **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** measures the **average change in prices of a basket of goods and services consumed by households**.

2. CPI data in India is released by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**.
3. The **base year for CPI is 2012 = 100**.
4. CPI inflation is used by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** as the **key measure for inflation targeting under the Monetary Policy Framework**.
5. The **inflation target set for RBI is 4% with a tolerance band of $\pm 2\%$ (2–6%)** under the **Monetary Policy Framework Agreement (2016)**.

Practice Question

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in India:

1. CPI measures the change in retail prices of goods and services consumed by households.
2. CPI data is released by the National Statistical Office under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
3. The Reserve Bank of India uses CPI as the primary indicator for inflation targeting.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Source: The Hindu / Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI)

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Food Processing Industry

News

The Government of India is implementing the **Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI)** to promote large-scale food manufacturing, enhance value addition, increase exports, and create global food processing champions.

Key Facts

1. The scheme aims to **support creation of global food manufacturing champions** and strengthen Indian brands in international markets.
2. It focuses on **increasing value addition and expanding export potential** of the food processing sector.
3. Incentives are provided based on **incremental sales of eligible food products** manufactured in India.
4. The scheme promotes **innovation, branding, and marketing of Indian food products abroad**.
5. It encourages **investment in food processing infrastructure and technology**.
6. The initiative also aims to **boost employment generation and farmers' income through stronger value chains**.



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Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing

- Incentive:** 4% to 6% on incremental sales (over base year) of goods manufactured in India
- Target Segments:** Mobile phones and specified electronic components
- Eligibility:** Subject to thresholds of incremental investment and incremental sales of manufactured goods
- Tenure of the Scheme:** Five years subsequent to the base year as defined (FY19-20)

Static Information

1. **Launch:** Approved by the Government of India in **November 2020**.
2. **Nodal Ministry:** **Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)**.
3. **Total Outlay:** ₹10,900 crore for implementation during **2021–22 to 2026–27**.
4. **Objective:**
 - Promote **Indian food brands globally**
 - Increase **value addition in agricultural produce**
 - Enhance **global competitiveness of the food processing sector**
5. **Components of the Scheme:**
 - **Support for Food Manufacturing Champions**
 - **Support for Branding and Marketing Abroad**
 - **Support for Innovative / Organic Food Products and SMEs**

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI):

1. It is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
2. The scheme provides incentives based on incremental sales of food products manufactured in India.
3. One of its objectives is to promote Indian food brands in global markets.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB) / Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)

First Export of GI-Tagged Joha Rice from Assam to the United Kingdom**News**

The **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)** facilitated the **first export of GI-tagged Joha rice from Assam to the United Kingdom**, promoting India's premium aromatic rice globally.

Key Facts

1. The export consignment of **Joha rice from Assam was flagged off from Guwahati** for the United Kingdom.
2. The initiative was facilitated by **APEDA in collaboration with the Government of Assam**.
3. **Joha rice** is known for its **distinct aroma and soft texture**, making it a premium rice variety.
4. Assam has **around 21,265 hectares under Joha rice cultivation** with significant annual production.
5. The export initiative aims to **enhance global recognition of GI-tagged agricultural products from India**.
6. It is part of efforts to **increase agricultural exports and support farmers in the North-East region**.

Static Information

1. **Joha Rice:**
 - A **short-grain aromatic rice variety** grown mainly in Assam.

- Recognized with a **Geographical Indication (GI)** tag in 2022.
- 2. **APEDA:**
 - Established in **1986** under the **APEDA Act, 1985**.
 - Works under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
 - Responsible for **promotion and development of export of agricultural and processed food products**.
- 3. **Geographical Indication (GI) Tag:**
 - Granted under the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**.
 - Protects products that have **specific geographical origin and unique qualities**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Joha rice is an aromatic rice variety primarily grown in Assam.
2. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
3. Geographical Indication (GI) tags in India are governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB) / APEDA / Ministry of Commerce and Industry

MSME Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP) and SFURTI

News

The MSME Ministry informed Parliament that 364 projects under the Micro and Small Enterprises-Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP) have been completed while the SFURTI scheme continues strengthening traditional industry clusters.

Key Facts

1. 606 projects have been approved under MSE-CDP since inception.
2. Out of these, 364 projects are completed and 242 projects are ongoing.
3. Under SFURTI, 513 clusters have been approved since 2015-16.
4. The scheme aims to benefit about 3.03 lakh traditional artisans.
5. 378 clusters are functional, while 135 are under implementation.
6. Common Facility Centres (CFCs) provide infrastructure such as Industry 4.0 learning facilities, additive manufacturing, digital infrastructure, and renewable energy systems.

SFURTI



- Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) is under Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).
- Union Minister MSMEs inaugurated five traditional clusters of Assam under SFURTI.

Objectives of SFURTI scheme:

- To organise the traditional industries and artisans into clusters to make them competitive and provide support for their long term sustainability and economy of scale.
- To provide sustained employment for traditional industry artisans and rural entrepreneurs.



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Static Information

1. MSE-CDP is a Central Sector Scheme under the Ministry of MSME.
2. Objective: Enhance productivity and competitiveness of Micro and Small Enterprises through cluster-based development.
3. It supports Common Facility Centres (CFCs) and infrastructure development.
4. SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries) was launched in 2005.
5. It focuses on organizing traditional artisans into clusters and improving skill, market access, and infrastructure.
6. Key sectors include handloom, handicrafts, agro-processing, coir and honey.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding SFURTI Scheme:

1. It aims to organize traditional artisans into clusters.
2. It is implemented by the Ministry of MSME.
3. It focuses on regeneration of traditional industries such as handloom and handicrafts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB)

Policy Changes in China Pertaining to Lithium and Impact on EV Sector

News

Policy changes by **China regarding lithium exports** may affect global supply chains for **electric vehicles (EVs)**, as India currently relies heavily on imports of critical minerals such as lithium.

Key Facts

1. India currently **depends heavily on imports of critical minerals** such as **lithium** for EV batteries.
2. The **entire current demand for lithium is met through imports**.
3. China dominates the **global lithium processing and supply chain**.
4. Export controls by China may impact **global prices of lithium, cobalt and nickel**.
5. India is working to **diversify supply chains for critical minerals**.
6. Lithium is essential for **lithium-ion batteries used in EVs and electronics**.

Static Information

1. The **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)** was approved in **January 2025** to secure India's supply of critical minerals.
2. India has identified **30 critical minerals** essential for strategic industries.
3. **Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL)** explores overseas mineral assets.
4. Lithium deposits were discovered in **Reasi district, Jammu & Kashmir (2023)**.
5. Lithium is a **lightweight alkali metal used in rechargeable batteries**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Lithium:

1. It is a critical mineral used in lithium-ion batteries.
2. India currently meets its entire lithium demand through imports.
3. Lithium belongs to the alkali metal group in the periodic table.

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)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB)

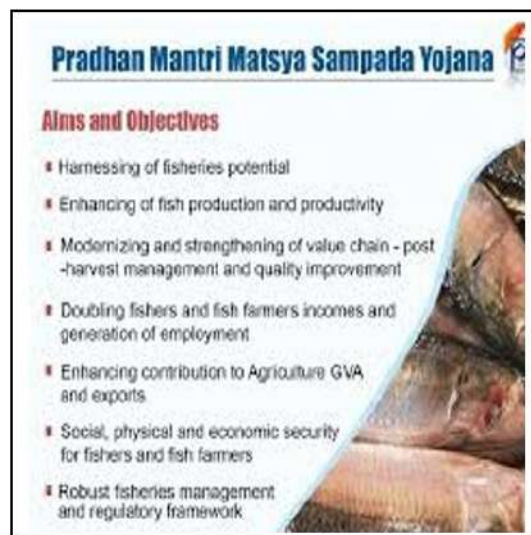
Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

News

The government informed that India's **fish production reached 183.93 lakh tonnes in FY 2023-24**, while **PM Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)** continues supporting fisheries development and fisher livelihoods.

Key Facts

1. India's **fish production reached 183.93 lakh tonnes in FY 2023-24**.
2. **Inland fisheries contribute 75.57%** of total production.
3. The fisheries sector supports **over 2.8 crore fishers and fish farmers**.
4. PMMSY was launched with an **outlay of ₹20,750 crore**.
5. Fisheries projects worth **₹21,274 crore** have been approved in the last five years.
6. Insurance coverage under PMMSY provides **₹5 lakh compensation for accidental death or permanent disability**.



Static Information

1. **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)** was launched in **2020**.
2. Implemented by **Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying**.
3. Objective: **Holistic development of fisheries and aquaculture sector**.
4. It focuses on **modernization of fishing harbours, cold chains, and fish landing centres**.
5. It is part of the **Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative**.
6. The scheme promotes **sustainable fisheries and aquaculture practices**.

Practice Question (UPSC Prelims Pattern)

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana:

1. It aims at holistic development of the fisheries sector.
2. It was launched in 2020.

3. It is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

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: Press Information Bureau (PIB)

White Revolution 2.0

News

The Government highlighted **White Revolution 2.0** as a cooperative-led dairy expansion initiative aimed at increasing milk procurement, creating new dairy cooperative societies, and strengthening women's participation and rural livelihoods.

Key Facts

1. White Revolution 2.0 was launched on **19 September 2024**.
2. It is being implemented jointly by the **Ministry of Cooperation** and the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying**.
3. It seeks to expand cooperative coverage in **uncovered Panchayats**.
4. The initiative targets a **50% increase in milk procurement** by dairy cooperatives over five years.
5. It envisages creation of **75,000 new Dairy Cooperative Societies** in five years.
6. The programme aims to enhance **employment, market access and women's empowerment**.

Static Information

1. India is the **world's largest milk producer**, contributing around **24–25% of global milk production**.
2. **Operation Flood**, launched in 1970, is known as the backbone of India's original **White Revolution**.
3. The **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD)** is the nodal department for dairy development at the Union level.
4. Dairy cooperatives play a key role in **milk procurement, processing, value addition and farmer payments**.
5. The dairy sector is important for **smallholders and women-led rural livelihoods** because it provides regular cash flow.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding White Revolution in India:

1. Operation Flood is associated with India's dairy cooperative expansion.
2. India is currently the world's largest milk producer.
3. White Revolution 2.0 aims to create new dairy cooperative societies.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: C

Source: PIB; Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying; NDDB.

Prison Overcrowding and Health Risk in Jails

News

A prison health outbreak and continuing overcrowding in Indian jails have renewed attention on inmates' right to health, disease vulnerability, shortage of medical staff, and prison reform measures.

Key Facts

1. Overcrowding in prisons raises the risk of **infectious disease transmission**.
2. Recent reporting linked overcrowded jails with outbreaks involving **HSV, TB, HIV and COVID-19**.
3. District prisons in some states have recorded **very high occupancy rates**.
4. India Justice Report flagged **shortage of medical officers** in prisons.
5. Undertrials constitute a **major share** of India's prison population.
6. Better screening, isolation, staffing and non-custodial alternatives are key reform suggestions.

Static Information

1. **Prisons, reformatories, borstal institutions and persons detained therein** fall under the **State List** in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.
2. The **Model Prison Manual 2016** provides guidance on prison administration, health, hygiene, legal aid and correctional measures.
3. The **National Human Rights Commission** and courts have repeatedly emphasized that prisoners retain their **right to life and dignity under Article 21**.
4. The **Prison Statistics India** report is published by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**.
5. Overcrowding is commonly measured by comparing actual inmates with the **official prison capacity**.

Practice Question

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

1. Prisons are a State subject under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.
2. Prisoners in India do not enjoy protection under Article 21.
3. NCRB publishes Prison Statistics India.

Which of the statements given above 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: NCRB Prison Statistics India; Ministry of Home Affairs; Model Prison Manual 2016.

Source: Constitution of India; Lok Sabha Rules of Procedure; PRS Legislative Research.

Force Majeure

News/Introduction

Disruptions in shipping through the Strait of Hormuz led several Gulf energy producers to declare **force majeure** on oil and gas shipments, bringing the contractual doctrine into focus.

Key Facts

1. Force majeure refers to an **extraordinary event** that prevents contractual obligations from being fulfilled.



2. The term is derived from French and means “**superior force.**”
3. It generally applies to events beyond reasonable control of parties.
4. Such clauses may cover **war, natural disasters, riots, epidemics or terrorist attacks.**
5. It does not apply to events that are **foreseeable, preventable or caused by negligence.**
6. In India, the doctrine is linked to **Section 56 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872.**

Static Information

1. **Section 56 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872** embodies the doctrine of **frustration of contract**, where an act becomes impossible or unlawful after the contract is made.
2. Indian courts distinguish between **force majeure clauses in contracts** and statutory frustration under Section 56.
3. The Supreme Court in **Energy Watchdog v. CERC (2017)** discussed force majeure and frustration in detail.
4. Force majeure depends heavily on the **exact wording of the contract clause.**
5. Mere commercial hardship or rise in cost does not automatically amount to force majeure.

Practice Question

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

1. It is closely associated with the doctrine of frustration under Section 56 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872.
2. Any increase in the cost of performing a contract automatically qualifies as force majeure.
3. War and natural disasters may be covered under force majeure clauses.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Source: Indian Contract Act, 1872; Supreme Court judgment in *Energy Watchdog v. CERC*; legal explainers from authoritative sources.

White Revolution 2.0

News

On 18 March 2026, the government highlighted White Revolution 2.0 in Parliament, stressing cooperative-led dairy expansion, women’s participation, digital milk procurement systems, and higher milk collection from uncovered areas.

Key Facts

1. White Revolution 2.0 was launched on **19 September 2024** jointly by the **Ministry of Cooperation** and the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.**
2. Its core objective is to raise **milk procurement of dairy cooperatives by 50% in five years.**
3. The programme focuses on expanding dairy cooperatives into **uncovered Panchayats**, improving market access, creating employment, and strengthening women’s empowerment.

4. Parliament reply noted that **milk production rose from 146.31 million tonnes in 2014-15 to 239.30 million tonnes in 2023-24.**
5. Average milk availability increased significantly during the same period, reflecting steady dairy sector growth.
6. Under digital reforms, **DPMCU and AMCU units** help with milk testing, data capture, transparency, and timely payment to farmers.

Static Information

1. India's earlier **White Revolution** was driven by **Operation Flood**, launched in **1970** by the **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)**.
2. Operation Flood created a **National Milk Grid**, linking producers with consumers across India and reducing seasonal and regional price fluctuations.
3. NDDB's **Anand Pattern** is based on farmer-owned dairy cooperatives at village, district, and state levels.
4. India is the **world's largest milk producer**, and dairy remains a major source of rural livelihood.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding White Revolution 2.0:

1. It was launched jointly by the Ministry of Cooperation and the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
2. Its objective includes increasing milk procurement by dairy cooperatives by 50% over five years.
3. It is implemented only through private dairy companies.

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; NDDB

World's Largest Food Storage Scheme for Farmers

News

On 18 March 2026, Parliament was informed about progress in the World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the cooperative sector, aimed at decentralized storage infrastructure and stronger food security.

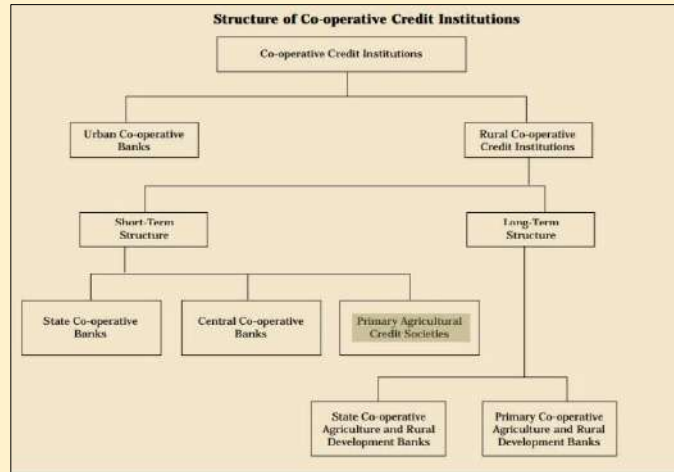
Key Facts

1. The Union Government approved the **World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector** on **31 May 2023**.
2. It seeks to create **decentralised scientific grain storage infrastructure** in rural areas.
3. Infrastructure under the plan includes **godowns, custom hiring centres, primary processing units, and Fair Price Shops** at the **PACS** level.
4. The scheme works through convergence of various government schemes such as **AIF, AMI, SMAM and PMFME**.
5. The plan is being implemented as a **pilot project** before wider rollout.

- It is designed to reduce post-harvest losses, improve storage access, and strengthen the cooperative sector in agriculture.

Static Information

- PACS (Primary Agricultural Credit Societies)** are grassroots cooperative institutions that provide short-term and medium-term agricultural credit and related services.
- The Ministry of Cooperation treats PACS as the nodal village-level institution for creating storage and related agri-infrastructure under this plan.
- The plan is part of the broader push for a **uniform and strengthened cooperative ecosystem** in India.
- Scientific storage reduces spoilage, improves foodgrain management, and supports local procurement and distribution systems.



Practice Question

Q1. With reference to the World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector, consider the following statements:

- It aims to create grain storage and allied agri-infrastructure at the PACS level.
- It is implemented through convergence of multiple existing central schemes.
- It is being implemented exclusively by the Food Corporation of India without any role for cooperatives.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Source: PIB; Ministry of Cooperation

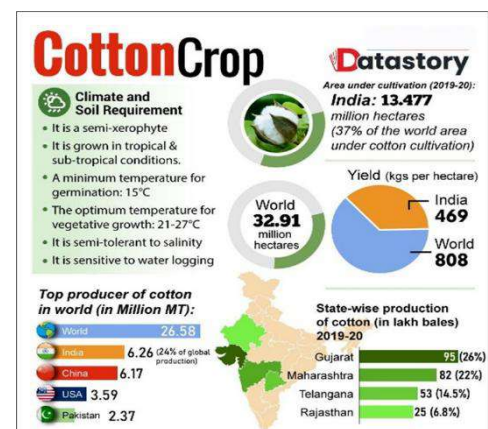
Cotton Corporation of India (CCI)

News

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved MSP-related funding support to the Cotton Corporation of India for the cotton season, strengthening procurement operations to protect farmers when market prices fall.

Key Facts

- Cotton Corporation of India was established on 31 July 1970.
- It is a Public Sector Undertaking functioning under the Ministry of Textiles.



3. Its core role is to undertake price support operations whenever kapas prices fall below the MSP.
4. CCI can procure cotton under MSP operations without quantitative limit.
5. It also undertakes commercial purchase operations to meet the raw material needs of the domestic textile industry.
6. Its headquarters is at Navi Mumbai, and it has a pan-India presence in major cotton-growing states.

Static Information

1. India is one of the largest producers of cotton in the world.
2. Cotton is a tropical and subtropical crop requiring warm conditions.
3. Ideal temperature for cotton cultivation is about 21°C to 30°C.
4. It generally requires 50–100 cm rainfall and around 210 frost-free days.
5. Cotton grows best in black soil (regur), though it is also cultivated in alluvial, red and lateritic soils.
6. Major cotton-growing states include Gujarat, Telangana and Maharashtra.

Practice Question

Q1. With reference to the Cotton Corporation of India, consider the following statements:

1. It is a Public Sector Undertaking under the Ministry of Textiles.
2. Its main function is to procure cotton when market prices fall below MSP.
3. It was established after the economic reforms of 1991.

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: PIB

Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme

News

The Union Cabinet has approved the Small Hydro Power Development Scheme for FY 2026–27 to FY 2030–31, aiming to expand clean energy capacity with special support for hilly and North-Eastern regions.

Key Facts

1. The scheme supports small hydro projects of 1–25 MW capacity.
2. It targets a cumulative additional capacity of about 1,500 MW.
3. It gives special emphasis to hilly and North-Eastern states with high untapped potential.
4. It provides higher central financial assistance for North-Eastern states and international border districts.
5. It includes support for preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for future projects.
6. It promotes run-of-the-river technology, minimising displacement, deforestation and major ecological disruption.

Static Information

1. In India, small hydro power projects are those with capacity up to 25 MW.
2. Small hydro is considered a part of the renewable energy sector.
3. Run-of-the-river projects generate electricity from the natural flow of water with limited storage.
4. SHP is especially suitable for remote, hilly and dispersed habitations.

5. Compared with large dams, SHP projects usually involve lower submergence and lower rehabilitation burden.

Practice Question

Q1. With reference to Small Hydro Power (SHP) in India, consider the following statements:

1. Small hydro projects in India are defined as those with capacity up to 25 MW.
2. Run-of-the-river projects generally require large-scale reservoir submergence.
3. SHP is classified under renewable energy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: PIB

Index Of Eight Core Industries (ICI)

News

The Index of Eight Core Industries grew by 2.3% in February 2026, indicating a slowdown from January, with mixed sectoral performance amid declining crude oil and natural gas output.

Key Facts

1. ICI growth stood at **2.3% (Feb 2026)** vs higher growth in January (4.7%).
2. Eight core industries contribute **40.27% weight in Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**.
3. **Cement (+9.3%)** and **Steel (+7.2%)** showed strong growth.
4. **Crude Oil (-5.2%)** and **Natural Gas (-5.0%)** recorded decline.
5. Electricity growth slowed to **0.5%**, a three-month low.
6. Cumulative ICI growth (Apr–Feb 2025-26) = **2.9% (provisional)**.



Static Information

1. Core industries: Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement, Electricity.
2. Base year: **2011–12 = 100**.
3. Released by: **Office of Economic Adviser, Ministry of Commerce & Industry**.
4. ICI is a **leading indicator of industrial growth**.
5. Electricity data includes **renewable energy since April 2014**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI):

1. It has a weight of more than 50% in IIP.
2. Electricity sector includes renewable energy data.

3. Cement and Steel showed positive growth in February 2026.

Which of the statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Source: PIB

RBI – VARIABLE RATE REPO (VRR) AUCTION

News

RBI injected ₹25,101 crore liquidity into the banking system via a three-day VRR auction to address liquidity tightening caused by advance tax outflows in March 2026.

Key Facts

- Liquidity injected: **₹25,101 crore**.
- Tool used: **Variable Rate Repo (VRR) auction**.
- Cut-off rate: around **5.26%**.
- Notified amount was higher (**₹75,000 crore**) but lower uptake.
- Earlier injection: **₹48,014 crore (March 17)**.
- Trigger: **Advance tax payments reducing liquidity**.



Static Information

- Repo Rate: Rate at which RBI lends short-term funds to banks.
- VRR: Allows banks to bid for funds at market-determined rates.
- Used under **Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF)**.
- Helps manage **short-term liquidity mismatches**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following regarding VRR auctions:

- Interest rate is fixed by RBI.
- It is part of Liquidity Adjustment Facility.
- It is used to absorb excess liquidity only.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Source: The Hindu / PTI

Core Sector Growth Slowdown

News

India's core sector growth slowed to 2.3% in February 2026, a three-month low, due to contraction in crude oil, natural gas, and refinery output amid global supply constraints.

Key Facts

1. Growth dropped from **4.7% (Jan) to 2.3% (Feb)**.
2. Oil & gas sectors contracting for multiple months.
3. **Natural gas contracted for 20th consecutive month**.
4. Refinery output declined in **6 of 11 months (FY26)**.
5. Cement recorded highest growth (**9.3%**).
6. External factor: **West Asia crisis affecting supply**.

Static Information

1. Core sector performance impacts:
 - **Industrial production**
 - **GDP growth**
2. Sensitive to:
 - Global oil prices
 - Geopolitical tensions
3. Acts as **proxy for infrastructure sector health**.

Practice Question

Q1. Which of the following sectors showed contraction in February 2026?

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| 1. Crude Oil | 2. Natural Gas |
| 3. Cement | 4. Refinery Products |

Select correct answer:

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

Answer: (a)

Source: The Hindu

Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme (MCGS–MSME)

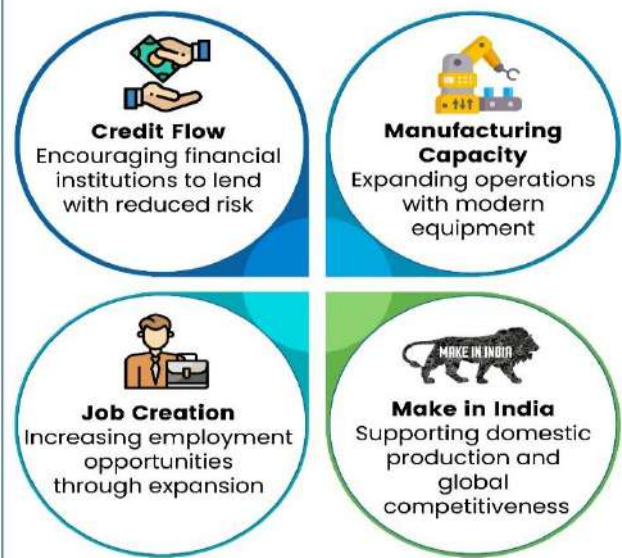
News

Government modified the Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme to enhance credit access for MSME manufacturers and exporters in line with Budget 2025–26, expanding eligibility and easing financial conditions.

Key Facts

1. Provides 60% guarantee coverage via NCGTC for loans up to ₹100 crore
2. Now extended to service sector MSMEs
3. Minimum project cost reduced to 60% (earlier 75%)
4. 5% upfront contribution refundable in later years
5. Guarantee tenure fixed at 10 years
6. Exporters eligible if 25% turnover from exports

Potential Benefits of the Scheme



Static Information

1. Implemented by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC)
2. Aims to reduce credit risk for lenders
3. Supports capital expenditure (machinery/equipment)
4. Part of broader MSME financing ecosystem (like CGTMSE)

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. MCGS provides 100% credit guarantee to MSMEs
2. It is applicable only to manufacturing MSMEs
3. Guarantee tenure is fixed

Which of the above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Source: News On Air

Rice & Wheat Procurement Issue

News

Parliamentary Standing Committee flagged consistently low procurement of rice and wheat compared to targets and urged better coordination between Centre and States.

Key Facts

1. Procurement below estimates since 2022–23
2. Less than 30% of total production procured
3. States affected: Punjab, Bihar, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh
4. Influencing factors: MSP, market prices, private participation
5. Gap between estimated vs actual procurement persists
6. Committee suggested real-time monitoring and planning reforms

Static Information

1. Procurement done mainly by Food Corporation of India (FCI)
2. Ensures food security under PDS/NFSA
3. Based on Minimum Support Price (MSP)
4. Helps maintain buffer stock norms

Practice Question

Q1. With reference to foodgrain procurement in India:

1. It is carried out solely by State Governments
2. MSP plays a role in procurement decisions
3. Procurement ensures buffer stock

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Source: The Hindu

NET FDI NEGATIVE FOR FIFTH STRAIGHT MONTH

News/Introduction

India recorded negative net FDI for the fifth consecutive month in January 2026 due to declining inflows and rising repatriation, according to RBI data.

Key Facts

1. Net FDI stood at around **−\$1.4 billion** in January 2026.
2. Gross FDI inflows: **\$5.7 billion**, 7% lower YoY.
3. Repatriation/disinvestment increased sharply by **97.3%**.
4. Outward FDI rose **5.4%** to **\$2.1 billion**.
5. Major inflow sectors: **manufacturing, computer services, energy, financial services**.
6. Around **75% outward FDI** directed to US, Singapore, UK, UAE.

Advantages of FDI

- Access to markets
- Access to resources
- Reduces cost of production
- FDI offers a source of external capital
- development of new industries
- learning is an indirect advantage for foreign countries

Static Information

1. FDI refers to **investment by foreign entities in productive assets** of a country.
2. Two types: **Greenfield investment** and **Brownfield investment**.
3. Regulated under **FEMA, 1999**.
4. DPIIT under Ministry of Commerce handles policy; RBI compiles data.
5. FDI routes: **Automatic route** and **Government route**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following:

1. FDI is governed by FEMA, 1999.
2. Negative net FDI means outflows exceed inflows.
3. RBI is responsible for FDI policy formulation.

Which statements are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Source: RBI / The Hindu

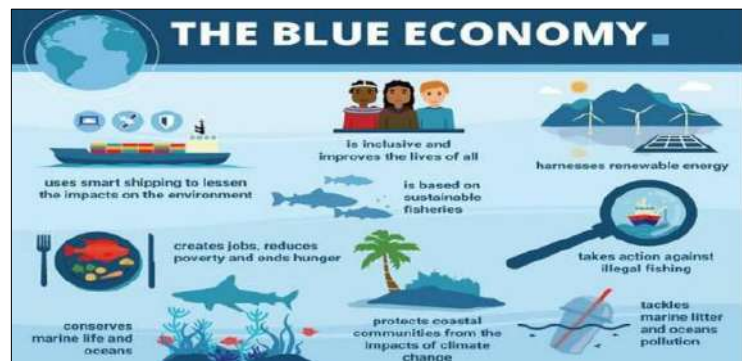
Blue Revolution & Fisheries Development – PM Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

News

The Government informed **Lok Sabha** about progress under the **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana**, highlighting increased fish production, aquaculture development, and infrastructure support across states including Bihar.

Key Facts

1. PMMSY was launched in **2020** with an estimated investment of **₹20,050 crore** for fisheries sector development.
2. Projects worth **₹547.13 crore** have been approved in Bihar, with **central share of ₹173.65 crore** released.
3. Around **4,421 beneficiaries** have been covered in Bihar under PMMSY, including fish seed farms and hatcheries.
4. India's total fish production increased from **141.6 lakh tonnes (2019–20)** to **197.75 lakh tonnes (2024–25)**.
5. Modern aquaculture techniques such as **Biofloc technology, Recirculatory Aquaculture Systems (RAS), cage culture, and mariculture** are being promoted.
6. Financial support includes **Kisan Credit Card (KCC) for fishers** and **interest subvention (up to 3%)** under **Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)**.



Static Information

1. **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana** is implemented by the **Department of Fisheries** under the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying**.
2. It aims for **holistic development of fisheries sector**, including **production, productivity, infrastructure, and value chain strengthening**.
3. The scheme focuses on **doubling fishers' income and increasing exports**.
4. It promotes **post-harvest infrastructure** such as cold storage, processing units, and feed mills.
5. India is among the **top fish-producing countries globally**, and fisheries contribute significantly to **agriculture GDP and livelihoods**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY):

1. It aims at holistic development of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in India.
2. It promotes modern aquaculture technologies such as Biofloc and Recirculatory Aquaculture Systems.
3. It is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

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)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB); Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (DDKY)

News

The Government informed **Lok Sabha** about the **Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana**, targeting 100 districts to boost agricultural productivity, diversification, and sustainable practices.

Key Facts

1. **100 districts** have been identified based on **low crop productivity, low cropping intensity, and low agricultural credit disbursement.**
2. The scheme aims to **enhance productivity, promote crop diversification, and strengthen post-harvest infrastructure.**
3. It focuses on improving **irrigation facilities and access to both short-term and long-term agricultural credit.**
4. Implementation is done through **District Action Plans (DAPs)** prepared by **District DDKY Samitis.**
5. Plans involve **convergence of 36 existing schemes** across **11 departments**, along with state and private sector participation.
6. Key interventions include **climate-resilient agriculture, micro-irrigation, protected cultivation, and post-harvest infrastructure development.**



Static Information

1. The scheme is implemented by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.**
2. It promotes **district-level planning and decentralized agricultural development.**
3. Converges major schemes like:
 - **Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture**
 - **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana**
4. Emphasizes **climate-smart agriculture** and **sustainable resource management.**
5. Monitoring is done through **State-level and National-level committees**, along with **Central Nodal Officers (CNOs)** assigned to districts.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (DDKY):

1. It targets districts with low agricultural productivity and low cropping intensity.
2. It promotes convergence of multiple schemes and departments for agricultural development.
3. It is implemented exclusively by State Governments without involvement 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 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB); Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

Micro and Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP)

News

The Government informed the **Rajya Sabha** about the implementation of the **Micro and Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme** to enhance productivity and competitiveness of MSMEs.

Key Facts

1. It is a **demand-driven Central Sector Scheme** focusing on cluster-based development of micro and small enterprises.
2. The scheme aims to **improve productivity, competitiveness, and holistic growth of MSEs**.
3. State Governments submit proposals for **Common Facility Centres (CFCs)** and **Infrastructure Development (ID)** projects.
4. It promotes **technology upgradation, skill development, quality improvement, and better market access**.
5. The programme emphasizes **green and sustainable manufacturing practices**.
6. Two major components:
 - **Common Facility Centres (CFCs)**
 - **Infrastructure Development (ID)** in industrial clusters.

Static Information

1. The scheme is implemented by the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**.
2. It adopts a **cluster development approach**, which helps enterprises benefit from **shared infrastructure and collective efficiency**.
3. **Common Facility Centres (CFCs)** provide services like testing, training, raw material storage, and effluent treatment.
4. The scheme supports **industrial estates and clusters**, including **flatted factory complexes**.
5. It encourages **formation of self-help groups, consortia, and associations** for collective action among enterprises.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Micro and Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP):

1. It is a Central Sector Scheme implemented by the Ministry of MSME.
2. It supports establishment of Common Facility Centres in industrial clusters.
3. It is exclusively focused on large-scale industries.

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)

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB); Ministry of MSME.

RARE EARTH & LITHIUM EXPLORATION IN INDIA

News

India is accelerating rare earth and lithium exploration, targeting 5,000 tonnes domestic rare earth magnet production by 2030, while boosting mining, processing capacity, and reducing import dependence through policy reforms.

Key Facts

1. Government aims to achieve **5,000 tonnes of rare earth permanent magnet production by 2030**.
2. Focus on **liberalising mining policies** and opening private sector participation.

3. Exploration of **lithium reserves** is being intensified to meet EV and energy storage demand.
4. Rare earth elements are crucial for **electronics, defence, aerospace, and clean energy technologies**.
5. India is working to **reduce dependence on imports**, especially from dominant global suppliers like China.
6. Emphasis on strengthening the **entire value chain**: mining → processing → manufacturing.

You're reading this thanks to rare earth elements.

Kelton Smith, rare earth expert and hydrometallurgist, breaks down myths about these critical minerals essential to our daily lives.



Static Information

Rare Earth Elements (REEs) include **17 elements** (15 lanthanides + scandium + yttrium).

1. Key applications:
 - Permanent magnets (EVs, wind turbines)
 - Electronics (smartphones, semiconductors)
 - Defence systems
2. India has REE reserves mainly in:
 - **Monazite sands** (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh)
3. **Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL)** is a PSU under the Department of Atomic Energy handling REE processing.
4. **Lithium** is a critical mineral used in:
 - Lithium-ion batteries (EVs, grid storage)
5. India identified lithium reserves in:
 - **Jammu & Kashmir (Reasi district)**
6. India is part of global initiatives like **Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)**.

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Rare earth elements consist of 17 elements including lanthanides, scandium, and yttrium.
2. Lithium is classified as a rare earth element.
3. India has identified lithium reserves in Jammu & Kashmir.

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) 1 and 3 only

Source: The Hindu, Ministry of Mines, Geological Survey of India (GSI)

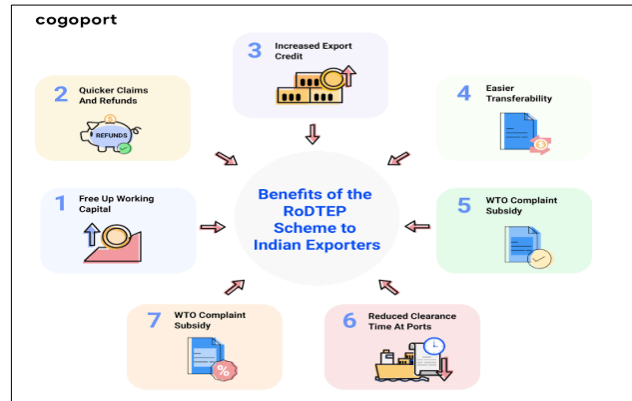
RoDTEP SCHEME – RESTORATION OF BENEFITS

News

Government of India has restored rates and value caps under the RoDTEP scheme for export products, aiming to boost exports by refunding embedded taxes and enhancing competitiveness in global markets.

Key Facts

1. RoDTEP benefits **restored with revised rates and value caps** for eligible export products.
2. Scheme ensures **refund of non-creditable taxes and duties** embedded in exports.
3. Implemented through a **digital end-to-end system** for transparency.
4. Covers **all sectors**, with emphasis on **labour-intensive industries**.
5. Includes **manufacturers and merchant exporters**, including e-commerce exports.
6. **Re-exported goods are not eligible** under the scheme.



Static Information

1. **RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products)** launched in **2021**.
2. Replaced:
 - **Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS)**
3. Objective:
 - Refund hidden taxes like:
 - ✓ VAT on fuel
 - ✓ Electricity duty
 - ✓ Embedded taxes not covered under GST
4. Administered by:
 - **Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance**
5. WTO compliant scheme:
 - Avoids export subsidies prohibited under WTO rules
6. Eligibility:
 - Exports must originate from **India**
 - Applicable to **SEZs and EOUs**
7. Benefits provided via:
 - **Duty credit scrips (electronic form)**

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding RoDTEP scheme:

1. It replaced the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS).
2. It provides direct export subsidies violating WTO norms.
3. It refunds embedded taxes and duties on exported products.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Source: PIB India, Ministry of Commerce & Industry

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding National Housing Bank (NHB):

1. It is a statutory body established under an Act of Parliament.
2. It regulates housing finance companies in India.
3. It operates under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

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: Press Information Bureau (PIB)

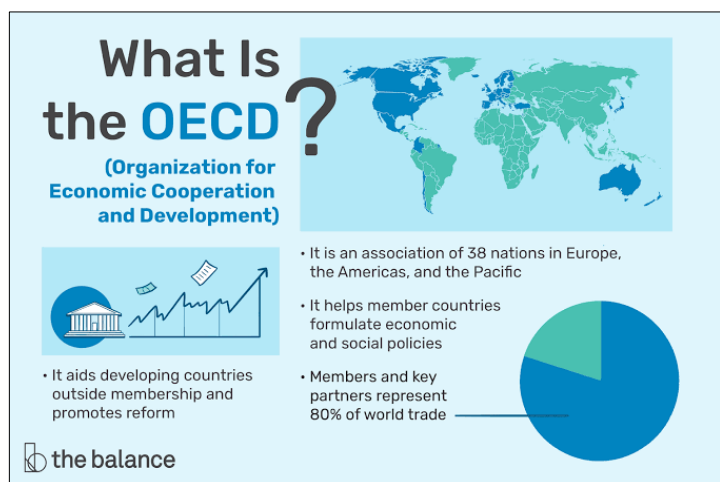
Organisation For Economic Cooperation and Development (Oecd)

News

Recently, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development projected India's economic growth at 6.1% for 2026–27, reflecting stable macroeconomic conditions and continued global economic engagement.

Key Facts

1. OECD was **established on December 14, 1960** by European nations along with the US and Canada.
2. It currently has **38 member countries**, mostly democratic and market-based economies.
3. OECD **publishes economic reports, forecasts, and statistical databases** globally.
4. It works to **combat bribery and financial crimes** internationally.
5. Maintains a **"black list" of uncooperative tax havens**.
6. India is a **non-member economy but an OECD Key Partner since 2007**.



Static Information

About OECD:

1. An **intergovernmental organisation** promoting **economic growth, trade, and policy coordination**.
2. Focus areas include:
 - Economic policy analysis
 - Taxation and anti-corruption
 - Education and employment
 - Environmental sustainability
3. Provides a platform for **policy dialogue and best practices sharing**.
4. Headquarters: Paris
5. Major publications:
 - Economic Outlook
 - PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)
6. Works closely with global institutions like:
 - World Bank

- International Monetary Fund

Practice Question

Q1. With reference to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), consider the following statements:

1. It is an intergovernmental organization promoting market-based economic policies.
2. India is a full member of the OECD.
3. OECD publishes global economic outlook reports.
4. Its headquarters is located in Geneva.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

Source: National Institute of Education (NIE) + OECD Official Resources

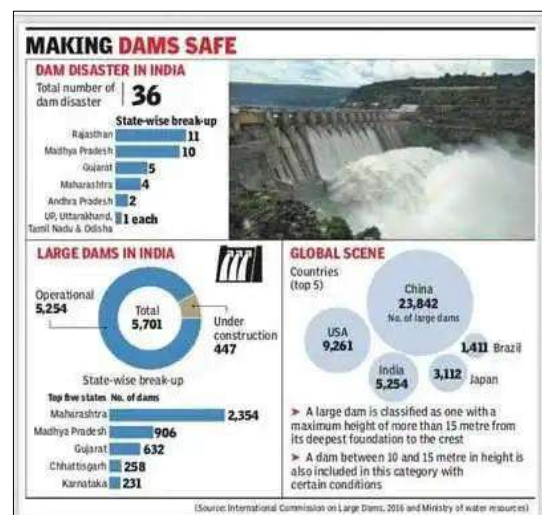
Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) Phase-II

News

Government informed Parliament about implementation of DRIP Phase-II & III along with Dam Safety Act, 2021, focusing on inspection, rehabilitation, digital monitoring, and strengthening institutional mechanisms for dam safety.

Key Facts

1. **Dam Safety Act, 2021** came into force on **30 December 2021**, establishing a comprehensive legal framework.
2. Provides for **surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance** of specified dams.
3. **Pre-monsoon and post-monsoon inspections** are mandatory across all States/UTs.
4. **Independent Panels of Experts** set up for safety evaluation of dams.
5. Year-wise inspections show increasing compliance (2023–2025 data given).
6. **DRIP Phase-II & III** implemented with **external funding** to improve dam safety.
7. Focus on **structural and non-structural measures**, including instrumentation and early warning systems.
8. **40 distressed dams rehabilitated** under the programme.
9. **Digital tools** developed for monitoring and compliance under DRIP-II.
10. Implementation agencies preparing **Emergency Action Plans (EAPs)** for disaster preparedness.
11. **Mock drills and community awareness programmes** conducted to improve resilience.



Static Information

- 1. Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)**
 - Centrally sponsored scheme launched in **2012**, later extended to Phase-II & III.
 - Aims at **improving safety and operational performance of dams**.
 - Funded by **World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**

2. **National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)**
 - Established under Dam Safety Act, 2021
 - Responsible for **implementing policies, regulating inspections, and ensuring compliance**
3. **National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS)**
 - Apex body to **frame dam safety policies and regulations**
4. **Central Water Commission (CWC)**
 - Provides **technical support, guidelines, and monitoring**
5. **India's Dam Profile**
 - Over **5,700 large dams** (3rd highest globally)
 - Many dams are **over 50 years old**, increasing safety concerns
6. **Emergency Action Plans (EAPs)**
 - Define **standard operating procedures during emergencies**
 - Include evacuation plans and warning dissemination
7. **Instrumentation of Dams**
 - Used for **real-time monitoring of structural health and hydrological parameters**

Practice Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Dam Safety in India:

1. The Dam Safety Act, 2021 provides a uniform framework for surveillance and inspection of specified dams.
2. National Dam Safety Authority is responsible for framing dam safety policies in India.
3. DRIP includes both structural and non-structural measures such as early warning systems.
4. Emergency Action Plans are mandatory for all specified dams.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1, 3 and 4 only

Source: PIB (Press Information Bureau)

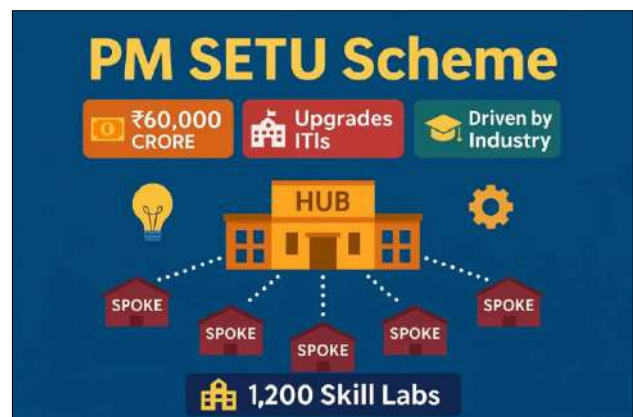
Operationalisation of PM-SETU Scheme

News

Government operationalised PM-SETU scheme to upgrade ITIs, enhance vocational training quality, promote industry-aligned courses, and strengthen institutional capacity through infrastructure modernization and global partnerships.

Key Facts

1. PM-SETU stands for **Pradhan Mantri Skilling & Employability through Upgraded ITIs**.
2. A **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** announced in **Budget 2024–25**.
3. Total outlay: **₹60,000 crore** (Centre, State, and Industry share).
4. Co-financed by **World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB)**.



5. Focus on **upgradation of 1,000 Government ITIs** under hub-and-spoke model.
6. Emphasis on **industry-aligned curriculum and demand-driven skilling**.
7. Establishment of **National Centres of Excellence** in select NSTIs.
8. Industry-led **Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs)** to implement reforms.

Static Information**1. Objective of PM-SETU**

- Improve **quality of training** in ITIs and NSTIs.
- Introduce **long-term and short-term courses** in emerging sectors.
- Strengthen **industry linkage and employment outcomes**.
- Enhance **capacity of trainers and institutions**.

2. Components of Scheme

- **Component I:** Upgradation of ITIs with **smart classrooms, modern labs, digital content**.
- **Component II:** Capacity augmentation of **National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs)**.

3. Institutional Framework

- **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** is nodal ministry.
- **National Steering Committee (NSC)** at central level for policy direction.
- **State Steering Committees (SSC)** for implementation oversight.

4. Implementation Features

- Selection of ITIs based on **industry demand and local needs**.
- Industry partners prepare **Strategic Investment Plans (SIP)**.
- Focus on **global partnerships** (e.g., Singapore, Germany, France).

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

1. PM-SETU is a centrally sponsored scheme aimed at upgrading ITIs.
2. The scheme is fully funded by the Government of India without external assistance.
3. It promotes industry-led training through Special Purpose Vehicles.

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)

New Reality: Fiscal Targets to Be Realigned on Updated GDP Estimates

Source: *The Hindu*

GS Paper Relevance**GS Paper III**

- Indian economy
- National income accounting
- Fiscal policy and fiscal deficit
- Economic data and statistical reforms

Introduction:

India has released revised national accounts data incorporating updated base year estimates and improved data sources. Such revisions are a standard statistical practice aimed at reflecting structural changes in the economy more accurately.

However, updated GDP figures do more than adjust growth rates — they alter fiscal ratios, debt metrics, and international comparisons. This creates a “new reality” for fiscal planning and macroeconomic management.



Key Issues

1. Impact on Fiscal Ratios

- An upward revision in GDP reduces fiscal deficit and debt ratios as a percentage of GDP, potentially altering fiscal space calculations.

2. Credibility and Data Quality

- Improved methodologies, expanded data sources, and better sectoral coverage enhance reliability.

3. Growth Rate Recalibration

- Revised estimates may show different growth trajectories compared to earlier series.

4. International Positioning

- Changes in GDP size can affect India’s global economic ranking.

5. Policy Signalling Risks

- There is a need to avoid interpreting statistical revision as automatic improvement in real economic conditions.

Key Facts for Prelims

- India periodically revises GDP base years to reflect structural economic changes.
- GDP can be measured using three methods: **Production (GVA), Expenditure, and Income approach.**
- Fiscal deficit is expressed as a percentage of GDP.
- India follows the **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003.**
- Gross Value Added (GVA) measures sectoral contribution to the economy.
- National accounts data are released by the **National Statistical Office (NSO).**

Global Practices

United States	The Bureau of Economic Analysis periodically revises GDP series incorporating new methodologies.
European Union	Eurostat harmonizes national accounts data across member states.
United Kingdom	Office for National Statistics (ONS) conducts regular methodological revisions.
Comparative Insight	Advanced economies regularly update statistical systems to reflect digital economy expansion, informal sector measurement, and service-sector growth.

Indian Policies / Institutional Framework

National Statistical Office (NSO)	Responsible for compiling and publishing national accounts.
FRBM Act, 2003	Mandates fiscal discipline and targets deficit reduction.
Base Year Revision	Allows incorporation of new surveys, sectoral data, and methodological refinements.
Use of Surveys	Includes Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), and corporate data filings.

Way Forward

- Maintain Statistical Transparency**
 - Clearly communicate methodology and implications of revisions.
- Align Fiscal Strategy Carefully**
 - Reassess fiscal targets under FRBM while maintaining prudence.
- Strengthen Data Infrastructure**
 - Enhance coverage of informal sector, digital economy, and services.
- Avoid Complacency**
 - Recognise that improved ratios do not automatically translate into stronger fundamentals.
- Institutional Independence**
 - Preserve autonomy and credibility of statistical institutions.

Conclusion:

Statistical revisions are not cosmetic adjustments but reflections of evolving economic structures. While revised GDP figures may improve fiscal ratios, they should not substitute for structural reforms, investment, employment generation, and productivity growth.

Sound fiscal management depends not merely on favourable denominators but on credible, transparent, and robust economic fundamentals.

Prelims MCQ

Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. Fiscal deficit is calculated as a percentage of GDP.
2. The National Statistical Office (NSO) compiles national income data in India.
3. Base year revisions automatically increase real economic output.

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 — base year revisions may alter measurement but do not automatically increase real output.)

Mains Practice Question

Q.2 “Revisions in GDP data alter fiscal arithmetic but do not automatically strengthen economic fundamentals.” Discuss in the context of India’s fiscal management framework. (250 words)

Revisiting *The Wealth of Nations* and its Suspicion of Concentrated Power

Source: *The Indian Express* (Opinion)

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper III – Indian Economy (Economic Thought, Markets, Role of State)

Introduction:

The ideas presented in **Adam Smith's** landmark book **An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations** (1776) continue to influence modern economic debates. Smith's work laid the foundations of classical economics while also expressing caution about **concentrated economic and political power**. The article revisits Smith's arguments to highlight that while markets promote prosperity, unchecked concentration of wealth and influence can distort institutions, public policy, and social outcomes.

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article

1. Suspicion of Concentrated Economic Power

- Smith warned that when economic power becomes concentrated among elites, it can influence public policy for private benefit.

Example: Large economic actors shaping regulations or trade rules to favour their interests.

2. Critique of Mercantilism

- The article notes that Smith criticised mercantilist policies such as monopolies and trade restrictions, arguing that they often benefited narrow interests rather than society as a whole.

3. State Capture by Vested Interests

- Smith observed that governments could be influenced by powerful economic groups.
- Such capture may lead to policies that prioritise private gain over public welfare.

4. Social Consequences of Extreme Specialisation

- While the division of labour increases productivity, Smith acknowledged that excessive specialisation may lead to **monotonous and degrading work conditions**, affecting human development.

5. Moral Dimension of Economic Systems

- Smith believed markets function best within a framework of **justice, institutions, and public education**, recognising that economic progress also carries moral and social costs.

Key Facts for Prelims

- **1776** – Publication of *The Wealth of Nations*.
- The book challenged the dominant economic doctrine of **Mercantilism**, which favoured state control, trade restrictions, and accumulation of bullion.
- Smith argued that **national wealth should be measured by productivity and living standards**, not merely by trade surpluses.
- The concept of **division of labour** was central to improving productivity and economic efficiency.
- Smith's ideas influenced later political and economic developments including debates during the **American Revolution**.

Global Practices

Several countries have attempted to balance market efficiency with checks on concentrated power.

United States	Strong antitrust laws regulate monopolistic behaviour and market dominance.
European Union	Competition policy actively monitors digital and technology giants.
Nordic countries	Combine market economies with strong welfare systems to reduce inequality.

These examples show that modern economies often adopt **mixed approaches—markets supported by regulatory safeguards**.

Indian Policies / Institutional Framework

Competition Regulation	Competition Commission of India prevents anti-competitive practices and monopolistic behaviour.
Industrial Policy Reforms	Liberalisation since 1991 economic reforms aimed to reduce excessive state control and encourage competition.
Consumer Protection	The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 strengthens consumer rights and accountability of businesses.
Digital Market Oversight	Ongoing discussions on regulating large digital platforms reflect concerns similar to Smith's warnings about concentrated economic power.

Way Forward

- Strengthen Competition Regulation**
 - Ensure robust enforcement against monopolistic practices in traditional and digital sectors.
- Promote Inclusive Economic Growth**
 - Encourage policies that distribute economic gains across regions and social groups.
- Enhance Institutional Transparency**
 - Prevent policy capture through stronger regulatory oversight and accountability.
- Invest in Education and Skill Development**
 - Address concerns arising from extreme labour specialisation by promoting diversified skills.
- Balance Markets and Public Welfare**
 - Maintain a policy framework where market efficiency operates alongside social protection.

Conclusion

The Wealth of Nations remains influential not merely for its advocacy of markets but also for its **careful warning against concentrated power and institutional capture**. Smith's insights underline the importance of maintaining a balance between economic freedom and regulatory oversight. In contemporary policy discussions, these principles continue to guide debates on competition, inequality, and governance.

Prelims Practice MCQ

Q1. With reference to the ideas of Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*, consider the following statements:

1. National wealth should primarily be measured by accumulation of precious metals.
2. Division of labour enhances productivity.
3. Governments can sometimes be influenced by vested economic interests.

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: B

Mains Practice Question

Q2. "Adam Smith's economic thought was not merely a defence of free markets but also a warning against concentrated economic power." Discuss its relevance in contemporary economic governance. (250 words)

Holding Up Half the Sky on India's Farms

Source: *The Hindu* – Madhura Swaminathan & Arindam Das

GS Paper Relevance

GS Paper I

- Role of women in agriculture and rural society

GS Paper III

Agriculture and allied sectors, Rural economy and labour markets, Inclusive growth

Introduction

Women constitute nearly half of **India's agricultural workforce and perform critical roles in crop cultivation, livestock rearing, and allied rural activities**. Despite their substantial contribution, women's labour in agriculture remains under-recognised due to gaps in statistical measurement, prevalence of unpaid work, and persistent wage disparities. Recognising and valuing women's role in agriculture is essential not only for gender equity but also for improving productivity, rural livelihoods, and inclusive economic growth.

Key Facts for Prelims

- **Women constitute nearly half of India's agricultural workforce.**
- According to labour surveys, **around 57% of women workers are employed in agriculture.**
- A majority of rural women workers are **self-employed or unpaid family labourers.**
- Data sources used for labour statistics include:
 - **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**
 - **All India Debt and Investment Survey (AIDIS)**
 - **National Sample Survey (NSS)**
- Women contribute significantly to **livestock activities such as dairy production**, which is one of the fastest-growing agricultural sectors.

Key Issues

1. Underestimation of Women's Work

- Large-scale labour surveys often underestimate women's contribution because much of their work is unpaid family labour or interspersed with domestic responsibilities.

2. High Share of Informal and Self-Employment

- Around **60% of rural women workers are self-employed**, often working on family farms without formal wages.

3. Gender Wage Gap

- Women agricultural labourers typically earn significantly lower wages than men across many regions.

4. Limited Land Ownership

- Women rarely own agricultural land, limiting access to credit, government schemes, and institutional support.

5. Sectoral Segmentation

- Women are largely concentrated in low-paying agricultural tasks while mechanised or higher-income activities remain male dominated.

Global Practices

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	FAO emphasises gender equality in agriculture through: Land ownership rights, Access to finance, Agricultural training programs
African Agricultural Cooperatives	Several African countries have successfully integrated women into farmer cooperatives and agricultural value chains.

Latin American Land Reforms	Countries like Brazil and Mexico expanded women's land rights to improve rural livelihoods and agricultural productivity.
Comparative Insight	Countries that strengthen women's property rights and access to agricultural resources often experience higher farm productivity and improved food security.

Indian Policies / Committees

Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)	Promotes sustainable agriculture practices and strengthens women farmers' participation.
National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)	Supports women self-help groups and rural entrepreneurship.
Women Farmer Recognition Initiatives	Government initiatives aim to recognise women as "farmers" rather than merely farm labourers.
Gender Budgeting	Ensures public spending considers gender-based economic outcomes.

Way Forward

- 1. Improve Data Collection**
 - Introduce gender-disaggregated data for agricultural labour to capture women's actual contribution.
- 2. Strengthen Land Rights**
 - Promote joint land titles and inheritance rights for women farmers.
- 3. Ensure Equal Wages**
 - Implement strict enforcement of equal wage provisions under labour laws.
- 4. Expand Skill Development**
 - Provide training in modern agricultural techniques, mechanisation, and agribusiness.
- 5. Promote Institutional Participation**
 - Encourage women's participation in Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and agricultural cooperatives.

Conclusion

Women sustain a substantial part of India's agricultural economy, yet their labour remains partially invisible in official statistics and policy discourse. Empowering women farmers through recognition, land rights, fair wages, and institutional support can strengthen both gender equity and agricultural productivity.

An inclusive agricultural transformation must acknowledge the central role women already play in sustaining rural livelihoods.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) provides labour market statistics in India.
2. A majority of women working in agriculture in India are unpaid family workers or self-employed.
3. Women own a majority of agricultural land holdings 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

Answer: a) 1 and 2 only

Mains Practice Question

Q2. Women constitute a significant share of India's agricultural workforce, yet their contribution remains under-recognised. Examine the challenges faced by women farmers and suggest policy measures to address them. (250 words)

Economic Survey Promises and the Impact of New Labour Codes

Source: *The Hindu – Opinion*

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper III:** Indian Economy – Labour Reforms, Employment
- **GS Paper II:** Governance and Policy Implementation

Introduction:

Labour reforms are a critical component of India's strategy to improve **ease of doing business, formalisation of employment, and economic growth**. The introduction of four consolidated labour codes aims to simplify numerous labour laws and create a modern regulatory framework. While these reforms promise improvements in labour market efficiency, their **actual impact will depend on effective implementation and balance between worker protection and economic flexibility**.

Labour Codes	Acts being subsumed
Code on Wages	• Payment of Wages Act, 1936 • Minimum Wages Act, 1948 • Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 • Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code	• Factories Act, 1948 • Mines Act, 1952 • Dock Workers (Safety, Health and Welfare) Act, 1986 • Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 • Plantations Labour Act, 1951 • Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 • Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979

Key Issues Highlighted in the Article

1. Formalisation of Employment

- The reforms aim to increase formal employment through simplified regulations, but concerns remain about **whether workers will actually gain improved protections and benefits**.

2. Implementation Challenges

- Labour is a **concurrent subject**, requiring coordination between the Union and state governments. Differences in state rules may affect the pace and uniformity of implementation.

3. Worker Protection and Security

- While the codes promise improved social security coverage, questions remain about **adequate safeguards for informal and vulnerable workers**.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. Four Labour Codes in India:

- **Code on Wages, 2019**
 - **Industrial Relations Code, 2020**
 - **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020**
 - **Code on Social Security, 2020**
2. These codes consolidate **29 central labour laws** into four simplified legislative frameworks.
 3. **Code on Wages:** Establishes a universal minimum wage and timely payment of wages.
 4. **Industrial Relations Code:** Regulates trade unions, layoffs, and industrial disputes.
 5. **Social Security Code:** Extends benefits such as insurance and retirement security to workers including those in the gig economy.
 6. Labour codes aim to **increase labour market flexibility while encouraging formal employment**.

4. Employer Flexibility vs Worker Rights

- Some provisions intended to make hiring and layoffs easier for businesses have raised concerns about **job security and bargaining power of workers**.

5. Administrative and Institutional Capacity

- Successful implementation requires **digital systems, labour inspectors, and grievance mechanisms**, which may vary in effectiveness across states.

Global Practices: Comparative Perspectives

Germany	Germany balances labour market flexibility with strong social security systems and worker participation in industrial decision-making .
United States	The U.S. labour market offers greater flexibility for employers , but social security coverage and worker protections vary.
Nordic Countries	Countries such as Denmark and Sweden follow the “flexicurity” model , combining labour market flexibility with strong welfare protections.
Comparative Insight	Successful labour reforms often balance economic competitiveness with worker welfare and social protection systems .

Indian Policies / Committees

Second National Commission on Labour	Recommended rationalising numerous labour laws into a simplified legal framework , which later influenced the labour codes.
Economic Survey Recommendations	The Economic Survey has repeatedly emphasised labour market reforms, formalisation, and productivity improvements .
Digital Compliance Systems	Government initiatives aim to simplify labour law compliance through online registration, reporting, and inspection mechanisms .
Social Security Expansion	Policies are being designed to extend pension, insurance, and welfare benefits to informal sector workers.
State-Level Labour Reforms	Several states have introduced additional reforms to attract investment and industrial development .

Way Forward

1. **Ensure Balanced Implementation:** Labour reforms should maintain a balance between **economic growth and worker welfare**.
2. **Strengthen Social Security Coverage:** Expanding social protection for informal and gig workers is essential for **inclusive economic development**.
3. **Improve Labour Market Data:** Reliable employment data can help policymakers design **evidence-based labour policies**.
4. **Enhance Institutional Capacity:** Strengthening labour departments and grievance mechanisms will improve **policy implementation and compliance**.
5. **Promote Skill Development:** Investing in skill development programs can improve **productivity and employment opportunities** for workers.

Conclusion

India’s labour codes represent an important attempt to modernize labour regulation and support economic growth. However, the success of these reforms will depend on **effective implementation, institutional capacity, and maintaining a balance between labour flexibility and worker protection**.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the new labour codes in India:

1. The four labour codes consolidate 29 central labour laws.
2. The Code on Social Security aims to extend social security benefits to workers including those in the gig economy.
3. Labour is exclusively a Union subject under the Constitution of India.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. The consolidation of labour laws into four labour codes represents a major structural reform in India's labour market. Discuss the opportunities and challenges associated with their implementation.

Preparing India for a True Innovation-Led Economy

Source: The Hindu – Opinion

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper III:** Indian Economy, Science & Technology, Innovation and R&D
- **GS Paper II:** Governance, Public Policy, Institutional Reforms

Introduction:

In the contemporary global economy, **innovation has emerged as a key driver of long-term economic growth and competitiveness**. Countries that successfully build strong research ecosystems, technology industries, and knowledge-based institutions often achieve higher productivity and sustainable development. For India, transitioning toward an **innovation-led economy** is essential to strengthen manufacturing, improve global competitiveness, and generate high-quality employment.

Key Issues Highlighted

1. **Low Investment in Research and Development:** India's spending on R&D remains relatively low compared to advanced economies, limiting the development of **frontier technologies and high-value innovations**.
2. **Weak Industry-Academia Linkages:** Collaboration between universities, research institutions, and industry is limited, reducing the **commercialization of research outcomes**.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **Research and Development (R&D) Expenditure in India:** Approximately **0.7% of GDP**, significantly lower than many advanced economies.
2. **Global Innovation Index (GII):** Measures innovation performance of countries based on parameters such as institutions, human capital, infrastructure, and knowledge outputs.
3. **Major Innovation Hubs Globally:** The **United States, China, South Korea, and Germany** have strong ecosystems linking universities, industry, and government.
4. **Startup Ecosystem in India:** India hosts one of the **largest startup ecosystems globally**, supported by initiatives like Startup India.
5. **Knowledge Economy:** An economic system where **growth is primarily driven by knowledge, technology, and innovation** rather than traditional factors of production.



3. **Institutional and Policy Fragmentation:** Multiple government schemes exist to support innovation, but **lack of coordination and implementation challenges** reduce their effectiveness.
4. **Dependence on Imported Technologies:** India continues to rely heavily on **foreign technologies and intellectual property**, which affects domestic technological self-reliance.
5. **Skill and Infrastructure Constraints:** Innovation requires skilled human capital, advanced laboratories, and robust digital infrastructure, which remain **unevenly distributed across regions**.

Global Practices:

United States	The U.S. innovation ecosystem is driven by strong university research, venture capital networks, and private sector investment .
South Korea	South Korea invests heavily in R&D and promotes technology-driven industries , particularly electronics and advanced manufacturing.
Germany	Germany's innovation model relies on strong industry-research collaboration , especially through institutions such as applied research centres.
Comparative Insight	Successful innovation ecosystems combine public investment, private sector participation, strong institutions, and supportive policy frameworks .

Indian Policies / Committees

National Innovation System Initiatives	India has established several programs aimed at strengthening research, entrepreneurship, and innovation ecosystems.
Startup India Initiative	Encourages entrepreneurship by providing financial support, incubation, and regulatory facilitation for startups.
Atal Innovation Mission	Promotes innovation and problem-solving through innovation labs, incubators, and entrepreneurship programs .
National Education Policy (NEP) 2020	Emphasizes research, multidisciplinary education, and innovation ecosystems in universities .
Digital and Technology Missions	Government initiatives promote digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence, and emerging technologies to support innovation-led growth.

Way Forward

1. **Increase R&D Investment:** India should progressively raise public and private investment in **research and development**.
2. **Strengthen Industry-Academia Collaboration:** Creating structured partnerships between universities and industries can improve **technology transfer and commercialization**.
3. **Build Innovation Clusters:** Developing regional innovation hubs with strong infrastructure can support **research, startups, and manufacturing ecosystems**.
4. **Encourage Private Sector Participation:** Policies should incentivize private companies to invest more in **technology development and research activities**.
5. **Develop Skilled Human Capital:** Expanding STEM education and research training will create a workforce capable of **supporting advanced technological innovation**.

Conclusion

India's aspiration to become a leading global economy depends significantly on its ability to **strengthen innovation capacity and technological self-reliance**. By increasing research investment, improving

institutional coordination, and fostering collaboration between academia, industry, and government, India can gradually transition toward a **sustainable innovation-driven growth model**.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding innovation and research ecosystems:

1. Research and Development (R&D) expenditure in India is less than 1% of GDP.
2. The Global Innovation Index measures innovation performance of countries.
3. Innovation-led economies rely primarily on natural resources rather than knowledge and technology.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. "Innovation-driven growth is essential for India's long-term economic competitiveness."

Discuss the challenges and policy measures required to build a strong innovation ecosystem in India.

The Opportunity in Cameroon to Rebalance the WTO

Source: The Hindu – Opinion

GS Paper Relevance:

- **GS Paper II:** International Organisations (WTO), Global Governance
- **GS Paper III:** Economy (Global Trade, Trade Policy)

Introduction

Global trade is increasingly shaped by geopolitics, where economic tools are used for strategic influence. In this evolving context, the upcoming WTO ministerial meeting presents an opportunity to reassess and rebalance the multilateral trading system to ensure it remains relevant, credible, and equitable.

Key Issues

1. **Crisis in Dispute Settlement Mechanism**
 - The Appellate Body remains non-functional
 - Weakens enforceability of trade rules
2. **Rise of Protectionism and Unilateralism**
 - Increasing use of tariffs and economic coercion
 - Shift from multilateralism to bilateral deals
3. **Outdated Trade Rules**
 - WTO rules designed for 20th-century trade
 - Inadequate for:
 - ✓ Digital trade
 - ✓ Climate-related measures
4. **Inequities in Global Trade**

Key Facts for Prelims

- **World Trade Organization:** Established in 1995 to regulate international trade.
- **Dispute Settlement System:** Ensures rule-based resolution of trade disputes.
- **Appellate Body:** Final authority in dispute settlement; currently non-functional due to appointment issues.
- **Most Favoured Nation (MFN):** Principle ensuring equal trade treatment among members.
- WTO has **166 member countries**.

- Developing countries argue:
 - ✓ Rules are legally correct but not always fair
- Issues like agricultural subsidies remain unresolved

5. Fragmentation of Trade Governance

- Countries forming smaller groupings outside WTO
- Risk of weakening global trade architecture

Global Practices

United States	Prefers bilateral agreements and strategic tariffs.
European Union	Supports rules-based multilateralism with reforms.
China	Uses state-led trade strategies and supports WTO continuity.
Lesson for India	Promote reformed multilateralism while safeguarding national interests.

Indian Policies / Committees

India's WTO Strategy	Focus on protecting developing country interests.
Trade Facilitation Measures	Simplifying customs and logistics.
Agricultural Negotiation Stance	Advocating food security and subsidy flexibility.
Digital Trade Policy	Gradual engagement with evolving global norms.

Way Forward

1. **Restore Dispute Settlement System**
 - Revive Appellate Body for credibility and enforcement
2. **Update Trade Rules**
 - Incorporate:
 - ✓ Digital trade
 - ✓ Climate-related regulations
3. **Balance Fairness with Predictability**
 - Address subsidy disputes
 - Ensure equitable treatment for developing countries
4. **Promote Inclusive Multilateralism**
 - Integrate smaller group initiatives into WTO framework
5. **Strengthen Institutional Flexibility**
 - Allow adaptive reforms while maintaining rule-based order

Conclusion

The WTO remains central to maintaining stability in global trade, especially for developing economies. Reform, rather than replacement, is the need of the hour. A balanced approach that restores trust, updates rules, and ensures fairness can help the WTO remain a cornerstone of global economic governance.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The World Trade Organization was established in 1995.
2. The Appellate Body is part of the WTO dispute settlement mechanism.
3. The Most Favoured Nation principle allows preferential treatment to select countries.

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)

Mains Question

Q2. "The crisis in the WTO reflects deeper structural challenges in global trade governance." Discuss the need and direction for WTO reforms in the current geopolitical context.

AI-powered Tax Governance in India and its Challenges

Source: The Hindu

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper III (Economy, Science & Technology), GS Paper II (Governance)

Introduction:

India's tax system has increasingly turned to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data analytics to improve compliance and revenue mobilisation. Initiatives like Project Insight aim to move from reactive enforcement to predictive governance. While early outcomes indicate improved detection and voluntary compliance, the shift also raises concerns around fairness, transparency, and institutional safeguards.

Key Issues

1. Data Quality and Reliability Concerns

- AI outputs depend on data quality; complex financial patterns may be misinterpreted as evasion.

2. Algorithmic Bias

- AI models trained on historical data may replicate socio-economic or geographic biases.
- Example: Certain taxpayer groups may face disproportionate scrutiny.

3. Transparency and Due Process Deficit

- Taxpayers may not understand why they are flagged.
- Limited clarity on algorithmic decision-making affects fairness.

4. Privacy and Data Security Risks

- Use of sensitive financial and personal data increases vulnerability to breaches.

5. Institutional Gaps (Lack of Oversight)

- Absence of an independent ombudsman for AI-driven tax disputes.
- Limited external audits of risk-scoring models.

Key Facts for Prelims (Static + Factual)

1. India historically has a low tax-to-GDP ratio (~16–17%) among emerging economies.
2. **Project Insight (PI):** AI-based initiative by the Income Tax Department to enhance compliance.
3. **INTRAC (Income Tax Transaction Analysis Centre):** Uses big data from banking, GST, property, and securities transactions.
4. **NUDGE Strategy:** Non-intrusive reminders (SMS/email) to encourage voluntary compliance.
5. AI in taxation is part of broader e-governance and digital public infrastructure reforms.

Global Practices

United States	Uses AI for fraud detection with strong legal safeguards and appeal systems.
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United Kingdom	HMRC deploys “Connect” system but ensures taxpayer rights through transparent processes.
Australia	Combines AI with human review, especially in high-impact decisions.
Comparison	India has made significant strides in AI adoption but needs to strengthen accountability, transparency, and grievance redress mechanisms.

Indian Policies / Committees

Project Insight	Core AI-based compliance system.
Faceless Assessment Scheme	Reduces human interface, supported by analytics.
Digital India Initiative	Enables data integration across sectors.
Data Protection Framework (evolving)	Addresses privacy concerns in digital governance.

Way Forward

- Ensure Human-in-the-Loop Systems**
 - Critical tax decisions must include human review for fairness.
- Improve Algorithm Transparency**
 - Provide explainable AI outputs to taxpayers.
- Strengthen Data Governance Frameworks**
 - Standardise data quality checks and ensure secure data handling.
- Establish Independent Oversight Mechanism**
 - Create an ombudsman for AI-related tax disputes.
- Regular Audits of AI Systems**
 - Conduct third-party audits to detect bias and improve accuracy.

Conclusion

AI-driven tax governance represents a significant evolution in India’s fiscal administration. While it enhances efficiency and compliance, its long-term success depends on balancing technological capability with institutional trust. A calibrated approach that integrates innovation with accountability will ensure that tax governance remains both effective and equitable.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding AI in India’s tax administration:

1. Project Insight uses data analytics to identify tax evasion patterns.
2. INTRAC processes data only from income tax returns filed by taxpayers.
3. NUDGE strategy involves non-intrusive communication to improve compliance.

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

Mains Question

Q2. Discuss the role of Artificial Intelligence in improving tax governance in India. What are the associated ethical and institutional challenges?

New GDP Series: Charting the Path Ahead

Source: The Hindu

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper III (Indian Economy)

Introduction:

India has introduced a new GDP series with base year 2022–23, aiming to provide a more realistic and updated picture of economic activity. By incorporating improved methodologies and expanded data sources, the revision seeks to align national income estimation with evolving economic structures and international best practices.

Key Issues

- Data Allocation Challenges Across States**
 - Difficulty in distributing national corporate GVA to States due to enterprise-level data limitations.
- Private Corporate Sector Measurement Gaps**
 - Heavy reliance on MCA database; underreporting or missing firms affect accuracy.
- Sampling Limitations in ASI**
 - Truncated sampling frames may distort State-level industrial output estimates.
- Volatility in Household Sector Estimates**
 - Use of survey-based proxies (PLFS, ASUSE) introduces fluctuations across years and regions.
- Methodological Transition Issues**
 - Shift from earlier extrapolation methods to direct estimation may create comparability issues with past series.

Key Facts for Prelims

- Base Year:** Updated to 2022–23 (earlier 2011–12).
- GDP (Nominal Estimates):** Approx. ₹261.18 lakh crore (2022–23), ₹289.84 lakh crore (2023–24), ₹318.07 lakh crore (2024–25).
- Sectoral Share (GVA):**
 - **Primary:** ~21.4%
 - **Secondary:** ~25.8%
 - **Tertiary:** ~52.9%
- Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE):** ~56% of GDP.
- Key Data Sources:**
 - Annual Survey of Industries (ASI)
 - Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)
 - Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)
 - Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA-21 database)

Global Practices

United States	Frequent base year revisions with strong administrative data integration.
European Union	Harmonised GDP methodology under ESA (European System of Accounts).
OECD Countries	Increasing use of real-time big data and digital transaction records.
Comparison	India is moving closer to global standards but still faces challenges in data depth, coverage, and consistency, especially in the informal sector.

Indian Policies / Committees

National Accounts Statistics (NAS)	Framework for GDP estimation.
Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics	Guides methodology revisions.
Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)	Nodal agency for GDP estimates.
Reforms include integration of MCA, GST, and survey datasets.	

Way Forward

1. Strengthen Data Integration

- Link GST, MCA, and survey databases for comprehensive coverage.

2. Improve State-Level Estimation Methods

- Develop better allocation models for corporate sector GVA.

3. Enhance Survey Design and Sampling

- Upgrade ASI and household surveys for greater reliability.

4. Leverage Technology and Big Data

- Use digital transaction data for real-time economic indicators.

5. Ensure Transparency in Methodology

- Regularly publish detailed methodological notes for credibility and comparability.

Conclusion

The new GDP series marks a significant step towards improving the accuracy and credibility of India's national accounts. While methodological refinements and better data integration enhance reliability, addressing structural challenges—particularly in measurement and consistency—will be crucial for informed policymaking and economic analysis.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding India's GDP estimation:

1. The base year for the latest GDP series has been updated to 2022–23.
2. The Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) is used only for agricultural sector estimation.
3. The MCA-21 database is used for estimating corporate sector output.

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

Mains Question

Q2. Discuss the significance of the new GDP series in India. What are the methodological improvements and associated challenges in national income estimation?

Looking back at the lockdown, lessons in leadership

Source: The Hindu

GS Paper Relevance: GS Paper II (Governance, Disaster Management), GS Paper IV (Ethics, Leadership)

Introduction:

The COVID-19 lockdown marked an unprecedented governance challenge, requiring swift decisions under uncertainty. It highlighted that effective leadership in crises is defined not only by decisiveness but also by coordination, empathy, and adaptability.

Key Issues**1. Uncertainty in Decision-Making**

- Limited information at the onset required rapid policy responses with high stakes.

2. Balancing Health and Economy

- Lockdowns saved lives but disrupted livelihoods, especially for informal workers.

3. Implementation Challenges

- Ensuring supply chains, healthcare capacity, and essential services across regions.

4. Vulnerability of Informal Sector

- Migrant workers and small businesses faced severe disruptions.

5. Digital Divide and Inequality

- While technology aided governance, unequal access limited its effectiveness.

Key Facts for Prelims

1. **COVID-19 Pandemic:** Global health emergency declared by World Health Organization in 2020.
2. **India Lockdown:** Nationwide lockdown announced on March 25, 2020.
3. **Disaster Management Framework:** Guided by Disaster Management Act.
4. **Public Health System:** State subject under Indian Constitution (Seventh Schedule).
5. **Digital Tools:** Use of tracking, data dashboards, and communication platforms during the pandemic.

Global Practices

East Asia (South Korea, Taiwan)	Early testing, contact tracing, and targeted restrictions.
Europe	Strong welfare support systems during lockdowns.
New Zealand	Strict lockdown with clear communication and public trust.
Comparison	India adopted a strict nationwide lockdown initially, but faced challenges due to scale, diversity, and socio-economic disparities.

Indian Policies / Committees

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)	Coordinated response under DM Act.
PM Garib Kalyan Yojana	Relief measures for vulnerable sections.
Aarogya Setu App	Digital contact tracing tool.
State-Level Responses	Decentralised implementation by states like Tamil Nadu.

Way Forward

1. Strengthen Public Health Infrastructure

- Invest in hospitals, workforce, and emergency preparedness.

2. Institutionalise Crisis Preparedness

- Develop robust contingency planning and simulation exercises.

3. Enhance Cooperative Federalism

- Improve coordination between Centre, States, and local bodies.

4. Build Social Safety Nets

- Expand support systems for informal workers and vulnerable groups.

5. Bridge Digital Divide

- Ensure inclusive access to digital governance tools.

Conclusion

The lockdown experience underscores that crisis leadership requires a balance of decisiveness, compassion, and adaptability. Strengthening institutional capacity and learning from past experiences will be crucial for managing future emergencies effectively.

Prelims MCQ

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding India's COVID-19 response:

1. The nationwide lockdown was implemented under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
2. Public health is exclusively a Union subject in India.
3. Digital tools like Aarogya Setu were used for contact tracing.

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

Mains Question

Q2. "Crisis leadership is as much about coordination and empathy as it is about decision-making." Discuss in the context of India's COVID-19 lockdown experience.

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