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CSE (Pre.) 2026

CURRENT *EDGE*

Monthly Magazine

OCTOBER 2025

Sessions | Workbooks | Test Series | k-Snippet 365+

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Current Edge



CURRENT *EDGE*

One-Stop Current Affairs Prelims 2026

Sessions || TESTS || WORKBOOKS || k-Snippet 365+
Comprehensive Coverage



Sessions: 31 Sessions (Roughly 50 hours)

- ★ Phase 1: 10 sessions (Month-by-Month CA)
- ★ Phase 2: 12 sessions (Subject-wise CA)
- ★ Phase 3: 9 sessions (Snippets + Rapid Revision)



Materials: 22 Weekly Materials + CA Snippet

- ★ Phase 1: 10 Workbooks (≈ 50 pages each)
- ★ Phase 2: 12 Subject-wise Compilations
- ★ Phase 3: 1 Snippet Booklet (≈ 200 pages)



Tests: 10 Tests (8 HLTs & 2 FLTs) | 600 MCQs

- ★ Phase 1: 3 Tests (150 MCQs)
- ★ Phase 2: 5 Tests (250 MCQs)
- ★ Phase 3: 2 Full-Length Tests (200 MCQs)

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CURRENT EDGE SCHEDULE

Phase-I: Month-by-Month Mastery

Session	Date	Coverage	Material	Test (Q)
SESSION 1	1 Nov (Sat)	Jan + Feb 2025	Workbook 1	–
SESSION 2	8 Nov (Sat)	Mar + Apr 2025	Workbook 2	–
SESSION 3	15 Nov (Sat)	May 2025	Workbook 3	–
SESSION 4	22 Nov (Sat)	June 2025	Workbook 4	23 Nov (Sun) – Test 1 (50 MCQs)
SESSION 5	29 Nov (Sat)	July 2025	Workbook 5	–
SESSION 6	6 Dec (Sat)	Aug 2025	Workbook 6	–
SESSION 7	13 Dec (Sat)	Sep 2025	Workbook 7	14 Dec (Sun) – Test 2 (50 MCQs)
SESSION 8	20 Dec (Sat)	Oct 2025	Workbook 8	–
SESSION 9	27 Dec (Sat)	Nov 2025	Workbook 9	–
SESSION 10	3 Jan (Sat)	Dec 2025	Workbook 10	4 Jan (Sun) – Test 3 (50 MCQs)

Phase-II: Subject-wise CA Modules

Week	Date	Coverage	Material	Test (Q)
01	5–10 Jan	Polity – Part 1	Polity CA Part 1	–
02	12–17 Jan	Polity – Part 2	Polity CA Part 2	18 Jan (Sun) – Test 4 (50 MCQs)
03	19–24 Jan	Geo. & Env. Part 1	Geo-Env CA Part 1	–
04	27–31 Jan	Geo. & Env. Part 2	Geo-Env CA Part 2	1 Feb (Sun) – Test 5 (50 MCQs)
05	2–7 Feb	Eco. & Agr. Part-1	Eco-Agri CA Part 1	–
06	9–14 Feb	Eco. & Agr. Part-2	Eco-Agri CA Part 2	15 Feb (Sun) – Test 6 (50 MCQs)
07	16–21 Feb	Science & Tech	Sci-Tech CA	–
08	23–28 Feb	International Relations	IR CA	1 Mar (Sun) – Test 7 (50 MCQs)
09	2–7 Mar	History & Art–Culture	History CA	–
10	9–14 Mar	Government Schemes	Schemes CA	–
11	16–21 Mar	Society & Social Issues	Society-Social Issues CA	–
12	23–28 Mar	Updation	CA Update	29 Mar (Sun) – Test 8 (50 MCQs)

Note: Session Date will be notify

Phase-III: CA Snippet Sessions

Date	Snippet Focus	Test (Q)
6 Apr (Mon)	Polity	–
8 Apr (Wed)	Geography	–
10 Apr (Fri)	Environment	12 Apr (Sun) – CA FLT 1 (100 MCQs)
13 Apr (Mon)	Economy	–
15 Apr (Wed)	Science & Tech	–
17 Apr (Fri)	International Relations	19 Apr (Sun) – CA FLT 2 (100 MCQs)
20 Apr (Mon)	History & Art–Culture	–
22 Apr (Wed)	Government Schemes	–
24 Apr (Fri)	Society & Social Issues	–

Complete CA Snippet File Launch Release in 1st Week of April 2026

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CURRENT *EDGE*

One-Stop Current Affairs Prelims 2026

Other Details

- Start: **1st Nov, 2025**
- Test Time: **10:00 AM**
- Class Time: **05:00 PM**
- Mode: **Online | Offline**
- Medium: **English**

FEE
₹4,000/-



Enroll: <https://bit.ly/3WkWhj3>

Concession Details

Kalam IAS Students: 10%

UPSC Interview Student: 20%

Selected Students: 25%

CSE 2024 TOPPERS



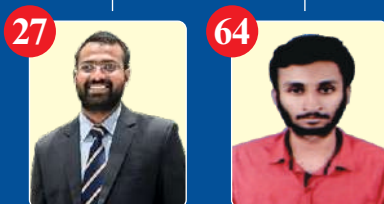
CSE 2021



MEHAK
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CSE 2022



YADAV
SURYABHAN

ANIRUDHA
PANDEY

CSE 2023



ADITYA
SRIVASTAVA

AISHWARYAM
PRAJAPATI

MONTHLY MAGAZINE – OCTOBER 2025

Sl. No.	Topics
Quotes of the Day	
What Others Say	
History, Art & Culture	
1	Dhrupad Copyright Suit
2	RSS Centenary:
3	Darul Uloom Deoband
4	Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's Legacy
5	Kittur Rani Chennamma Utsav
NEWS IN SHORT	
1	Lal Bahadur Shastri Birth Anniversary
2	Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel 150th Jayanti
Polity & Governance	
1	Sentinelese Census Debate
2	ADR Reforms
3	Judiciary as Development Hurdle
4	Electoral Roll Revision (Bihar SIR)
5	Trust Erosion in Recruitment
6	DPDPA vs. RTI
7	Execution Petition Pendency
8	Nationwide SIR (Phase 2)
9	Kerala and PM-SHRI
NEWS IN SHORT	
1	53rd Chief Justice of India (CJI)
Society & Social Justice	
1	MGNREGA Water Conservation Mandate
2	NCRB Crime in India 2023
3	Caste Bias in Bureaucracy
NEWS IN SHORT	
1	ULLAS Adult Learning Programme
2	Vital Statistics of India 2023
International Relations	
1	Trump's Gaza Peace Plan
2	PoK Protests
3	Europe's Strategic Autonomy
4	Phase 1 Gaza Peace Deal
5	India-China Engagement
6	India-UK CETA

7	Erosion of Pax Americana
8	India-Taiwan Ties
9	Future of IMEC
10	China's Rare Earth Curbs
11	Pakistan-Afghanistan Distrust
12	UNSC Reform
13	US Sanctions on Russian Oil
14	India-Taliban Engagement
15	WTO Complaint on PLI
16	47th ASEAN Summit
NEWS IN SHORT	
1	UN Secretary-General Candidate
2	2030 Commonwealth Games
3	MERCOSUR-India PTA
4	Critical Mineral Extraction
Economy & Agriculture	
1	Gold & Silver Prices
2	Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979
3	RBI Regulatory Reforms
4	Consumer Confidence and Inflation
5	State Fiscal Fragility
6	IIP Base Year Revision
7	Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences 2025
8	Swadeshi Push
9	Ethanol Blending Programme
10	Microplastic Bioaccumulation in Goa
11	GST and Fiscal Federalism
12	Weak Private Investment
13	Global Public Debt Warning
14	Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses
15	8th Central Pay Commission (CPC)
NEWS IN SHORT	
1	RoDTEP Extension
2	Stablecoins
3	Deposit Tokenisation Pilot
4	Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses
5	Retail Inflation Low
6	PM GatiShakti – Offshore
7	EPFO Withdrawal Norms

8	World Food Day 2025
Science & Technology	
1	Nobel Prize (Medicine)
2	Nobel Prize (Physics)
3	Nobel Prize (Chemistry)
4	AMR Communication
5	Cough Syrup Tragedy (DEG)
6	India's Biotech Ecosystem
NEWS IN SHORT	
1	Google's AI for Cancer Drugs
Geography & Environment	
1	Coral Larvae Cryobank
2	Invasive Alien Species (IAS)
3	Punjab Flood Impact
4	La Niña Re-emergence
5	Elephant Estimation
6	Karnataka Human–Wildlife Conflict
7	Delhi Cloud Seeding Debate
8	Record CO ₂ Levels
9	IUCN World Heritage Outlook
10	India–EU Carbon Market Linkage
11	Cyclone Montha

12	Himalayan Early Warning Systems (EWS)
13	Odisha Disaster Model
NEWS IN SHORT	
1	Darjeeling Landslides
2	National Red List Roadmap
3	IUCN Red List Update
4	Green Fireworks
5	Forest Declaration Assessment
6	NBA Access & Benefit Sharing (ABS)
7	Rare Defence Traits in Frogs
Internal Security	
1	Maoist Insurgency Decline
NEWS IN SHORT	
1	NATPOLREX-X Exercise
2	Exercise AUSTRALIND 2025
3	President's Rafale Sortie
Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude	
1	Gandhi's Moral Courage
2	Gandhi vs. Algorithmic World
3	Nobel Peace Prize 2025
4	Robert Badinter Pantheonisation



➞ Scan to get more Study Material

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QUOTES OF THE DAY

October 2025

Sl No	Quote
1	"We are stuck with technology when what we really want is just stuff that works." – DOUGLAS ADAMS
2	"Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy." – LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
3	"The love for all living creatures is the most noble attribute of man." – CHARLES DARWIN
4	"War is an invention of the human mind. The human mind can invent peace" – NORMAN COUSINS
5	"Someone struggled for your right to vote. Use it." – SUSAN B ANTHONY
6	"What we know is a drop, what we don't is an ocean." – ISAAC NEWTON
7	"Who wishes to fight must first count the cost." – SUN TZU
8	"When a man is in despair, it means that he still believes in something." – DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
9	"Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding." – ALBERT EINSTEIN
10	"It is only the farmer who faithfully plant seeds in the spring, who reaps a harvest in the autumn." – B C FORBES
11	"Poverty is the deprivation of opportunity." – AMARTYA SEN
12	"Peace and justice are two sides of the same coin." – DWIGHT D EISENHOWER
13	"The more difficult the victory, the greater the happiness in winning." – PELE
14	"The chief product of an automated society is a widespread and deepening sense of boredom." – C NORTHCOTE PARKINSON
15	"The greatest danger of AI is that people conclude too early that they understand it." – ELIEZER YUDKOWSKY
16	"The mind of man is capable of anything – Because everything is in it." – JOSEPH CONRAD
17	"A state in the grip of neo-colonialism is not master of its own destiny." – KWAME NKRUMAH
18	"Proclaim the truth and do not be silent through fear." – ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA
19	"The true republic: Men, their rights, and nothing more; Women, their rights, and nothing less." – SUSAN B ANTHONY
20	"After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world." – PHILIP PULLMAN
21	"A politician thinks about the next election but the statesman thinks about the next generation." – JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE
22	"The freer the flow of world trade, the stronger the tides for economic progress and peace among nations." – RONALD REAGAN

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

October 2025

Sl No	Quote
1	"The [Labour] party's ideological centre of gravity is shifting – away from liberal universalism and towards transactional belonging. But it is a step backwards for Labour to only offer belonging to those who pass a morality test rather than one that guarantees right as a matter of principle." – THE GUARDIAN
2	"Even though Hamas has not yet given its consent, Trump must not assume that Netanyahu's assent is carved in stone. The concessions Israel is required to make according to the plan may cost Netanyahu his government, and he has already proven how easily he can be pressured or extorted." – HAARETZ, ISRAEL
3	"Milei's upcoming White House visit isn't about a working plan – it's about making the US bailout a Trumpian campaign stop. And Argentina, once again becomes the backdrop for someone else's political theatre." – THE GUARDIAN
4	"It is alarming that even after US President Donald Trump's appeal for a ceasefire in Gaza, Israeli airstrikes and artillery shelling have continued, wreaking havoc on residential areas and killing at least 20 individuals, including children." – THE DAILY STAR, BANGLADESH
5	"The balancing act for the US delegation heading to Egypt is figuring out how to finish the fighting to Israel's satisfaction without alienating Arab leaders." – THE WASHINGTON POST
6	"Hamas terrorists are the ones who perpetrated the brutal massacre of October 7, 2023, but this failure happened on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's watch. He didn't resign, he didn't even beg for forgiveness, and for two years, he has also blocked the establishment of a state commission of inquiry" – HAARETZ, ISRAEL
7	"Once again without a prime minister or a draft budget, President Emmanuel Macron finds himself mired in a major crisis. One he set in motion, but to which every political party has contributed." – LE MONDE, FRANCE
8	"Mr Trump ran for President promising to reduce the cost of living, and of energy prices in particular. He has failed so far." – THE NEW YORK TIMES
9	"The temptation for Israel's allies now may be to ease off, acting as if this short-term fix were a solution. They must instead intensify effort to produce the strong and durable peace of which Mr Trump spoke – Which will only be feasible if it is founded on justice." – THE GUARDIAN
10	"The message from global regulators this week was blunt: The AI boom is driving stocks to dotcom-bubble highs – and the world is finally listening. With so much cash riding on so few firms, any loss of faith could send shares tumbling and drag down the wider economy." – THE GUARDIAN
11	"The war that has been going on in the Gaza Strip for 20 months already has once again shown how hard it is to end wars or to achieve 'total victory,' as Netanyahu has promised. Military pressure alone will produce neither security nor victory." – HAARETZ, ISRAEL

12	"Without mechanisms guaranteeing Palestinian participation and control over their own institutions, any deal risks freezing subjugation under the language of peace." – THE GUARDIAN
13	"Israel's Prime Minister fears peace more than he fears war. Instead of seizing the historic moment that Trump created, he once again chose the inertia of refusal, fearing a confrontation with his messianic coalition partners." – HAARETZ, ISRAEL
14	"Achieving the just peace that the two-state solution could guarantee requires the commitment and consistency of all parties. That remains a very distant prospect." – LE MONDE, FRANCE
15	"The US has a long and inglorious history of intervention in Latin America. But Mr Trump will be wary of angering Maga supporters with military action and of looking like a paper tiger if Mr Maduro endures again." – THE GUARDIAN
16	"It's been said that Russians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity. Thankfully for Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin's shambolic autocracy has been doing its best to live up to the saying." – THE WASHINGTON POST
17	"Israeli control of the West Bank is the darkest curse hanging over the nation. Without efforts to establish a Palestinian state, Israel won't recover from the calamities that have befallen it under the current government." – HAARETZ, ISRAEL
18	"Mr Trump should not profit from his presidency. He should pay a political price for his brazen corruption. Instead, he is telling American taxpayers to pay a price, directly to him." – THE NEW YORK TIMES
19	"We urge the interim government to use its full force, which it appears to have, to ensure a proper election process leading to a fair and participatory election on time. This is the most important national priority at the moment." – THE DAILY STAR, BANGLADESH
20	"Russia's president has been convinced that his forces could always outlast Ukraine's. If the EU can make good on its commitment to replace US funding and Trump's White House holds firm on its new sanctions, the costs to Moscow will become much higher." – FINANCIAL TIMES, UK
21	"Netanyahu's self-victimisation has helped him at the ballot box in the past, but following two years of war, the time has come for the public to recognise the real victims of the current governments policy – everyone but him." – HAARETZ, ISRAEL
22	"A \$40 bn rescue may have helped Javier Milei scrape through midterms, but it leaves Argentina's democracy and economy more dependent than ever on Washington." – THE GUARDIAN



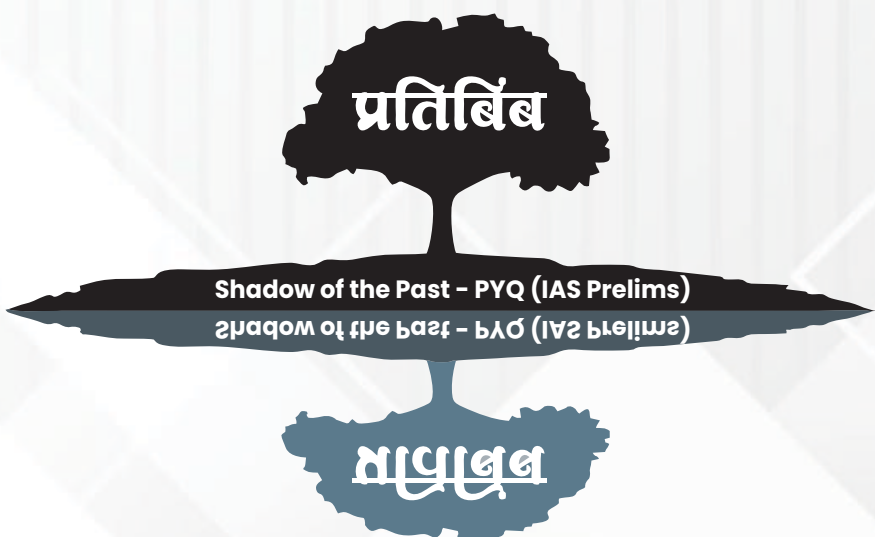
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UPSC Prelims 2026



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History, Art & Culture

October 2025

News / Explained / Explained Culture / Rahman-Dagar court case: A Hindu devotional art form and its Muslim custodians

Rahman-Dagar court case: A Hindu devotional art form and its Muslim custodians

Generations of Dagers, as practising Muslims, have continued to pray to Saraswati and chant hymns from the Vedas. Here's a brief history of Dhrupad, and its remarkable practitioners.

IE Explained; By Suanshu Khurana;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – History, Art & Culture
[Link](#)

Why in News?

Delhi HC allowed AR Rahman's appeal against ₹2 cr damages & credit change in copyright suit filed by Dhrupad exponent Ustad Faiyaz Wasifuddin Dagar (2023) over PS-2 song *Veera Raja Veera*.



Court Case & Verdict

- **Allegation** → Song copied *Shiva Stuti* (Jr. Dagar Brothers, 1978 Amsterdam recording).
- **Plaintiff's claim** → Composition in raga Adana by Ustad Zahiruddin Dagar; diary notes as proof.
- **HC ruling** → Dagers = performers, not original authors; oral transmission = tradition; no copyright if in public domain.
- **Rationale** → Western music → written notation = authorship; Indian classical → oral legacy.
- **Impact** → Prevents performers from claiming authorship of inherited compositions.

Similarities & Dispute

- *Shiva Stuti* → finale in Dhrupad concerts, builds tempo, devotional climax.
- *Veera Raja Veera* → same melodic base, diff instrumentation.
- **Music world attribution** → Jr. Dagers credited (Gundecha Bros, Uday Bhawalkar, etc.).
- **Issue** → Composition vs Lyrics primacy; notations rarely written in Hindustani tradition.

Dhrupad: Form & Practice

- **Meaning** → “Structured”; oldest extant Hindustani form.
- **Features** → Rigid raga + tala; sung with rudra veena, pakhawaj, tanpura.
- **Content** → Bhakti poetry, Vedic hymns, devotional tone.
- **Contrast** → ↑ rigidity vs Khayal/Thumri; no taans, sargams, or erotic themes.
- **Global status** → Popular in Europe (deep listening practice), niche in India.
- **1960s Europe tours + recordings** → Built Western following.

Dagar Lineage & Legacy

- **Origin** → Swami Haridas → Baba Gopal Das Pandey → converted to Islam under Mughals.
- **Custodianship** → Dagarvani style; blending Hindu devotion with Muslim practice.
- **Mughal-era patrons** → Courts of Alwar, Udaipur, Jaipur.
- **Key figures** →
 - ♦ **Behram Khan** → pioneer of Dagar gharana
 - ♦ **Allabande & Zakiruddin Khan** → early masters
 - ♦ **Senior Dagar Brothers** (Nasir Moinuddin & Aminuddin) → iconic duo
 - ♦ **Junior Dagar Brothers** (Zahiruddin & Faiyazuddin) → creators of Shiva Stuti style
- **Unique syncretism** → Muslim family preserving Vedic hymns, Saraswati worship.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Dhrupad, recently in news, is correctly characterized by which of the following features?

- 1) It emphasizes strict raga and tala structures with devotional content.
- 2) It traditionally employs instruments such as rudra veena, pakhawaj, and tanpura.
- 3) It allows taans and sargams as in Khayal.
- 4) It gained significant global recognition through the European tours of the Dagar family in the 20th century.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

Hint: Dhrupad is rigid (no taans/sargams), devotional, uses rudra veena–pakhawaj–tanpura, and was popularized in Europe by Dagar family tours.

RSS at 100: A century of service, culture, and nation-building

From its inception, the RSS instilled in its volunteers a simple yet profound mantra:

Nation first, self later

IE Opinion; By Parvesh Sahib Singh;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – History [Link](#)

Why in News?

RSS marks 100 years (1925–2025) → centenary of world's largest voluntary socio-cultural organisation.



PM unveils Rs 100 coin at RSS event, Bharat Mata features on currency for 1st time

Origins & Growth

- **Founded 1925, Nagpur** → Dr K.B. Hedgewar
- **Motto** → “Nation first, self later”
- **Shakhas** → daily drills, discipline, cultural grounding
- **Expansion** → from local seed → global outreach (diaspora networks)

Role in Nation-Building

- **Education** → Vidya Bharati schools (20k+ institutions)
- **Health & relief** → Seva Bharati, disaster response (tsunami, COVID-19)
- **Rural dev.** → Gram Vikas projects, tribal outreach
- **Unity work** → reducing caste barriers, community integration

Trials & Challenges

- **Colonial suspicion** → Hedgewar jailed 1930–31
- **Ban post-Gandhi assassination (1948)** → lifted after acquittal
- **Emergency (1975–77)** → RSS resisted authoritarianism
- **Continuous opposition from ideological rivals** → yet expansion continued

Ideological & Cultural Impact

- **Nationalism** → “Bharat Mata ki Jai” slogan roots in shakhas
- **Cultural pride** → revival of Hindu traditions, festivals, language promotion
- **Moral ethos** → humility, service, sacrifice above power/fame
- **Family & society** → discipline, organisation, collective spirit

Leadership & Legacy

- **Produced leaders** → Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Deendayal Upadhyaya, Narendra Modi, countless social workers
- **Emphasis on anonymity** → swayamsevaks work without personal credit
- **Political influence** → ideological parent of BJP

Criticism & Controversy

- **Accusations** → majoritarianism, cultural homogenisation
- **Bans (3 times in history)** → yet legally reinstated

- **Debate** → role in secular-democratic India vs Hindu cultural nationalism

The Road Ahead (Next 100 Years)

- **Goal** → India as *Vishwaguru* (spiritual & cultural teacher)
- **Emphasis** → values, ethics, collective discipline over materialism
- **Focus** → social harmony, global outreach, moral leadership
- **Challenge** → balancing modernity with tradition, inclusivity with ideology

🔑 **Centenary** = not just org. milestone, but civilisational affirmation: RSS as force of service, culture, nationalism shaping India's destiny.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. The idea of "Nation first, self later" associated with RSS is closest to which of the following Indian philosophical traditions?

- (a) Lokayata (Materialist)
- (b) Advaita Vedanta
- (c) Karma Yoga of Bhagavad Gita
- (d) Charvaka philosophy

Hint: Philosophy that stresses selfless duty, sacrifice, and service without attachment to personal gain → aligns with Karma Yoga of Gita.

News / Explained / Muttaqi visits UP seminary: What is Darul Uloom Deoband, why it is significant

Muttaqi visits UP seminary: What is Darul Uloom Deoband, why it is significant

Muttaqi's trip to Deoband underlines old ties between India and Afghanistan and the influential role Indian institutions have played in Southeast Asia. We explain.

IE Explained; By Asad Rehman;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – History, Art & Culture

[Link](#)

Why in News?

→ Afghanistan FM Amir Khan Muttaqi's visit to Darul Uloom Deoband (UP) highlights Indo-Afghan historical ties & Deoband's transnational religious influence.

Darul Uloom Deoband: Origin & Evolution

- **Est.** → 31 May 1866, Deoband (Saharanpur, UP) post-1857 revolt

- **Purpose** → Islamic alternative to British-run universities
- **Sister institution** → Nadwatul Ulema (Lucknow, 1883)
- **Global reach** → Students from Afghanistan, Iran, Bukhara, SE Asia, Africa
- **Status** → 2nd only to Al-Azhar (Cairo) in Islamic scholarship prestige
- **Role in freedom struggle** → Fostered anti-colonial consciousness among Muslims

Deoband Movement: Ideology & Influence

- **School of thought** → Sunni Islam → Hanafi jurisprudence
- **Doctrine** → Quran + Hadith + rational interpretation (Abu Hanifa)
- **Goal** → Revivalist reform, purity in practice, avoidance of Westernization
- **Education model** → Traditional Islamic sciences (Shariah, Sunnah, Tariqah)
- **Global impact** → Network of ~30,000 Deobandi madrasas worldwide

Link with Afghanistan

- **Early ties** → Afghan students among 1st foreign batches (19th century)
- **Deobandi madrasas in Afghanistan** → Founded by Deoband-trained scholars
- **Post-Partition offshoot** → Darul Uloom Haqqania (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan) → "University of Jihad" → many Taliban leaders alumni
- **Post-1979** → Shift of Afghan students to Pakistani Deobandi madrasas → ↑ militancy influence
- **Current context** → Afghan Sunni religious ethos still largely Deobandi

Muttaqi's Visit: Symbolism & Message

- **Event** → Huge local turnout → public address cancelled (crowd control)
- **Remarks** → Gratitude for hospitality; hopes for ↑ Indo-Afghan engagement
- **Gesture** → Darul Uloom conferred honorary title '*Qasmi*' to Muttaqi (ex-Haqqania alumnus)
- **Diplomatic signal** → India's cautious engagement with Taliban regime
- **Seminary stance** → Maintains apolitical, non-alignment with Taliban or Pakistan policies

Significance

- **Soft power** → India's religious institutions shaping Islamic thought in Asia
- **Historical continuity** → Deoband–Afghanistan intellectual linkage since 19th century
- **Foreign policy angle** → Platform for low-key outreach amid non-recognition of Taliban govt
- **Cultural diplomacy** → Shared religious heritage fostering people-to-people connect

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to the Deoband Movement, consider the following statements:

- 1) It originated as a theological reform movement within Sunni Islam following the Hanafi school.
- 2) It sought to integrate modern Western education with Islamic learning to strengthen Muslim society.
- 3) Its founders opposed British colonial rule and emphasized preservation of Islamic culture through religious education.

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

Hint:

The Deoband Movement rejected Westernization (so 2 is wrong) and aimed at purifying Islam & resisting British influence.

Q. In terms of religious jurisprudence, the Deobandi school primarily differs from the Salafi school in that:

- a) It emphasizes reason (ra'y) and precedent (qiyas) under Hanafi tradition rather than strict literalism
- (b) It rejects Sufism entirely
- (c) It considers only the Quran as the sole source of law
- (d) It follows Shia interpretations of jurisprudence

Hint:

Hanafi-Deobandi uses analogical reasoning & tradition; Salafis reject rationalist interpretation.

Remembering Sir Syed Ahmed Khan: He stood for diversity, fraternity. Aligarh Muslim University champions these values

His roles as an educator, social reformer, cultural conservationist, biographer, political ideologue, and institution builder take him beyond merely being the saviour of the Muslim community after the 1857 War of Independence.

IE Explained; By Tariq Mansoor;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – History, Art & Culture

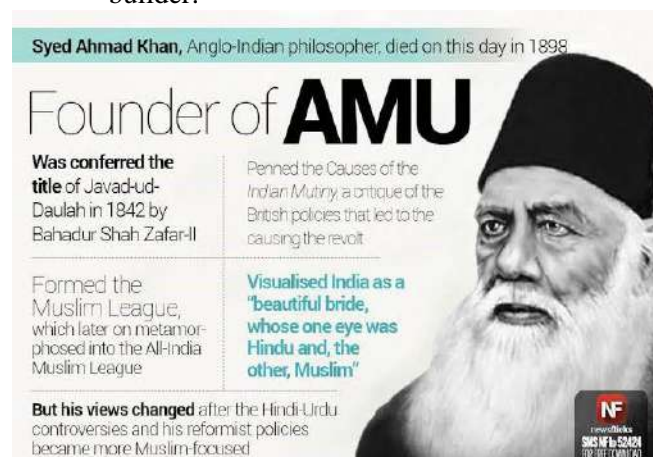
[Link](#)

Why in News?

→ 207th birth anniversary of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817–1898); reflection on his legacy of diversity, fraternity & inclusive education upheld by AMU.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: Visionary Reformer

- **Roles & Impact** → Educator, social reformer, biographer, political ideologue, institution builder.



- **Post-1857 Context** → Worked for Muslim upliftment after 1857 revolt → advocated modern education over confrontation.
- **Institutions** → Founded *Madrasatul Uloom Musalmanan-e-Hind* (1875) → evolved into *MAO College* (1877) → *Aligarh Muslim University* (1920).
- **Educational Renaissance** → Promoted scientific temper, rational thought, & English education → ↓ ignorance among Indians.

Concept of Nation & Inclusivity

- **Meaning of “Quam”** → Used for both *nation* & *community* → inclusive civic idea, not sectarian.

- **Nationhood Vision** → Hindus & Muslims = one nation → shared soil, governance, hardships, prosperity.
- **Religious Harmony** → Advocated Hindu-Muslim unity for national progress → rejected communal politics.
- **Cultural Openness** → Introduced comparative religious studies → wrote commentary on Bible → intellectual bridge-building.

Institutional Legacy: Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)

- **Symbol of Pluralism** → Students from 31 states & 26 nations → cultural microcosm of India.
- **British Era Context** → Despite divisive colonial policies, AMU promoted fraternity & coexistence.
- **Cross-Community Bonds** → Example: Bismillah ceremony of Ross Masood led by Hindu friend Raja Jai Kishan Das.
- **Global Connect** → AMU as academic link in India-Muslim world relations.

Contemporary Relevance

- **Resonance with NEP 2020** → Focus on inclusivity, equity, & holistic education mirrors Sir Syed's ideals.
- **PM Modi's Centenary Address (2020)** → Called AMU "mini India" → highlighted Sir Syed's dictum: "*Welfare of all, irrespective of caste or creed.*"
- **Enduring Ideals** → Diversity ♦ Fraternity ♦ National Integration ♦ Knowledge for all.

Conclusion → Sir Syed's mission: Modern education + communal harmony = foundation for an inclusive, progressive India.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. The term "Quam" used by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan referred to:

- Only the Muslim community
- The British rulers in India
- Both Hindus and Muslims as one nation
- Religious minorities of India

Hint:

Sir Syed used Quam to mean both nation & community → envisioned Hindus & Muslims as parts of one Indian nation.

News / Explained / Explained History / Story of Rani Chennamma, Kittur queen who stood up to the British

Story of Rani Chennamma, Kittur queen who stood up to the British

Faced with the prospect of having to hand over her kingdom to the East India Company, Chennamma chose to resist

IE Explained;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – History, Art & Culture
[Link](#)

Why in News?

♦ The annual festival Kittur Rani Chennamma Utsav begins (Oct 23, 2025) to honour her 1824 revolt against the East India Company.

Expanded Profile & Context

- **Born: 23 Oct 1778** (some sources 14 Nov) in Kagati (present Belagavi district, Karnataka).



- **Family:** Lingayat merchant/desai background; trained in horse-riding, archery, sword-fighting from early age.
- **Married at age ~15** to Raja Mallasarja of Kittur.
- **Became Regent after husband's death (1816)** and young son's death (1824). Adopted Shivalingappa as heir.
- **British pressure:** demand to accept Company rule & tribute; refusal triggered war.

The Revolt & Battles

- **First clash: Oct 1824** – British official John Thackeray killed in Kittur on 23 Oct.
- **Forces:** British amassed ~20,000 men + 1,400 guns vs Kittur's smaller army.
- **Initial victory for Chennamma's side;** British retreated.
- **Second assault:** 3–4 Dec 1824, British captured Kittur Fort; Chennamma arrested.

- **Imprisonment & death:** Held at Bailhongal; died in 1829 (some sources say Feb 21).

Administration & Strategy

- **Role:** Actively administered Kittur as Queen-Regent, handled petitions to British authorities.
- **Military tactics:** Utilised local terrain, fort defences, and resolute leadership despite inferior weaponry.
- **Succession issue:** British rejection of adopted heir mirrored later Doctrine of Lapse.

Legacy & Cultural Impact

- **Recognised as** one of India's earliest women leaders to lead armed resistance vs British.
- **Memorials & namesakes:**
 - **Rani Chennamma Express** (Bengaluru–Sangli) named after her.
 - **Statues, fort museum at Kittur**, anniversaries of revolt.
- **Symbolism:**
 - **Feminist icon** – defied patriarchal norms.
 - **Regional pride** (Kannada, Lingayat community).
 - **Inspiration** for local self-governance & resistance movements.
- **In folklore:** Many janapada songs/ballads immortalise her, often filling gaps in colonial records.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Arrange the following events in the correct chronological order:

- 1) Revolt of Rani Chennamma of Kittur
- 2) Revolt of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi
- 3) Revolt of Velu Nachiyar of Sivaganga
- 4) Revolt of Begum Hazrat Mahal of Awadh

Select the correct code:

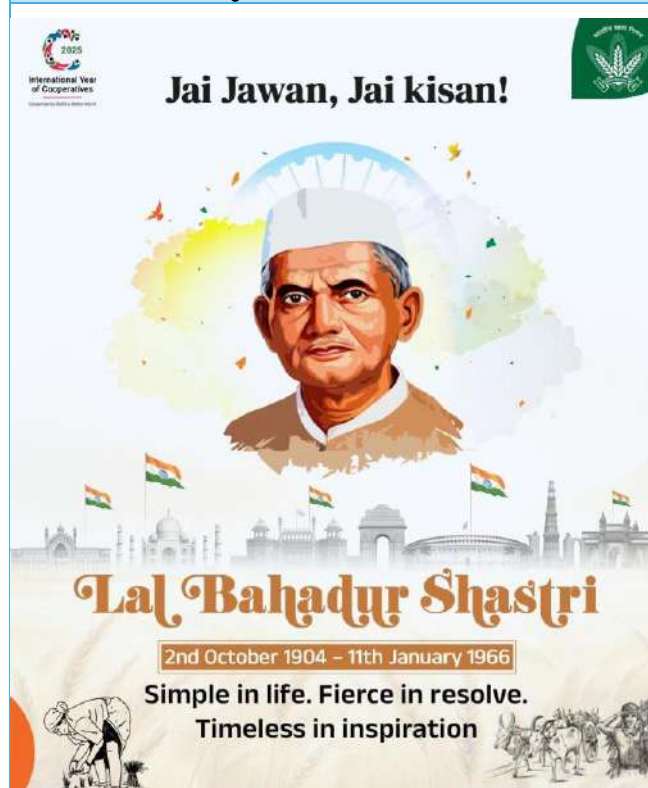
- (a) 3 → 1 → 2 → 4
- (b) 1 → 3 → 2 → 4
- (c) 3 → 2 → 1 → 4
- (d) 1 → 2 → 3 → 4

Hint:

Velu Nachiyar (1780s) → Chennamma (1824) → Lakshmibai (1857) → Hazrat Mahal (1857).

NEWS IN SHORT: HISTORY, ART & CULTURE

Lal Bahadur Shastri Birth Anniversary (2 Oct 2025)



Personal Life & Traits

- **Born:** 2 Oct 1904, Mughalsarai (UP); shares birthday with Mahatma Gandhi.
- **Education:** Banaras Hindu University → strong nationalist leanings.
- **Known for:** ♦ Simplicity ♦ Honesty ♦ Humility ♦ Integrity.
- **Title “Shastri”** → academic degree from Kashi Vidyapeeth.

Political Journey

- **Joined freedom struggle** → imprisoned multiple times in Civil Disobedience, Quit India Movement.
- **Post-Independence** → Minister of Police & Transport, UP → introduced female conductors, water jets for crowd control (instead of lathi).
- **Union Railway Minister (1951–56)** → resigned after railway accident (moral responsibility precedent).
- **Became PM (1964–66)** after Nehru's death.

Contributions as Prime Minister

- **Slogan** → “Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan” (1965 war + food crisis).
- **1965 Indo-Pak War** → decisive leadership, strengthened armed forces.
- **Green Revolution** → supported M.S. Swaminathan, C. Subramaniam, Norman Borlaug → ensured food security.
- **White Revolution** → promoted Amul cooperative, created NDDB under Verghese Kurien.
- **Economic steps** → devaluation of rupee (1966, controversial but necessary for IMF aid).
- **Institution building** → Food Corporation of India (FCI), Agricultural Prices Commission.
- **Foreign Policy** → Non-alignment continued, stronger ties with USSR, USA.

Tashkent Agreement (1966)

- **Brokered by USSR after 1965 war** → peace pact with Pakistan.
- **Signed** on 10 Jan 1966.
- **Shastri died mysteriously** in Tashkent hours later (suspected heart attack, still debated).

Legacy

- **Moral politics** → Resigned on ethical grounds (railway accident) → rare in Indian polity.
- **People's leader** → close to common man, lived simply (no luxury as PM).
- **Inspirational governance** → wartime food shortage → urged citizens to fast once a week.
- **Remembered for** → bridging security + agriculture → defence & farmer as national priorities.

India pays homage to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his 150th Jayanti: Prime Minister

Why in News? → India pays homage to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his 150th Jayanti: PM

About Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

- Born **31 Oct 1875** in Nadiad, Gujarat.

- Known as the “**Iron Man of India**” for his role in integrating the princely states.
- Held offices: **first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister** of India (1947-50).
- Legacy includes national unity, public administration reform, and cooperative movement.



Significance of 150th Jayanti & National Unity Day

- 31 October observed annually as **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day)** in India, marking Patel's birth anniversary.
- 2025 marks his **150th birth anniversary** → a major milestone celebrated nationally.

Celebrations emphasize: unity, integrity, self-reliance.



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Abhishek Vashishtha, **AIR-14** [CSE 2024]

Devansh M. Dwivedi, **AIR-228** [CSE 2024]

Sarthak Singh, **AIR-393** [CSE 2024]

I am Abhishek Vashishtha, I have secured AIR 14 in CSE 2024. Kalam IAS played an important role in my UPSC journey. I practiced PYQs at Kalam IAS, which helped me understand the exam pattern and improved my answer writing skill.

The face-to-face evaluation of my answers was very helpful. Interview Video analysis by Rajendra Chaudhary Sir was very useful. The detailed feedback provided to me by him helped me a lot.

Thank you Kalam IAS for being a constant support during my journey.

Abhishek
Abhishek Vashishtha
UPSC CSE Rank 14.

Hello everyone,

I am Devansh Mohan Dwivedi AIR 228 (UPSC CSE 2024). Kalam IAS's programmes like RLP+ and PYQ module with face to face evaluation was very helpful during mains preparation. whole team was very helpful and kind.

Kudos to the team.

Supri
Devansh Mohan Dwivedi
AIR 228 (CSE 2024).

Hello aspirants,

I am Sarthak Singh AIR 393 UPSC CSE 2024. Kalam IAS's mains PYQ courses were very beneficial in main marks improvement from my previous attempts.

Specially, Pratibimb and face to face evaluations ensure specific pointers for improvement are provided.

Additionally, content books like Essay MIB and Ethics MIB are very useful in preparation.

I wish you all the best!

SARTHAK SINGH
(AIR 393 CSE 2024) AIR 584 CSE 2022.

98878-44044

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Polity & Governance

October 2025

The case against counting Sentinelese groups for Census

The Sentinelese's choice of isolation is an act of preserving their culture and wisdom. Any outside intrusion may risk their survival and irreversible damage to their protection

IE Opinion; By Ramzan Shaikh;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Polity & Governance

[Link](#)

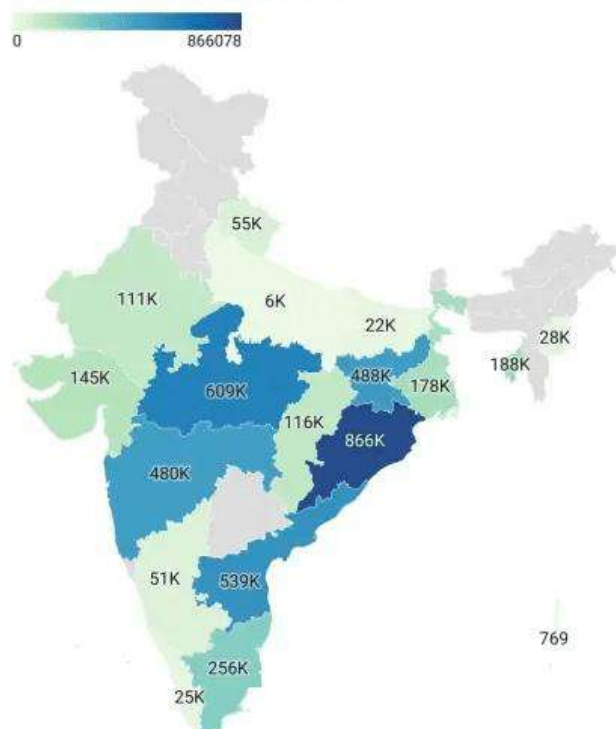
Why in News?

Centre's proposal for a "Non-Invasive Thermal Census" of Sentinelese sparks debate on ethics, legality, and tribal protection.

PVTGs & Census Context

- **75 PVTGs across 18 States/UTs** → 2.8M population (2011 Census undercounted).
- **Identified by Dhebar Commission (1960s)** → pre-agri tech, low literacy, ↓ population.
- **Govt push (2027 Census)** → accurate data for policy, constitutional duty, SDG monitoring.

PVTG population by state



Note: Andhra Pradesh data includes Telangana

Source: Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Census 2011 • Map data: © OSM • Created with Datawrapper

Sentinelese Exception

- **North Sentinel Island** → ~100–150 ppl (uncontacted, hostile).
- **ANPATR 1956** → The Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956 → buffer zone, zero-contact, legal ban on outsider entry.
- **Not part of Scheduled Areas** → special island-specific protection.
- **Survival strategy** → self-reliance, isolation, cultural continuity.

Risks of Enumeration

- **Intrusion effects** → noise, imaging, drones = breach of dignity/privacy.
- **Historical trauma** → Great Andamanese ↓ 5000 to ~50, Onges dependent.
- **Case studies** → 2018 Allen Chau killed, 2025 US citizen arrested.
- **Colonial legacy** → population loss, languages silenced, cultural disintegration.

Arguments Against Counting

- **Cultural choice of isolation** → core survival mechanism.
- **"Counting = first step to intrusion"** → leads to tourism, anthropological exploitation.
- **PVTG protection ≠ homogenised** → Andamanese need unique policy lens.
- **Traditional knowledge resilience** → 2004 Tsunami survival (read sea signs) vs modern tech failure.
- **Census logic = state's statistical compulsion;** but here → act of violence on autonomy.

Pro-Enumeration View (Govt Rationale)

- **"Non-contact" thermal tech** → drones/infrared count without human intrusion.
- **Useful for land mapping/wildlife census** → extended to PVTGs.
- **Data aids welfare targeting, monitoring schemes** (SVAMITVA, nutrition, health).

Ethical & Policy Concerns

- **Dignity vs statistics** → worth of tribe not numerical, but cultural being.

- **Protection priority > enumeration** → survival threatened by mere exposure.
- **Past lessons:** intrusions irreversibly altered Andaman tribes.
- **True welfare state** → respect autonomy, enforce restraint, not curiosity.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to the Sentinelese tribe of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, consider the following statements:

- 1) The Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956 (ANPATR) provides a legal buffer zone and prohibits outsider contact with the Sentinelese.
- 2) The Sentinelese are recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) under the Dhebar Commission's recommendations.
- 3) Sentinelese are included within the Scheduled Areas of the Fifth Schedule for special protection.

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

Hint:

- ANPATR = Yes.
- Sentinelese = PVTG.
- Scheduled Areas ≠ apply in A&N.

Q. Consider the following tribes and their current status:

- 1) Great Andamanese → Population drastically reduced from ~5000 to ~50.
- 2) Onge → Dependent on external aid and welfare provisions.
- 3) Sentinelese → Completely self-sustaining and uncontacted.
- 4) Jarwa → Fully integrated with tourism and modern economy.

Which of the above are correctly matched regarding their present socio-cultural condition?

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

Hint

- Great Andamanese ↓, Onge dependent, Sentinelese isolated.

- Jarwa ≠ “fully integrated” (still semi-isolated).

Why is ADR crucial for India's courts?

What is Alternative Dispute Resolution and how does it work in India? How long does it take to resolve disputes? What legal provisions support ADR and its processes? How can they reduce delays and court pendency effectively? Which States have the highest backlog of cases?

IE Explained; By C.B.P. Srivastava;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Polity & Governance

[Link](#)

Why in News?

Law Minister reaffirmed govt's push for legal reforms & global cooperation to strengthen ADR amid record 4.57 cr case pendency (NJDG 2025).

What is ADR & Its Constitutional Basis?

- **Meaning** → Alt. Dispute Resolution (ADR) = Non-judicial dispute settlement → Arbitration, Conciliation, Mediation, Lok Adalat.



- **Const. backing** → Art. 39A → Equal justice & free legal aid mandate.
- **Statutory base** → Sec. 89 CPC 1908 + Arbitration & Conciliation Act 1996 (amnd. 2021).
- **Legal framework** → Indian Arbitration Council (2021) → institutionalised process.
- **Time limit** → ≤ 180 days for resolution → ↓ delay & cost.

- **Exit option** → Party may withdraw after 2 mediation sessions if unsatisfied.
- **Scope** → Civil + compoundable criminal offences (e.g. trespass, adultery).

- **Outcome** → ↓ delay & pendency ↑ trust in justice system → “Nyaya Se Sahyog Tak.”

Lok Adalats → Grass-root Justice

- **Legal base** → Legal Services Authorities Act 1987 (Art. 39A inspired).
- **Types** → Permanent Lok Adalat (Sec 22-B), National Lok Adalat, e-Lok Adalat.
- **Origin** → 1st held in Gujarat (1999).
- **Nature** → Pre-litigation resolution → award = final & non-appealable.
- **Safeguard** → Dissatisfied party → may file fresh suit in court.
- **Impact** → ↓ pendency, ↑ access to justice, ↑ speed & cost efficiency.

Why ADR Crucial for India?

- **Massive pendency** → 4.57 cr cases (total); HCs 62.9 lakh; SC 81.7 k (NJDG 2025).
- **Vacancy burden** → HC 33% & district 21% vacant posts.
- **Workload** ↑ → Judges in UP, HP, Kerala → > 4,000 cases each.
- **Delay impact** → Justice delayed = denied; erodes trust in rule of law.
- **Mediation as social tool** (Justice Chandrachud) → aligns social norms with constitutional values.
- **Pre-litigation mediation** → ↓ case inflow, ↑ social harmony.
- **ADR = inclusive** → local language, community-based, participatory justice.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Consider the following pairs regarding ADR mechanisms and their key features in India:

- 1) Mediation: Binding and enforceable award
- 2) Arbitration: Based on mutual consent, adjudicated by arbitrator(s)
- 3) Lok Adalat: No appeal provision, pre-litigation settlement

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

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

Hint:

- Mediation → non-binding & voluntary;
- Arbitration → binding award by arbitrator;
- Lok Adalat → final, no appeal → pre-litigation focus.

Calling out the criticism of the Indian judiciary

TH Editorial; By Suhrith Parthasarathy;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Polity & Governance

[Link](#)

Inter-State Case Backlog

- **High pendency States** → Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar (India Justice Report 2025).
- **Old cases (>10 yrs)** → ↑ in HCs & subordinate courts.
- **Need** → Rapid disposal + ADR mainstreaming → improve per capita justice delivery.
- **Data tool** → NJDG → real-time tracking of pendency & disposal.

Way Forward

- ↑ **ADR awareness & training** → law schools, bar councils.
- **Institutional strengthening** → Arbitration Council, Lok Adalat digital infra.
- **Legislative support** → mandatory pre-litigation mediation in civil & commercial disputes.

Why in News?

Sanjeev Sanyal (PM-EAC) termed the *judiciary as India's single biggest hurdle* to achieving *Viksit Bharat*, reigniting debate on judicial efficiency, accountability & systemic reform.

Key Criticisms of Indian Judiciary (with Substantiation)

1. Judicial Delays & Inefficiency

- Pendency → ~5 crore cases (2025); disposal rate < filing rate.
- Average case duration → 6–10 yrs in civil matters.



- Contract enforcement rank → **163rd (World Bank, 2020).**
- Courts blamed for deterring business, delaying economic growth.



- Supreme Court → **~45 working weeks/year**; High Courts similar pattern.
- Perception → “elite privilege” amidst huge pendency.

3. Judicial Overreach / Obstructionism

- Allegation → Courts block projects (PILs, environmental stays) → delay infrastructure, investment.
- Perception → Judiciary = policy-interfering “activist” arm.

4. Ineffective Legal Processes

- Example → *Section 12A, Commercial Courts Act* → Mandatory pre-suit mediation often fails.
- Critique → Adds procedural layer → delays resolution.
- Root issue → weak design of mediation system, not judicial enforcement.

5. Failure in Contract Enforcement (“99-to-1 Problem”)

- Sanyal → Laws designed for 1% misuse → 99% face complexity → hampers business.
- Courts blamed → unable to swiftly enforce valid contracts.

6. Excessive Government Litigation

- Govt (Union + States) = >60% of all cases.
- Tax depts appeal routine orders; PSUs & ministries litigate minor disputes.
- Public servants, pensioners, teachers → forced to litigate for rightful benefits.
- Result → Clogs courts, inflates pendency, drains resources.

7. Poorly Drafted & Overlapping Laws

- Vague, complex statutes → frequent judicial interpretation required.
- New Criminal Codes (BNS, BNSS, BSA) → only cosmetic name changes; colonial essence retained.
- New Income-Tax Act (2025) → “irrespective” replaces “notwithstanding” → confusion, not simplification.
- Outcome → ↑ litigation, ↓ clarity, burden on courts.

8. Weak Judicial Infrastructure & Vacancies

- Vacancies → **~30% in District & High Courts.**
- Infrastructure gap → insufficient courtrooms, digital access, staff.
- Case load per judge → among world’s highest.

2. Vacations & Short Working Hours

- Critique → Colonial-era long vacations ↓ productivity.

- District judiciary → faces most acute pressure; first interface for citizens.

9. Misaligned Accountability & Perception

- Narrative → Judges unaccountable, insulated, unproductive.
- Reality → Weak administrative support, outdated procedures, low budget ($\leq 0.1\%$ of GDP).
- Courts mirror same inefficiencies that plague executive & legislature.

Conclusion

Criticisms of the judiciary — delays, inefficiency, overreach — stem largely from systemic governance failures: poor law-drafting, excessive government litigation, and chronic underfunding. India's judiciary is not the *hurdle* to development but a *reflection* of deeper structural flaws in governance and law-making.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. The “99-to-1 problem” mentioned in the debate on judicial reforms refers to:

- Ratio of cases pending in lower vs higher judiciary.
- Legislative tendency to over-regulate for a small fraction of misuse.
- Judicial errors in 1% of judgments reversing 99% verdicts.
- Courts' success rate in enforcing contractual obligations.

Hint:

Sanyal's term → 99% laws over-complicated to prevent abuse by 1%, creating inefficiency in legal processes.

What are the various electoral forms?

What is Form 6 used for in the context of electoral rolls? How can Overseas Electors register to vote? Which forms are used to raise objections or request corrections? What should citizens do to ensure their names are correctly included in the electoral rolls?

IE Explained; Rangarajan R.;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Polity & Governance
[Link](#)

Why in News?

EC concluded *Special Intensive Revision (SIR)* of electoral rolls in Bihar → plans to extend to other States in phases.

Electoral Roll Revision Framework

- Legal Basis** → Sec.21, Representation of People Act (RPA) 1950 → preparation & revision of rolls.



- Types of Revision** →
 - Summary Revision → before each election.
 - Special Revision (SIR) → anytime, by EC order.
- Bihar SIR (2025)** → July 1 qualifying date; draft roll, claims/objections, verification → final roll on Sept 30.
- SC Role** → Allowed Aadhaar as valid ID proof (interim order).

Key Electoral Forms (as per RER, 1960)

- Form 6** → New voter registration / inclusion in roll (↑ age 18+, ordinary resident).
- Form 6A** → Overseas Elector registration (Indian citizen residing abroad).
- Form 7** → Objection → name inclusion/deletion in roll.
- Form 8** → Correction of entries (spelling, address, etc.).
- Form 8A** → Transposition of entry → voter shifted within same constituency.
- Enumeration Form** → For all registered voters during SIR → verify citizenship, residence, age.

Overseas Electors Registration

- Form** → 6A (online/offline).
- Proof** → Valid Indian passport, residence abroad address, declaration not acquired foreign citizenship.

- **Submission** → To Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) of constituency of residence in India.

Ensuring Correct Electoral Inclusion

- **Step 1** → Check *draft roll* publication (online/booth).
- **Step 2** → Fill correct form → 6 (new), 8 (correction), 7 (objection), 8A (shift).
- **Step 3** → Submit valid proof (citizenship, age, residence, Aadhaar accepted per SC).
- **Step 4** → Verify *final roll* publication before election.
- **Support** → Political parties/CSOs to aid marginalised & migrants.

Significance

- Clean rolls → free & fair elections ♦ voter confidence ↑
- SIR → ensures authenticity, prevents duplication/fraud ♦ strengthens democracy.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Under the Representation of the People Act, 1950, which of the following statements correctly describes the powers of the Election Commission (EC) regarding electoral roll revision?

- 1) EC can carry out only one summary revision of rolls in a year.
- 2) EC may conduct a special revision of the electoral rolls at any time it deems fit.
- 3) The qualifying date for inclusion in the roll is fixed by the President of India.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

Hint:

Sec. 21, RPA 1950 → EC may conduct special revision any time. Qualifying date fixed by EC (not President).

Q. Regarding Overseas Electors in India, consider the following statements:

- 1) They are enrolled in a separate overseas electoral roll maintained by the Ministry of External Affairs.

- 2) They can register using Form 6A under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.
- 3) They must not have acquired citizenship of another country.
- 4) They are entitled to vote only in person in their home constituency.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Hint:

No separate roll by MEA; Form 6A used; dual citizenship barred; voting in person only.

Rebuilding trust in public service recruitment exams needs a tech-led overhaul

The cycle of scams has endangered the careers of countless deserving candidates and sparked widespread disillusionment

IE Opinion; By Abhinav Kumar;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Governance [Link](#)

Why in News?

→ Series of exam scams (Bihar Police 2023, Uttarakhand SSC 2022, Punjab PSC 2021) → massive protests, job delays → Govt & experts demand digital overhaul.

Trust Erosion in Recruitment

- **Govt exams = lifeline** → ~1.3 cr aspirants yearly (CMIE 2024)
- **Bihar 2023** → 180 arrested for using proxies; exam papers leaked online
- **Punjab PSC 2021** → Chairman Ajit Singh accused in ₹1 cr bribe-for-post scam



- **Uttarakhand 2022** → 57 arrested, CM ordered CBI probe

- **Result** → Aspirants' protests (e.g., Prayagraj 2022) → trust crisis among youth

Structural Flaws in Recruitment Commissions

- **Political appointments** → CAG (2022) flagged "lack of objective criteria" in many state PSCs
- **2019 MPPSC & 2021 HPSC** → nepotism allegations in member selection
- **Opaque process** → Syllabi & marks rarely published; RTI replies delayed
- **Eg. SSC 2018 exam leak** → Supreme Court ordered CBI inquiry for transparency breach

Tech-Led Reforms (Core Solution)

- **Biometric/unique IDs** → Used in CAT & NEET → prevented impersonation (NTA report 2023)
- **Encrypted QP delivery** → UPSC moved to e-paper encryption in 2018 → zero leaks since
- **AI/ML fraud detection** → Used in SEBI & RBI recruitment to flag anomalies
- **Cloud-based CCTV & GPS tracking** → Implemented by Telangana PSC 2024 pilot → 97% reduction in malpractice complaints

Legal & Institutional Safeguards

- **Uttarakhand Anti-Cheating Act 2022** → 10-year jail + ₹10 lakh fine → strongest in India
- **UP introduced Special Task Force (STF)** for exam crimes (2023)
- **Delhi HC (2022)** → urged creation of "Exam Offences Act" at national level
- **Accountability** → Rajasthan Govt dismissed RPSC member (2023) for leak involvement

National-Level Mechanism

Oversight

- **Proposal** → National Recruitment Integrity Authority (NRIA) akin to UPSC's oversight role (suggested by NITI Aayog 2023 note)
- **UPSC conducts** ~25 lakh candidates/year → model of uniformity & low corruption
- **Parliamentary Standing Committee (2022)** → recommended central monitoring of state PSCs
- **Audit framework** → similar to UGC's accreditation for universities

Citizen & Civil Society Role

- **Civil society watchdogs (PRS, ADR)** → push for transparency in PSC appointments

- **Social audit model** → Bihar tried "public observer" system in 2023 pilot
- **RTI activism** → forced Rajasthan PSC to publish answer keys & marks (2022)
- **Student unions (ABVP, NSUI)** → demand representation in recruitment monitoring boards

Way Forward

- **Merit + transparency** = restore youth trust → 40% youth unemployment (CMIE, 2024) adds urgency
- **Integrated approach** → tech + law + audit + participation
- **Similar success** → Aadhaar-enabled NEET & UPSC → no major leak post-2018
- **Needed** → "National Recruitment Reform Mission" to unify standards & digital oversight

Test Your Knowledge

Q. In the context of public examinations, "Trust Capital" refers to:

- (a) Financial resources for exam infrastructure
- (b) Ethical legitimacy of state institutions
- (c) Data protection and privacy norms
- (d) Citizen participation in governance

Hint:

Trust capital = intangible confidence citizens place in state institutions.

The RTI is dead. Long live the RTI

The recently passed (but yet to be implemented) Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA) threatens to destroy the power and utility of the RTI Act, as well as severely curtail freedom of expression in the country

IE Opinion; By Nikhil Dey, Aruna Roy;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Governance [Link](#)

Why in News?

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA), 2023 (yet to be implemented), is seen as undermining the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, by expanding "privacy" exemptions and restricting public access to information.

RTI Milestone & Legacy

- **RTI Act** → Completed 20 yrs (Oct 12, 2025); Beawar, Rajasthan → 30 yrs of RTI movement
♦ "RTI City"
- **Landmark law** → Empowered citizens, ↑ transparency, ↓ corruption, redefined citizen–state relation

- **Symbolic initiatives** → RTI Museum, RTI Mela by MKSS & School for Democracy → preserve public participation ethos

DPDPA's Threat to RTI

- **Section 44(3)** → Amends Section 8(1)(j) RTI Act → Blanket ban on “personal information” disclosure
- **Deletes key clause** → “Info. that cannot be denied to Parliament cannot be denied to a citizen” ♦ ↓ equality principle
- **Removes “public interest override”** → Decision to disclose → Govt's discretion only, not citizen's right
- **Outcome** → Shielding of officials, ↓ accountability, RTI becomes “empty shell”

Impact on Democracy & Freedom

- **Names of public officials** → No longer disclosable → Blocks exposure of corruption & maladministration
- **Blanket privacy claim** → Even for acts in public capacity → ↑ opacity in governance
- **DPDPA penalties** → ₹250 crore fine for unauthorized disclosure → Chilling effect on journalists, activists
- **Broader threat** → Curtails free speech, academic inquiry, media investigations

Public & Political Response

- **Opposition from** → 150+ MPs, 2,500+ journalists, 22 national journalist associations, CSOs, lakhs of citizens
- **Govt stance** → No meaningful consultation → Democratic deficit
- **Civil resistance** → Beawar's movement continues → RTI Museum as “living space” for accountability battles

Core Message

- RTI = “Right to live” (empowerment through knowledge)
- DPDPA = Legal setback, moral challenge to transparency
- Law may be amended, but **the movement for truth & accountability persists**

Test Your Knowledge 01

Q. Which of the following best reflects the constitutional foundation of the Right to Information in India?

(a) Article 14 – Equality before Law

(b) Article 19(1)(a) – Freedom of Speech and Expression

(c) Article 21 – Right to Life and Personal Liberty

(d) Article 22 – Protection of Rights in Certain Cases

Hint:

RTI derives from freedom of speech → citizen's right to know; reaffirmed in *Raj Narain vs State of UP* (1975).

Q. Assertion (A): The DPDPA 2023 empowers the state to decide when to disclose “personal information.”

Reason (R): The amended RTI provisions transfer the discretion of public interest disclosure from citizens to the government.

(a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.

(b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.

(c) A is true, R is false.

(d) A is false, R is true.

Hint:

Under DPDPA, the power to decide disclosure in “public interest” lies with public authorities, not citizens — shifting discretion from people to the state.

News / Explained / Explained Law / The other massive pendency in Indian courts: Why it can take years to obtain 'execution petitions'

The other massive pendency in Indian courts: Why it can take years to obtain 'execution petitions'

The Supreme Court has expressed concern about a deep-rooted malaise in the judicial system, where people who have already spent years successfully fighting their cases are stuck in a second battle — to get what a court has held they are legally owed.

IE Explained; By Vineet Bhalla;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Polity & Governance

[Link](#)

Why in News? → SC (Oct 16, 2025) flagged alarming pendency of **8.82 lakh execution petitions** in district courts; termed delay a “travesty of justice.”



What is an Execution Petition?

- **Final stage of civil case** → enforcement of decree (money, property, rights)
- **Tool to “reap fruits of decree”** → ensures judgment implemented

- **Filed by decree-holder** → against judgment-debtor for compliance

Scale of Pendency

- **8.82 lakh pending execution petitions across India** (as per SC data)
- **Avg civil suit: 4.91 yrs** → Execution adds ~ 3.97 yrs (NJDG data)
- **47.2% filed before 2020** → long-term backlog
- Highest pendency: **Bombay HC (3.4L)** → Madras (86k) → Kerala (83k)

Causes of Delay

- Counsel unavailability → 38.9% cases
- Court stay orders → 17%
- Awaiting documents → 12%
- Procedural delays → repeated notices, objections under CPC
- Poor case-type data → hinders targeted reforms
- Regional disparities → e.g., Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu ↑ due to high commercial load
- Judicial infrastructure & staffing gaps

SC's Interventions

- **2021 (CJI SA Bobde bench)** → 14 directions + 6-month disposal target
- **Mar 2025 (Pardiwala–Mithal bench)** → Pan-India monitoring order → data collection by all HCs
- Quoted 1998 case: litigant “passes same terrain again” post-judgment
- Aim → systemic accountability + timely execution

Findings from SC Review (Oct 2025)

- 3.38L petitions disposed post-March order → pendency still 8.82L
- Detailed HC-wise pendency list → Bombay, Madras, Kerala top backlog
- Karnataka HC pulled up → failure to submit data

SOON What Next

- SC → granted **6 more months** to all HCs for expedited disposal
- Registrar General (Karnataka HC) to explain non-compliance (2 weeks)
- **Next review: April 10, 2026** → SC to monitor progress

Test Your Knowledge 02

Q. Under the Civil Procedure Code (CPC), the execution petition primarily relates to:

- Filing a new civil case after appeal disposal
- Enforcement of a decree passed by a civil court
- Review of an earlier court judgment
- Transfer of a case from one court to another

Hint:

Enforcement of a decree passed by a civil court

News / Explained / What sets nationwide SIR apart from Bihar's controversial roll revision

What sets nationwide SIR apart from Bihar's controversial roll revision

From its earlier refrain asserting the EC's right to verify citizenship as part of determining eligibility, Monday's announcement marked a clear shift — citizenship remains an eligibility criterion, but was no longer invoked as a central test.

IE Explained; By Damini Nath , Ritika Chopra;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Polity/Governance [Link](#)




Why in News? → EC launches **2nd phase of nationwide Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls (Oct 28, 2025) → major procedural + policy shift from Bihar's controversial SIR (June 2024).


Core Objective & Tone Shift

- **Bihar SIR** → citizenship verification focus → anxiety, exclusion fears
- **Nationwide SIR** → inclusion-centric, voter continuity focus
- Citizenship = eligibility criterion ✓ but **not** verification test

THE VOTER LIST CLEAN-UP

THERE ARE FOUR KINDS OF ELECTORAL ROLL REVISIONS

 <p>INTENSIVE REVISION Fresh electoral rolls prepared from scratch with 100 per cent door-to-door verification</p>	 <p>SUMMARY REVISION Annual process; updates made based on claims and objections without field verification</p>	 <p>PARTLY INTENSIVE AND SUMMARY Mixed approach. Existing rolls published in draft while officers conduct household verification</p>	 <p>SPECIAL REVISION Done when routine updates are deemed insufficient. Can be attached to other methods</p>
--	---	--	--



SPECIAL INTENSIVE REVISION: Current Bihar exercise. Not defined in electoral rules; a discretionary method created by the ECI in 2025 to validate voter citizenship

- **Aim** → clean, updated rolls ♦ no mass deletions or document-driven exclusion

❑ Enumeration Phase (Approach Recast)

- **Bihar** → electors (post-2003) had to show citizenship/age proof → large-scale document hunt
- **Now** → only basic info (address, family link) needed → no docs at enumeration
- **Enumerators trace electors** via old rolls of self/parents/relatives → emphasis on continuity
- **Purpose** → identify missing voters, ensure none dropped mistakenly

❑ Enumeration Form Changes

- **2 new columns** → link to last SIR roll (self/family)
- **Earlier introduced late in Bihar** after backlash → now built-in from start
- **Enables automatic tracing of voter lineage across revisions** → simplifies eligibility confirmation

❑ Cross-State Roll Linkage ♦ New Feature

- **BLOs get access to all states' last** intensive revision rolls
- **Bihar BLOs** → limited to state 2003 roll
- **Migrants** (e.g., WB 2002 → TN 2025) can retain registration using old state link
- **Acknowledges mobility of workforce**, urban migration patterns

❑ Document Submission Policy

- Docs required only if voter absent from **any state's** last SIR roll
- **Earlier** → all post-2003 Bihar voters had to submit one of 11 docs
- **Now** → smaller, targeted group receives notice during claims-objections phase
- **Fairer scrutiny** → avoid blanket demand for citizenship proof

❑ Citizenship Verification Recalibrated

- **Bihar EC claim** → right to verify citizenship directly
- **New approach** → citizenship remains base criterion, not active test
- **Language softened** to prevent exclusion of genuine electors
- **Aadhaar retained as 12th acceptable doc** (added after SC ruling)

❑ Inclusion of New Voters (18+)

- **Earlier (Bihar)** → new electors added only later (claims-objections)
- **Now** → can submit **Form 6 + SIR declaration** during enumeration → faster inclusion
- **Reduces lag for first-time voters** → better youth participation

❑ Political & Administrative Process Improvements

- **Bihar** → poor coordination, sudden notice → confusion & protests
- **Nationwide SIR** → pre-launch meetings with CEOs & political parties → transparency ↑
- **Parties briefed on process** → stakeholder buy-in ensured
- EC aims to rebuild trust after Bihar criticism

Wider Context & Significance

- **First large-scale nationwide SIR** since 2003–04 revisions
- **Timing** → before major Assembly polls (e.g., TN, WB, UP upcoming 2026–27)
- **Aligns with EC's goal of 100% roll accuracy**, minimal duplication
- **Reflects course correction** post-public backlash in Bihar

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following actions by the Election Commission would fall within its constitutional and statutory mandate under Articles 324–329 and the Representation of the People Acts?

- 1) Revising electoral rolls through nationwide SIR.
- 2) Requiring proof of citizenship as an eligibility condition for voter registration.
- 3) Declaring Aadhaar as mandatory for inclusion in electoral rolls.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Hint:

EC can verify eligibility (citizenship, age, residence) but cannot make Aadhaar mandatory (violates SC orders, Aadhaar Act s.7 restrictions).

News / Explained / Row over PM-SHRI in Kerala: What is the school education scheme, why some states have opposed it

Row over PM-SHRI in Kerala: What is the school education scheme, why some states have opposed it

The Centre has linked the release of funds under the Samagra Shiksha scheme to the implementation of PM-SHRI. Here's what the scheme is, and why it has run into opposition.

IE Explained; By Abhinaya Harigovind;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Polity/Governance [Link](#)

- **Assessment** → Competency-based, not rote-learning
- **Framework** → *School Quality Assessment Framework* → performance-linked funding
- **Curriculum** → NCF or State Curriculum (based on NEP)

Why in News? → Kerala govt signed MoU with Centre to implement **PM-SHRI** scheme after long resistance; sparked intra-LDF & Opposition row.



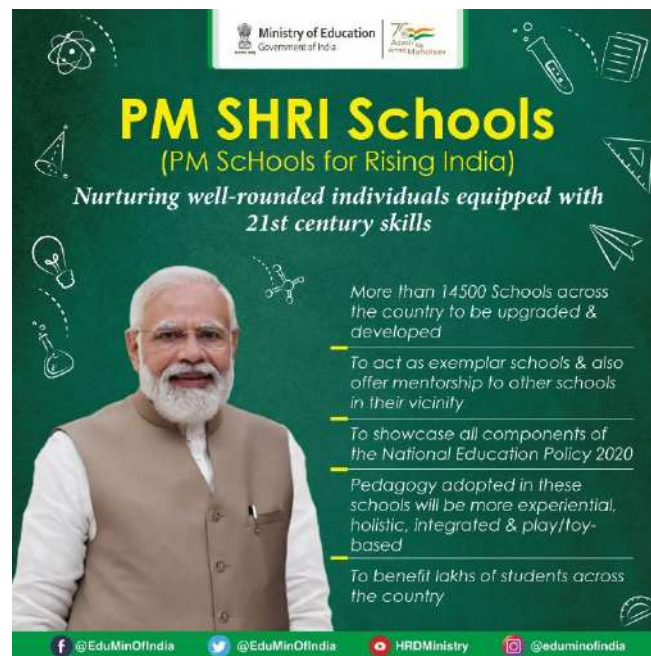
A file picture of Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan and PM Modi. The Opposition has slammed the LDF government's decision to sign the MoU, alleging a "link" between the CPI(M) and the BJP. (Photo: ANI)

PM-SHRI Scheme – Overview

- **Full form** → *PM Schools for Rising India*
- **Launched** → 2022; aligned with **NEP 2020** vision
- **Coverage** → 14,500 schools (existing govt schools)
- **Purpose** → Model "exemplar" schools → showcase NEP practices
- **Funding** → Centre–State ratio 60:40
- **Selection so far** → 13,070 schools (incl. 1,533 KVAs + NVs)

Key Features & Implementation

- **Pedagogy** → Art/toy-based learning, experiential methods
- **Skills focus** → Vocational edu + skill labs in each school
- **Foundational learning** → FLN (basic literacy & numeracy) ensured
- **Infra** → Labs, ICT, accessibility, zero-dropout target



Political & Federal Dimensions

- **Implementing states** → Most incl. Karnataka, Telangana, HP, Punjab, Delhi
- **Non-implementing** → Tamil Nadu, West Bengal (oppose NEP branding + central prefix "PM")
- **Kerala's stance shift** → Initially refused (NEP clause) → now signed MoU citing fund crunch
- **Internal dissent** → CPI (LDF ally) opposed lack of consultation
- **Opposition charge** → Congress alleges CPI(M)–BJP "deal"

Linkage with Samagra Shiksha Funds

- **Samagra Shiksha** → Core school funding scheme (RTE, uniforms, textbooks, inclusive edu)
- **Funding tie-up** → Centre linked fund release to PM-SHRI adoption
- **Kerala impact** → No central funds for FY 2024–25 & 2025–26; partial in 2023–24 (~₹1,150 cr)
- **Result** → State used own share → pending scholarships, uniforms, grants
- **Reason for MoU** → Need for revival of withheld funds

Core Issue – NEP Implementation Clause

- **MoU condition** → State to adopt NEP “in entirety”
- **Kerala’s clarification** → Will adopt only state-acceptable parts; retain control over curriculum/textbooks
- **Broader debate** → Centre–State friction over federal control in education + ideological opposition to NEP

Conclusion → Kerala’s U-turn on PM-SHRI stems from fiscal necessity amid Centre’s fund freeze; reignites debate on NEP federalism & political optics.

Test Your Knowledge 02

Q. With reference to the PM Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) Scheme, consider the following statements:

- 1) It aims to develop new model schools across the country under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- 2) Only centrally managed schools like Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas are eligible for selection.
- 3) The funding pattern of the scheme between Centre and States (Normal) is in the ratio of 60:40.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Hint:

PM-SHRI upgrades existing schools (not new ones); includes both Central & State govt schools; funding 60:40 (90:10 for NE & UTs).

NEWS IN SHORT: POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Justice Surya Kant to Become 53rd Chief Justice of India (CJI)

Why in News? → Justice Surya Kant appointed as 53rd CJI; to assume office on Nov 24, 2025, succeed Justice Bhushan R. Gavai.

Appointment of Chief Justice of India (CJI)

- **Constitutional Basis** → **Art. 124(2)** → No specific procedure for appointing CJI — only says “President shall appoint.”
- **Appointing Authority** → **President of India**
- **Process** → By convention → **seniority principle** (senior-most SC judge appointed)
- **Consultation** → With outgoing **CJI & other senior judges** (Collegium norm)
- **Tenure** → **Till age of 65 yrs**
- **Removal** → By President → after impeachment by Parliament (Art. 124(4))



- **Oath** → Administered by President under Third Schedule

Functions → Head of judiciary & SC; advises President; chairs collegium & NALSA



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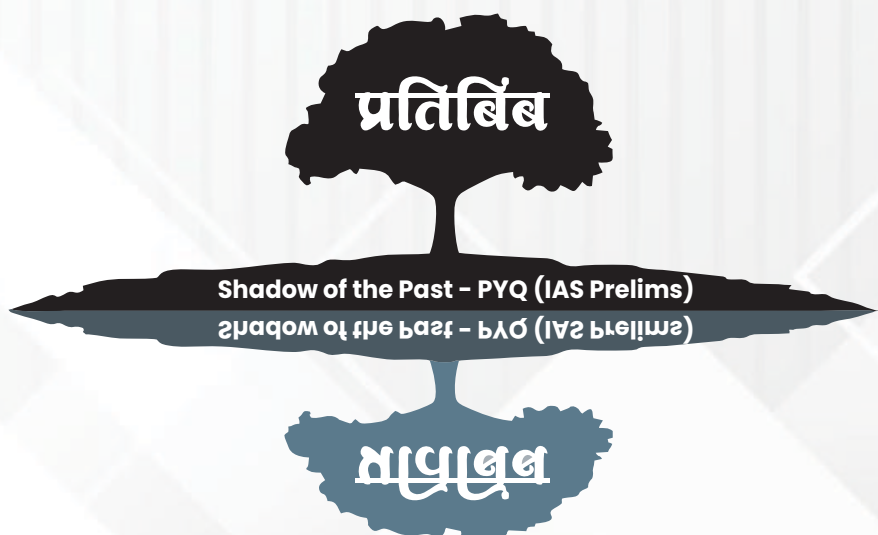
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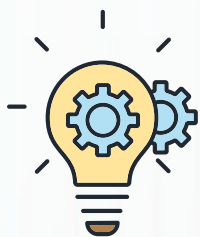
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Society & Social Justice

October 2025

News / Explained / How a new MGNREGA amendment pushes for spending on water conservation projects

How a new MGNREGA amendment pushes for spending on water conservation projects

The norms have specified minimum spending at the block level, based on their stage of groundwater extraction — “Over-exploited”, “Critical”, “Semi-critical” and “Safe”.

IE Explained; By Harikishan Sharma;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Society & Social Issues
[Link](#)

- **Earlier rule:** 60% works (district level) → agri & allied assets (land, water, trees)

What Changed?

- **New norm** → block-level minimum allocation for water-related works
- **Linked to CGWB groundwater categories:**
 - Over-exploited & Critical → ≥65%
 - Semi-critical → ≥40%
 - Safe → ≥30%

Rationale

- **PM's push** → at Council of Ministers meeting, stressed on urgent water focus under NREGA
- **Groundwater crisis** → India among top global groundwater extractors (25% of world), >700 blocks in over-exploited stage
- **Policy gap earlier** → only district-level mandate, ignored micro-level water stress variation
- **Block-level focus** → ensures funds reach severely stressed zones first, avoids dilution by safer blocks
- **Climate resilience** → water conservation structures (ponds, recharge wells, check dams) → drought-proofing, recharge aquifers
- **Rural livelihoods** → water security supports agriculture, livestock, long-term productivity → beyond wage employment

Impact & Beneficiary States

- **National picture:** CGWB 2024 assessment (6,746 blocks):
 - **Over-exploited** → >100% extraction: 751 (11.1%)
 - **Critical** → 90–100%: 206 (3.0%)
 - **Semi-critical** → 70–90%: 711 (10.5%)
 - **Safe** → ≤70%: 4,951 (73.4%)
 - **Salinity:** 127
- **Funds earmarked:** ~₹35,000 cr (of ₹86,000 cr NREGA FY26) → water-related works
- **Major gainers (highest stressed blocks):**
 - **Rajasthan** → 214 (arid/semi-arid, severe depletion)
 - **Punjab** → 115 (over-extraction due to rice-wheat cropping pattern)
 - **Tamil Nadu** → 106 (dependence on groundwater, coastal stress)

Why in News?

Centre amended **Schedule-I of MGNREGA (Sep 23, 2025)** → mandates minimum spending on **water conservation & harvesting works** at block level.



The Centre has amended Schedule-1 of MGNREGA to mandate higher spending on water conservation in rural blocks, with **65% of funds** directed to over-exploited and critical areas

Key Provisions of MGNREGA

- **100 days guaranteed rural employment** (on demand)
- **Schedule-I** → defines permissible public works
- **Amendments via govt. notification** (≈2 dozen so far)

- **Haryana** → 88 (intensive irrigation, falling water table)
- **Uttar Pradesh** → 59 (western UP esp. critical)
- **Expected benefits:**
 - ↑ fund flow to water-scarce regions
 - ↑ job creation via water asset works
 - ↓ groundwater over-extraction trend
 - ↑ irrigation sustainability for agriculture-dependent states

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to the recent amendment to Schedule-I of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, consider the following statements:

- 1) The amendment mandates a minimum block-level expenditure on water conservation and harvesting works.
- 2) The proportion of funds for water-related works varies depending on the groundwater categorisation by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB).
- 3) Previously, the Act required at least 60% of works at the Gram Panchayat level to be related to agriculture and allied activities.

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

Hint: Earlier mandate of 60% works was at district level, not Gram Panchayat level.

News / Explained / Rise in cybercrime, most crimes against women in UP: How to read NCRB's 2023 Crime in India report

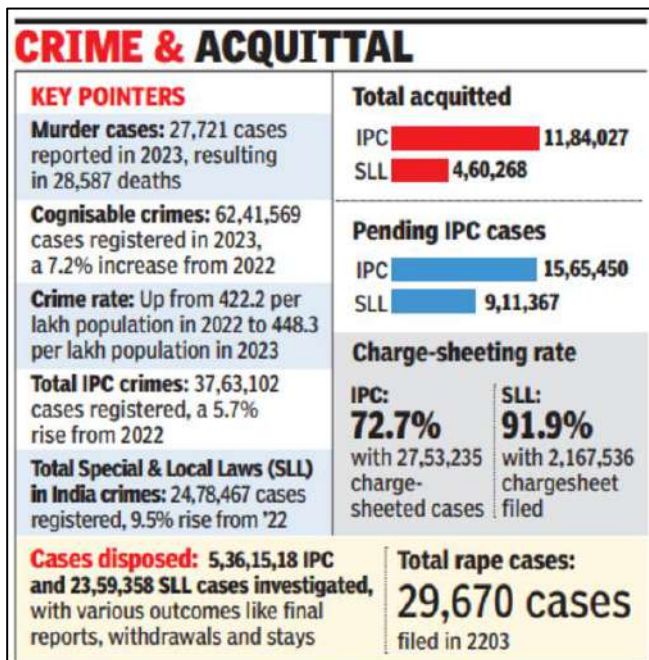
Rise in cybercrime, most crimes against women in UP: How to read NCRB's 2023 Crime in India report

How does the NCRB gather these data, what do they tell us beyond the headline numbers, and why are they important?

IE Explained; By Mahendra Singh Manral;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Society [Link](#)

Why in News?

NCRB released **Crime in India 2023** report → ↑ cybercrime, crimes against women & SC/STs



NCRB & Data Collection

- Est. 1986 → under MHA, compiles national crime data
- Sources → States/UTs police stations → validated district/state → NCRB software
- Method → Crime per lakh (population est. from 2011 Census projections)
- Limitation → **Principal Offence Rule** (only most serious crime counted) → underreporting
- Records **only registered crimes** → may reflect ↑ reporting, not always ↑ incidence

Key Findings 2023

Overall Crime

- **Total crime rate** ↑ 422.2 (2022) → 448.3 (2023)
- **Murder** ↓ 2.8% → 27,721 cases
- **Crimes affecting human body** ↑ 2.3% → 11.85 lakh cases
- **MV Act violations doubled** → 94,450 → 1.92 lakh

Crimes Against Women

- **Total** → **4,48,211 cases (↑0.7%)** | Crime rate: 66.2/lakh female pop
- **Top state:** UP (66,381) > Maharashtra, Rajasthan, WB, MP
- **Major categories** → Cruelty by husband/relatives (29.8%), Kidnapping (19.8%), Outraging modesty (18.7%), POCSO (14.8%)

- **Decline:** MP, Maharashtra; ↑: Bihar, TN; Delhi UT highest (2,278)

Crimes Against Children

- 1,77,335 cases (↑9.2%)
- Kidnapping/abduction → 79,884 (45%)
- POCSO Act → 67,694 (38.2%)

Crimes Against SC/ST

- SCs → 57,789 cases | UP highest (15,130) > Rajasthan (8,449) > MP (8,232) > Bihar (7,064)
- STs → 12,960 cases (↑28.8%) | Manipur worst-hit, then MP (2,858), Rajasthan (2,453)

Cybercrime

- ↑**31.2%** → **86,420 cases** | Rate 6.2/lakh pop
- Motives → Fraud (68.9%, 59,526 cases), Extortion, Sexual exploitation
- States: Karnataka, Telangana, UP top contributors
- **Trend steady** ↑ → 27,248 (2018) → 65,893 (2022) → 86,420 (2023)

How to Read the Report

- **Data ≠ actual crime incidence** → reflects *registered crime*
- ↑ **numbers may indicate better reporting**, e-FIRs, women helpdesks
- **Principal Offence Rule** → masks secondary crimes (e.g. murder+rape → only murder)
- **Population base outdated (2011 census)** → distortion in crime rate comparisons

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following best explains the Principal Offence Rule used by NCRB in compiling crime statistics?

- A case is counted under all the sections of IPC applied to it.
- Only the first registered offence is counted for statistical purposes.
- Only the most serious offence in a case is recorded for the report.
- All crimes against women and children are recorded separately from other offences.

Hint: “Murder with rape” counted as only Murder.

Q. Consider the following with respect to Cybercrime in India (2023):

- It showed a steady rise since 2018.
- Fraud accounted for nearly 70% of cases.
- Maharashtra reported the maximum number of cases.
- The cybercrime rate per lakh population was higher than that of crimes against women.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- Only one
- Only two
- Only three
- All four

Hint: Trend ↑ since 2018 ✓, Fraud ~69% ✓, Top states = Karnataka/Telangana/UP ✗ (not Maharashtra), Cybercrime rate (6.2) << Women crime rate (66.2) ✗.

The casteless bureaucrat is a myth

Suicide note of Y Puran Kumar alleging caste discrimination raises important institutional questions



IE Opinion; By Sumeet Mhaskar, Prabodhan Pol;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Society, Ethics [Link](#)

Why in News?

→ Suicide of Haryana cadre IPS officer **Y Puran Kumar (Dalit)** alleging caste discrimination within bureaucracy exposes deep-seated structural bias.

Caste Bias in Bureaucracy

- **Kumar's case** → Alleged caste harassment → denied promotions, ACR bias, cadre exclusion, humiliation, leave denial
- **Known for** → Exposing irregular promotions, caste bias in postings, corruption, illegal temple construction in police lines
- **Suicide note (8 pages)** → Evidence of “blatant caste-based discrimination”
- **Reflects wider SC/ST officers' experience** → Not isolated, systemic

Structural & Institutional Dimensions

- **Supreme Court 2024 verdict** → Allowed SC/ST sub-classification → Noted intra-community disparity
- **Controversial view** → Exclusion of “creamy layer” among SC/ST → echoes anti-reservation arguments
- **Kumar’s case** → Shows caste ≠ purely economic; discrimination persists despite status

Symbolic Incidents of Caste Prejudice

- **CJI B.R. Gavai (Dalit)** shoe attack in SC → “Sanatan Dharma insult” pretext → caste undertone
- **Even top constitutional posts** → not immune from caste hostility

Representation Crisis in Bureaucracy

- **Ambedkar’s foresight** → Predicted caste infiltration post-independence → *States and Minorities*
- **Caste = graded inequality** → ritual, relational, not economic
- **Data (Kathryn Doner, 2022)** → Secretary-level: SCs 1.1%, STs 3.37%, OBCs 0%
- **Massive vacancy of reserved posts** → due to prejudice, exclusionary culture

Institutional Accountability & Reforms

- **FIR filed against officers named by Kumar** → rare accountability in SC/ST Act cases
- **Systemic failure** → Few convictions, bureaucratic shielding of accused
- **Needed reforms** →
 - Caste-sensitisation training for officers
 - Independent grievance redressal for SC/ST bureaucrats
 - Monitoring of promotions & postings for caste bias
 - Representation review at senior levels

Core Message

♦ The “casteless bureaucrat” = myth → Indian “steel frame” corroded by caste → urgent need for structural reform to ensure dignity, equity, and justice within bureaucracy.

Test Your Knowledge 01

Q. Which of the following best captures the constitutional rationale behind reservations in public employment?

- Compensation for historical economic deprivation
- Tool for administrative efficiency through diversity
- Guarantee of equality of opportunity under Article 16
- Fulfilment of Directive Principles of State Policy under Article 39(b)

Hint:

Linked to Article 16(4) → ensures equality of opportunity for backward classes, not mere economic relief.

Q. The phrase “graded inequality” as used by B. R. Ambedkar refers to:

- Economic stratification among castes
- Hierarchical ranking of social groups with unequal status and privileges
- Unequal access to education across genders
- Income disparity between rural and urban India

Hint:

Ambedkar’s idea → caste = hierarchy of ranks with graded privileges & disabilities, not just wealth gaps.

NEWS IN SHORT: SOCIETY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

PM shares article praising ULLAS adult learning programme

Why in News?

The Prime Minister shared an article commending the **ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society) programme**, launched under NEP 2020, especially its impact on rural and women literacy.

About ULLAS Programme

- A **centrally sponsored scheme** (Centre + State funding) for FY 2022–2027, approved by the Government of India.
- Targets **non-literates aged 15 years and above** who missed out on formal schooling.

Components / Focus Areas

- **Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN)** — basic reading, writing, arithmetic skills.
- **Critical Life Skills** — digital literacy, financial literacy, health & hygiene, legal literacy, etc.
- **Basic Education** — equivalency up to middle/secondary levels.
- **Vocational Skills** — to enhance employability in local settings.
- **Continuing Education** — lifelong learning in arts, sciences, culture, recreation, etc.

Implementation & Methodology

- **Volunteerism-based model:** volunteers (students, community members) teach learners.
- **Hybrid delivery:** both in-person training, orientations and digital/online modes (mobile app, portal, TV, radio) for teaching & resources.
- **Use of a mobile app and portal** for registration, teaching materials, tracking learners and volunteers.
- **Assessment through the Functional Literacy Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT)**, conducted twice a year in many states. Learners who pass receive certification.

Targets, Budget & Reach

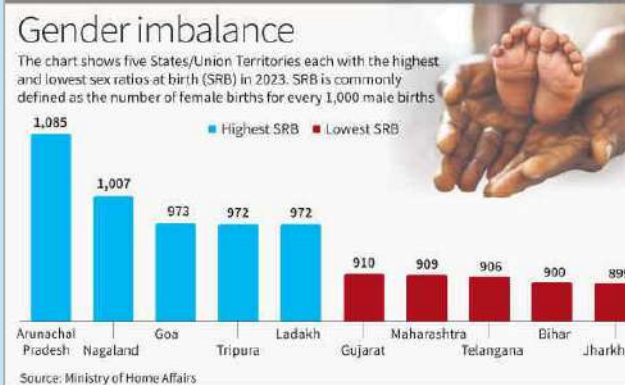
- **Financial outlay:** ~ ₹1,037.90 crore, of which ₹700 crore is central share and ₹337.90 crore is state share.
- **Learner target:** aim to reach 5 crore non-literates over the scheme period (i.e. about 1 crore learners per year).
- **Achievements so far:**
 - Over **77 lakh people** have appeared for FLNAT assessments nationwide.
 - The ULLAS mobile app has over 1.33 crore learners registered and 35 lakh volunteer teachers.
 - In **Ladakh**, ULLAS declared “Full Functional Literacy” after crossing 97% literacy.

Mizoram has also recently been declared to have achieved “full functional literacy” under ULLAS.

Number of births declines; deaths rise slightly: report

Why in News?

Vital Statistics of India 2023 (Civil Registration System Report, RGI) – Shows ↓ births & marginal ↑ deaths in India.



Birth & Death Trends

- **Total births (2023)** → 2.52 crore (↓ 2.32 lakh vs 2022).
- **Total deaths (2023)** → 86.6 lakh (↑ from 86.5 lakh in 2022).
- **Major spike only in 2021** → 102.2 lakh deaths (excess of 21 lakh vs 2020).
- **2020 deaths** → 81.2 lakh.
- **No abnormal ↑ deaths in 2022–23** despite COVID-19 deaths = 5.33 lakh (MoHFW data).

Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB)

- **National concern** → persistently low SRB in several states.
- **Lowest SRB (females/1000 males)** → Jharkhand (899), Bihar (900), Telangana (906), Maharashtra (909), Gujarat (910), Haryana (911), Mizoram (911).
- **Highest SRB** → Arunachal Pradesh (1085), Nagaland (1007), Goa (973), Ladakh & Tripura (972), Kerala (967).
- **Since 2020** → Bihar consistently lowest SRB.
- **Indicator relevance** → Reflects gender bias & female foeticide trends; key to SDG-5 (Gender Equality).

Birth Registration & Institutional Deliveries

- **Overall registration of births** → 98.4% (↑ coverage).
- **Institutional births share** → 74.7% (excl. Sikkim).
- **Timely registration (within 21 days)** → >90% in 11 States/UTs:
 - Gujarat, Puducherry, Chandigarh, DNH & DD, Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep, A&N Islands, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Punjab.
- **80–90% timely registration** → Odisha, Mizoram, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh.

- **50–80% timely registration** → Assam, Delhi, MP, Tripura, Telangana, Kerala, Karnataka, Bihar, Rajasthan, J&K, Jharkhand, WB, Meghalaya, UP.

Civil Registration System (CRS): Static Linkage

- Mandated under → **Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969.**

- Implemented by → **Office of the Registrar General of India (RGI), under Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).**
- **Purpose** → Continuous, permanent, compulsory recording of vital events (births & deaths).
- **Data use** → Demographic statistics, health planning, SDG monitoring.



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International Relations

October 2025

News / Explained / Explained Global / Gaza peace plan: Trump the businessman's big imprint; for India, reasons for relief, caution

Premium

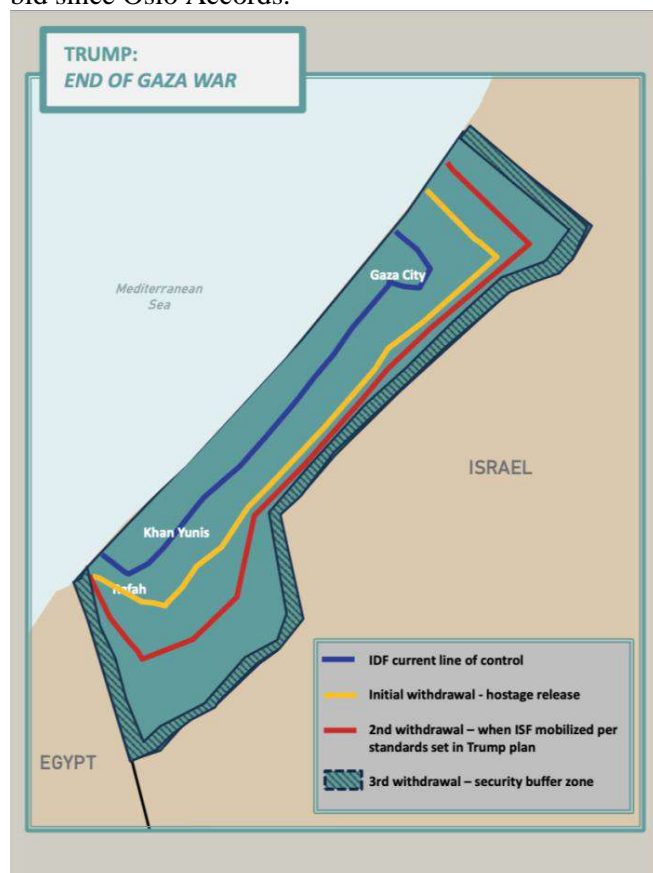
Gaza peace plan: Trump the businessman's big imprint; for India, reasons for relief, caution

Trump Israel Palestine plan: What is the new Gaza peace plan? Why is Tony Blair being talked about again? With Trump welcoming Pakistan's role, what should New Delhi watch out for?

IE Explained; By Shubhajit Roy;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations
[Link](#)

Why in News?

US Prez Trump unveiled a **20-point “Comprehensive Plan to End Gaza Conflict”**, seen as most ambitious bid since Oslo Accords.



Key Features of Trump's Gaza Peace Plan

- **Hamas disarmament & exit** → Amnesty for those surrendering; safe passage to Jordan/Egypt/Qatar/Iran.
- **Hostage-prisoner swap** → 48 hostages (20 alive) to be freed; Israel to release 250 life-term convicts + 1700 detainees; 15:1 body-swap formula.
- **International Stabilization Force (ISF)** → US-Arab-Int'l backed; train Palestinian police; IDF phased withdrawal but buffer zone retained.
- **Governance – “Day After Plan”** → Technocratic Palestinian committee + Int'l experts; oversight by “Board of Peace” led by Trump; Tony Blair's inclusion contentious.
- **Aid & reconstruction** → Water, power, hospitals, rubble clearance, bakeries; UN + Red Crescent to channel aid.
- **Regional + Int'l guarantees** → Compliance assured by Qatar, Jordan, UAE, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi, Egypt; China & Russia welcome plan.

Implications:

For Trump

- **Legacy boost** → Oslo-like Nobel prize aspirations.
- **Business footprint** → Hotels, malls, real estate in “New Gaza”; Kushner's Gulf links vital.
- **Geopolitics** → Iran excluded; weakened Hamas/Hezbollah gives US leverage.

For Israel

- **Security assurance** → Hamas disarmament, buffer zone
- **Hostages returned** → addresses strong domestic protests
- **Risk** → transitional governance may weaken Israeli leverage later
- **Political gain for Netanyahu** → Trump's backing consolidates his position

For Hamas & Palestinians

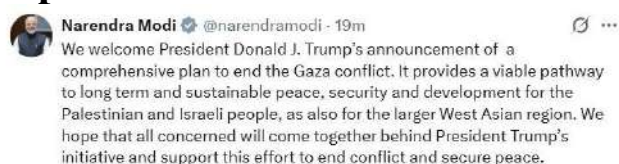
- **Hamas** → existential risk; surrender/disarmament = loss of power base
- **Amnesty/safe passage** → limited option for cadre survival

- **Palestinian Authority (PA)** → gains legitimacy as partner in governance
- **People** → benefit via aid, reconstruction, public services revival

For Arab & Muslim States

- **Collective role** → Qatar, Saudi, UAE, Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Indonesia, Pakistan endorse plan
- **Prestige & mediation** → enhances Arab centrality in peace process
- **Economic stakes** → participation in Gaza rebuilding, aid diplomacy
- **Pakistan** → profile ↑ in US-Arab diplomacy, possible leverage vs India

Implications for India



Positive

- **Stability in region** → diaspora safety (90 lakh Indians in W Asia, 18k in Israel).
- **Energy security** → 80% oil imports from ME; peace ↓ volatility in crude prices.
- **Investment & trade** → Boost to Arab FDI; IME-EC (India-ME-Europe corridor) viability ↑.

Concerns

- **Pakistan role** → Trump lauds Pak PM & Army Chief; ↑ US-Pak tilt.
- **Strategic balance** → Pak leverage in ME peace architecture; India cautious.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. In the context of conflict resolution in West Asia, which of the following past agreements can be considered relevant precedents to the Gaza Peace Plan 2025?

- 1) Camp David Accords (1978)
- 2) Oslo Accords (1993, 1995)
- 3) Abraham Accords (2020)
- 4) Taif Agreement (1989)

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

Hint:

- Camp David (1978) → Egypt–Israel peace.

- Oslo (1993/95) → Israel–Palestine, closest parallel.
- Abraham (2020) → Arab states–Israel normalization, US-brokered.
- Taif (1989) → Ended Lebanese Civil War → not directly Israel–Palestine but broader West Asia conflict resolution.

News / Explained / Explained Global / Several dead in PoK unrest: The protesters' demands, how Pakistan govt responded

Several dead in PoK unrest: The protesters' demands, how Pakistan govt responded

PoK unrest, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir protests: While Pakistan often blames any unrest in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on India, the current round of protests go back at least two years. We explain.

IE Explained;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations
[Link](#)

Why in News?

Violent protests in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) over economic & political grievances killed ≥9 (incl. 3 policemen); talks held with protesters amid continuing unrest.



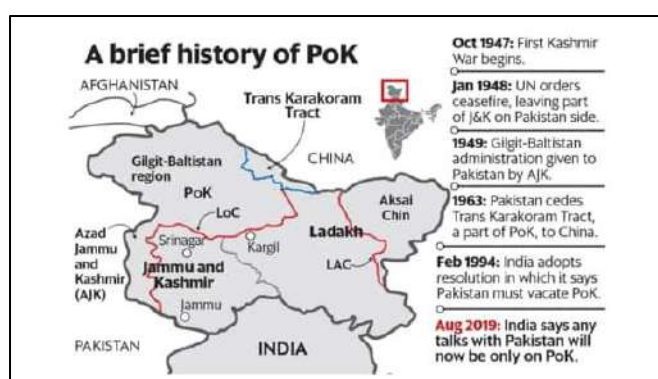
Background of Protests

- **Origin (2023–24)** → Began over ↑ electricity bills, ↓ wheat subsidies, economic distress.
- **Key grievance** → PoK generates hydropower (Mangla project) yet pays high tariffs.
- **Socioeconomic discontent** → Govt officials' privileges (vehicles, fuel, security) amid public hardship.

- **May 2024 “Long March”** → 5 deaths → PM Shehbaz announced subsidies + judicial commission → promises unfulfilled → anger reignited.

Current Round (Sept–Oct 2025)

- **Trigger (Sep 29)** → JAAC called shutdown; police crackdown → clashes → ≥9 dead.
- **Security response** → Paramilitary deployment, schools closed, communication curbs.
- **Death toll dispute** → Govt: 6 policemen; JAAC: 12 protesters → mutual blame.
- **Govt stance** → Caution vs “enemy exploitation” (India); seeks calm, talks initiated.



Protesters’ Demands (38-Point Charter)

- **Political** → Abolish 12 reserved assembly seats for J&K migrants → locals allege Pak interference.
- **Judicial** → Drop cases vs earlier protesters.
- **Economic** → Fair hydropower royalties; ↓ electricity & wheat prices.
- **Developmental** → ↑ investment in health, education, infra.
- **Governance** → End official perks; ensure accountability.

Govt Response & Constraints

- **Partial acceptance** → Subsidy & review commission accepted “in principle”.
- **Constitutional limits** → Seat abolition needs federal amendment → sensitive issue (Partition migrants).
- **Talks (Oct 2025)** → Led by Ahsan Iqbal; appeal for restraint; no concrete outcomes yet.

Broader Shifts & Implications

- **Nature of movement** → From local economic → structural political reform.
- **Information blockade** → Internet curbs → ↓ global visibility.
- **Public trust** ↓ → Promises unmet → escalates alienation.
- **Regional impact** → India condemns HR violations; Pak fears external exploitation narrative.
- **Future risk** → Continued unrest if tangible reforms not implemented soon.

Conclusion → PoK unrest now transcends bread-and-butter issues, reflecting deep-rooted resentment over political control, governance inequity, and economic neglect under Pakistan’s administration.

Test Your Knowledge

- Q. The Mangla Dam, often mentioned in the context of PoK protests, is significant because:
- It supplies irrigation to Sindh and Balochistan only.
 - It is jointly owned by Pakistan and China under the CPEC framework.
 - It generates hydropower for Pakistan while causing local resource grievances in PoK.
 - It is located on the Indus River near Skardu.

Hint:

Mangla (on Jhelum River, Mirpur district, PoK) → large hydropower generation → locals demand royalty & lower tariffs → major protest issue.

C Raja Mohan writes: In a multi-polar West, India's opportunity

Europe is today increasingly ill at ease with Donald Trump's America First nationalism. A loosely knit West offers India opportunities to seek multiple avenues of cooperation.

IE Opinion; By C Raja Mohan;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations
[Link](#)

- **Focus areas** → Trade, defence, digital infra, resilient supply chains, Global Gateway connectivity.
- **Shift** → From China-centric Indo-Pacific to India as pivotal partner.

Why in News?

Europe's growing strategic autonomy amid Trump-era US nationalism creates new openings for India to deepen ties with a "multipolar West."

Shifting Western Order

- **Post-WW2 unity** → US-led "collective West" vs USSR; Western solidarity during Cold War.
- **Post-Cold War** → Brief unipolarity (G7 expansion, "end of history") → eroded by Russia's assertiveness & China's rise.
- **Now** → "Multipolar West" emerging — internal divisions in US-Europe-Japan alliance.

Trump's America First & Western Fragmentation

- **Nationalism** ↑ → US retrenchment, alliance scepticism, unilateralism.
- **Allied unease** → EU, Japan feel Washington treats allies ↓ than adversaries.
- **Debate on "strategic autonomy"** → Triggered by US unpredictability.
- **Result** → Europe, Asia recalibrating strategies to hedge against US policy shifts.

Europe's Strategic Reawakening

- **Leadership signals** → Macron's "Europe Puissante"; Scholz's *Zeitenwende*.
- **Von der Leyen (2025)** → Europe must stand "on its own feet" (economic, tech, defence).
- **Actions** → EU rearmament, defence cooperation (UK, Canada, Japan, SK).
- **Economic diversification** → Beyond Atlantic → Indo-Pacific, Latin America.
- **Goal** → Self-reliant, cohesive "plural West" balancing US influence.

India–Europe Convergence

- **Recent momentum** → Starmer's Mumbai visit, EFTA pact, EU trade talks.
- **EU Joint Communication (Sep 2025)** → Mutual success doctrine ("India's success = EU's success").

India's Strategic Calculus

- **Opportunity** → Multipolar West → multiple engagement vectors, ↑ manoeuvrability.
- **Risk** → Fragmented West → ↓ collective response vs authoritarian powers.
- **Diplomatic agility** → Balanced ties (US–Europe–Russia–China).
- **Constraint** → Domestic reform lag; institutional inertia ↓ external leverage.
- **Need** → Economic modernisation, faster policy execution to capitalise on Western pluralism.

Conclusion:

A fragmented yet plural West offers India new strategic and economic openings — but seizing them depends on Delhi's internal dynamism matching the external flux.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. The Global Gateway programme of the EU aims to:

- Fund digital infrastructure in Africa and Asia
- Counter China's Belt and Road Initiative through sustainable connectivity projects
- Facilitate internal EU migration and labour mobility
- Provide aid to conflict-ridden states in the Indo-Pacific

Hint:

EU's flagship connectivity initiative (2021) → sustainable, transparent, rules-based alternative to China's BRI.

News / Explained / Explained Global / Israel, Hamas agree to 1st phase of Gaza peace plan: Trump on brink of major diplomatic accomplishment

Israel, Hamas agree to 1st phase of Gaza peace plan: Trump on brink of major diplomatic accomplishment

Israel Gaza peace plan, Israel Hamas ceasefire: Much could go wrong in coming days, and in the Middle East it often does. The "peace" deal Trump heralded on Truth Social on Wednesday evening may look more like another temporary pause in a war that started with Israel's founding in 1948

IE Explained;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations
[Link](#)

- **Global backlash** → calls for Palestinian state ↑, Israel's moral isolation ↑.
- **Netanyahu's overreach** → bombing in Qatar, Iran strikes, Syrian collapse, Hezbollah hits.

Shifts in Regional Politics

- **Arab states + Turkey** forced Hamas to accept ceasefire → loss of legitimacy.
- **Saudi Arabia's potential normalization** → trigger for Hamas 2023 attack.
- **Israel's standing** ↓ internationally despite military dominance ↑.
- **New geopolitical equation** → Trump as peace broker, Netanyahu weakened.

Fragile Peace & Next Steps

- **Phase 1** = ceasefire + troop pullback → but long-term peace uncertain.
- **Phase 2 challenges** → Hamas disarmament, Gaza governance, PA role unclear.
- **Interim technocratic leadership planned** → implementation doubts.
- **Netanyahu insists on total Hamas elimination** → risk of deal collapse.
- **Historical pattern** → peace in ME = cyclical, often temporary (1948–present).

Significance

- Potentially Trump's biggest 2nd-term achievement.
- Could reshape Israel's regional role & U.S. diplomacy image.
- But sustainability hinges on mutual compliance + credible postwar governance in Gaza.

Why in News?

Israel & Hamas agree to 1st phase of Gaza peace plan brokered by US President Donald Trump — potential major diplomatic win amid long-running conflict.

Trump's Diplomatic Breakthrough

- **Ceasefire + hostage release** → 1st tangible step toward Gaza peace.
- **20-step plan** → Initial phase: swap of 20 living hostages ↔ Israeli withdrawal from Gaza City.
- **Trump aims for Nobel Peace Prize** → timing aligns with 2025 announcement.
- **Seen as continuation of Abraham Accords legacy** (UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan).
- **Trump pressured Netanyahu** → rare U.S. hard stance on Israel.



Context: Israel-Hamas War 2023–25

- **Started after Hamas' Oct 7, 2023 attack** → worst since Holocaust for Jews.
- **Israeli retaliation** → 60,000+ Palestinians killed, 90% Gaza homes destroyed.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Under international law, Israel's continued military presence in Gaza post-2023 war would primarily raise issues under which legal regime?

(a) UN Charter, Article 51 – Right to self-defence
 (b) Geneva Conventions – Law of Occupation
 (c) Rome Statute – Jus ad bellum provisions
 (d) Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine

Hint:

Occupation law under the 4th Geneva Convention governs duties of occupying powers vis-à-vis civilian populations.

Compete or cooperate? India's delicate dance with China

United States' handling of China under President Richard Nixon is instructive. As founding father of the modern Singaporean state Lee Kuan Yew admirably quipped, 'Nixon would engage, not contain, China, but he would also quietly set pieces in place for a fallback position, should China not play according to the rules as a good global citizen'

IE Opinion: By N Manoharan, Mandhara Bilagi and Avishka Ashok;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations

[Link](#)

Why in News?

Evolving India–China engagement post-SCO détente & regional recalibration amid shifting global power balance.



Global Context → Compete or Cooperate?

- **Geo-shift:** Rise of East (India–China) ↔ West's "secular stagnation" (Larry Summers).
- **New world order:** Multipolarity ↑ → fluid, fragmented interdependence; weaponisation of trade/tech.
- **India's stance:** Strategic ambivalence → cooperation in economy, competition in security.
- **Supply chains:** Global diversification away from China → "Make in India" opportunity.
- **Complementarity view:** Ratan Tata → "China = factory; India = knowledge hub."
- **Strategic model:** Nixon's China playbook → engage + fallback plan (Lee Kuan Yew insight).

Regional Dynamics → China's Twin Strategy

- **"Envelopment"** → Deep economic penetration in S. Asia via BRI, loans, trade dominance.
- **"Encirclement" / "String of Pearls"** → Strategic presence in Pak, SL, Nepal, Maldives, Bangladesh, Myanmar, IOR.
- **Pakistan link:** "Iron brothers" narrative → joint military + CPEC.
- **India's counter:**
 - Neighbourhood First & SAGAR vision → aid, infrastructure, energy, digital links.
 - Soft power → culture, disaster relief, democracy appeal.
 - People-centric diplomacy → goodwill in crises = "good pangs of proximity."

Bilateral Engagement → 3 Domains

a) Military

- Threats → Kinetic (border, LAC), Non-kinetic (cyber, space).
- Priorities → Defence modernisation, A2/AD capabilities, infra in border belts, ISR tech.

b) Economic

- Trade asymmetry → India's imports from China ↑ (3/4th in 327 key items – RIS study).
- Import substitution → mobiles, telecom, solar, APIs, electronics.
- Leverage → India = major consumer market; China can't afford decoupling.
- Goal → Self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat) + selective engagement.

c) Diplomatic

- China's line → "Elephant–Dragon dance" (Wang Yi): cooperation > confrontation.
- India's calculus → Avoid being cornered into US bloc; maintain autonomy.
- Mechanism → Dialogue, border management, strategic trust building.

Policy Imperative → The Balancing Act

- **Engage where beneficial ↔ Compete where necessary.**
- **Adopt Nixonian realism:** Engage–hedge–prepare fallback.
- **Outcome:** Strategic equilibrium → cooperation in economy, deterrence in security, assertion in neighbourhood.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Waldo Tobler's First Law of Geography, used in India's neighbourhood context, underscores that:

- (a) Physical proximity alone determines foreign policy behaviour.
- (b) Regional cooperation should be prioritised over global alliances.
- (c) Spatial closeness increases mutual relevance and interdependence.
- (d) Geographical proximity automatically ensures political stability.

Hint:

"Near things are more related than distant things" → basis for stronger neighbourhood engagement.

- **Strategic shift** → hedge vs. US tariffs (↑50%) under Trump

Sectoral Opportunities for India

- **Gems & Jewellery**
 - UK imports \$92.7 bn; India's share \$0.6 bn only
 - Huge scope; can offset US losses (\$11.9 bn exports at stake)
 - MFN tariff pre-CETA: India 1.16%, US 0.11%, Germany 0.04%
- **Textiles & Apparel (HSN 61–63)**
 - UK imports \$22.3 bn; India exports \$1.59 bn
 - Tariff ↓ from 9–12% → 0% (CETA parity with Bangladesh, Vietnam)
 - Boost for labour-intensive sector
- **Leather & Footwear (HSN 42, 64)**
 - UK imports \$8.5 bn; India's share \$453 mn
 - MFN duty earlier: footwear 8.04%, leather 3% → now 0%
 - Competitive gain vs. China (13.02%) & Vietnam (13.09%)

As US shuts doors, India-UK partnership can be a launch pad for growth

With Starmer's visit and CETA in place, the UK market offers significant opportunities for India. But reduced tariffs alone will not translate into exports unless matched with structural reforms that promote India's competitiveness

IE Opinion; By Ashok Gulati, Sulakshana Rao;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations

[Link](#)

Why in News?

UK PM Keir Starmer's India visit & signing of India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) seen as major growth opportunity amid US tariff shock on Indian exports.

**India–UK Economic Landscape**

- **Bilateral trade** → \$56 bn (Goods \$23 bn + Services \$33 bn) → target \$120 bn by 2030
- **India's surplus** → in both goods & services
- **CETA** → covers >99% tariff lines → near-zero tariffs on key products

Market Access for UK in India

- Gradual duty cut on Scotch & gin: 150% → 75% (now) → 40% (in 10 yrs; suggest 5 yrs for signal)
- Other areas: advanced machinery, defence, clean energy tech, medical devices

Strategic & Diplomatic Dimensions

- Partnership as stability pillar amid global trade volatility
- Strengthens India's position before EU talks
- Message to US: balanced diplomacy, not dependency

Challenges & Domestic Reforms Needed

- **Competitiveness Gap** → Rivals (Canada, Vietnam, Bangladesh) already enjoy FTAs
- **Policy Support** → Targeted export incentives, easier credit access
- **Trade Facilitation** → Export clearance: India 17.3 days vs. Bangladesh 6.7, China 3.3
- **Regulatory Cholesterol** → Need simplified, enabling regulatory framework

- **Industrial Clusters** → Invest in shared infra, testing, logistics to ↓ costs, ↑ quality

Way Forward

- Speed up domestic reforms + CETA implementation
- Focus on labour-intensive exports & value-added manufacturing
- Use UK as strategic export hub amid global realignment
- CETA = launch pad for India's next export growth phase

Test Your Knowledge

Q. The India–UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) can be seen as a “next-generation” FTA because it—

- 1) Covers goods, services, investments, and intellectual property comprehensively.
- 2) Integrates sustainability and digital economy chapters.
- 3) Mandates full capital convertibility between the two economies.
- 4) Aims at mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

Select the correct answer:

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

Hint:

CETA covers goods, services, IPRs, and modern trade issues; includes digital & sustainability aspects; no capital convertibility clause.

Shashi Tharoor writes: The world after the American order

The US-led postwar order is unravelling. In its place, a contest for influence and legitimacy is gathering pace, with China eager to fill the vacuum.



This new era is defined less by ideological blocs than by pragmatic alignments. (Illustration by CR Sasikumar)

IE Opinion; By Shashi Tharoor;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations

[Link](#)

Why in News?

Shashi Tharoor analyses the erosion of the US-led post-war order and China's growing bid to reshape global governance amid American retrenchment under Trump's second term.

Decline of the US-led “Pax Americana”

- **Post-1945 order** → built on UN, liberal democracy, open markets, US leadership
- **Stability ↓ due to** → US overreach (Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan), 2008 crisis
- **Trump era** → nationalism ↑, multilateralism ↓, trade wars → system unravelled
- **US withdrawal from** → UN bodies, USAID, global diplomacy → soft power loss

Rise of China's Alternative Global Vision

- **Xi's narrative** → “safeguard UN”, “inclusive globalisation” ♦ contrasts US belligerence
- **China** → **top trading partner** for 100+ nations → economic gravity shift
- **Belt & Road Initiative (BRI)** → infrastructure + predictability → appeal to Global South
- **SCO summit** → “true multilateralism”, “anti-hegemonism” → soft power projection
- **China's model** → state-driven economy yet appears steadier vs US tariff threats

Global South Recalibration

- **Shift from ideology** → pragmatic alignments ♦ multipolarity emerging

- **India, Brazil, others** → balancing US unpredictability ↔ Chinese investment
- **Strategic autonomy** → priority > bloc loyalty
- **Stability + growth** > democracy rhetoric

Challenges to China's Leadership

- **Trust deficit** → South China Sea aggression, Xinjiang/Tibet record, India border tensions
- **Overdependence risks** → BRI debt, rare earth monopoly weaponisation
- **Yet** → Trump's chaos overshadows Beijing's flaws → vacuum-filling advantage

Implications for Global Order

- **Post-war system** → fraying; legitimacy contest
↑
- **Global governance** → fragmented, transactional, fluid
- **US dilemma** → re-engage & rebuild trust ♦ or retreat & cede space
- **Restoration cost** ↑, but abdication cost ↑↑

Conclusion → The American-led order is disintegrating; a multipolar, interest-driven world is emerging where China seeks to define the new rules — not by superiority of ideology, but by filling the vacuum of leadership.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. The "Pax Americana" system that emerged after 1945 primarily rested on which of the following pillars?

- 1) Institutional multilateralism under UN & Bretton Woods
- 2) Liberal economic order & open trade
- 3) American military security guarantees
- 4) Global ideological homogeneity

Select the correct code:

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

Hint:

The post-war order combined institutional, economic, and military leadership—without global ideological uniformity.

India and Taiwan have seen 30 years of strengthening ties. More can be done

With 90 per cent of the world's advanced semiconductor production, Taiwan's role is crucial to India becoming a global hub for electronic manufacturing and design

IE Opinion; By Seshadri Chari and Sumit Kumar;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations

[Link](#)

Why in News?

♦ India–Taiwan mark 30 yrs of growing ties → focus on semiconductors, Indo-Pacific security & trade expansion.



Evolution of India–Taiwan Relations

- **Pre-1991 phase** → limited contact; no formal diplomatic ties.
- **1991 "Look East Policy"** → start of structured engagement; visa relaxations.
- **1995** → TECC (Taipei) & ITA (New Delhi) offices → semi-diplomatic channels.
- **Post-2014 (Modi era)** → ↑ political visibility → Taiwan invited to PM's oath (2014), BJP MPs attended Tsai's ceremony (2020).
- **2022–23** → India's MEA stance vs. China's "status quo" change in Taiwan Strait; visit by 3 retired service chiefs to Ketagalan Forum.
- **Taipei Centre in Mumbai (2023)** → expansion beyond Delhi.

Economic & Technological Cooperation

- **Trade** → \$10.6 bn (2024); 200+ Taiwanese firms in India.
- **Sectors** → electronics, auto, construction, hardware manufacturing.
- **Semiconductors** → Taiwan = 90% of world's advanced chips → key to India's ESDM hub ambition.

- **Major Deal** → Tata Electronics + PSMC → \$11 bn fab in Gujarat → India's 1st semiconductor plant.
- **Foxconn's CEO Young Liu** → Padma Bhushan (symbolic recognition).
- **Mobility pact** → enables labour flow, addresses Taiwan's workforce shortage.

Strategic & Security Convergence

- **Indo-Pacific vision** → Free & Open Indo-Pacific = shared goal.
- **Maritime security** → Stability in Taiwan Strait vital (major Indian trade route).
- **China factor** → Diversify supply chains, ↓ dependence, align with like-minded partners (US, Japan).

Opportunities for Deepening Ties

- **Political outreach** → Encourage MPs/state reps' visits → attract investments.
- **FTA exploration** → Boost trade & market access.
- **Academic cooperation** → MoUs, exchange programmes, joint research.
- **New domains** → Cybersecurity, climate change, space, governance.
- **Language collaboration** → Invite Taiwanese Mandarin teachers → fill scholar gap.
- **Connectivity** → Direct Delhi–Taipei flights → tourism + business ↑.

Way Forward

- **Institutionalise engagement** → from informal to structured.
- **Expand strategic, tech & academic partnerships.**
- **Use Taiwan's semiconductor strength** → advance India's tech sovereignty.
- **Balance engagement** while managing China sensitivities.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. In global semiconductor geopolitics, which of the following countries form the critical "chip triangle"?

- Taiwan, South Korea, United States
- Japan, Germany, India
- Taiwan, Malaysia, Vietnam
- China, Israel, Singapore

Hint:

Taiwan (TSMC), S. Korea (Samsung), USA (design & R&D) dominate advanced semiconductor chain.

The future of the IMEC

The India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor visualises maritime connectivity between India and the Arabian Peninsula, as well as high-speed trains running from the ports in the UAE to the Haifa port through Saudi Arabia and Jordan. However, the situation in West Asia mandates that the corridor's routes adapt to political dynamics



IE Text & Context; By Sanjay Pulipaka;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations

[Link](#)

Why in News?

Future of the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) uncertain amid West Asia tensions & shifting trade routes.

Concept & Vision

- **IMEC** → Maritime + rail corridor linking India → Arabian Peninsula → Europe
- **Core plan** → India–UAE ports ↔ Saudi Arabia–Jordan ↔ Haifa (Israel) → Europe
- **Add-ons** → Clean hydrogen pipeline, electricity cable, digital undersea cable
- **Goal** → Diversified, resilient supply chains; boost Indo–Europe trade



- **Expansion idea** → Include ports in Saudi Arabia & Egypt for redundancy
- **Strong Indo-Arab economic ties** → Counters Pakistan's regional manoeuvres

Way Forward

- **IMEC as “economic bridge”** → India–Europe as twin anchors (“bookends”)
- **Focus** → Economic gains > political volatility
- **Leverage** → Innovation, new routes, multi-nodal cooperation
- **Aim** → Prosperity, connectivity, and strategic balance in IMEC region

Geopolitical Genesis

- **2023** → Abraham Accords optimism ♦ Israel–Arab rapprochement
- **India–UAE–Saudi ties** ↑; India–U.S. ties strong → birth of I2U2 (India–Israel–UAE–U.S.)
- **G20 Delhi Summit** → IMEC launched with EU, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia etc.
- **Post-launch shock** → Oct 7 Hamas attacks → Israel–Arab tensions ↑ → IMEC feasibility ↓

Emerging Global Trade Shifts

- **Arctic route opening** (climate change impact) → Shorter Asia–Europe shipping time
- **Beneficiaries** → U.S., Russia, China, N. Europe
- **Mediterranean concern** → Trade share ↓ if Arctic route dominates
- **Italy** (only Mediterranean coast) → IMEC crucial to retain maritime relevance
- **India** → Mediterranean route still vital (Arctic gains uncertain)

Indo–European Economic Imperatives

- **EU = India's largest trade partner** → \$136 bn+ trade
- **Europe** → High income, tech, education → Long-term strategic partner
- **Need** → Scaled-up connectivity, resilient logistics → Supply chain stability

Strategic & Security Dimensions

- **Red Sea disruptions (Houthi attacks)** → Trade rerouting via Cape of Good Hope → ↑ cost/time
- **Gaza conflict uncertainty** → Regional risk persists
- **IMEC** → Multimember flexibility → Can adapt to evolving geopolitics

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following correctly pairs connectivity projects with sponsoring powers?

- 1) IMEC → India, U.S., EU, Gulf partners
- 2) BRI → China
- 3) INSTC → India, Iran, Russia
- 4) Global Gateway → Japan

Select the correct option:

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

Hint:

Global Gateway = EU-led, not Japan.

Pratibimb PYQ Mentorship Program 2026



What is Pratibimb Mentorship?

Pratibimb Mentorship Program 2026 is designed to guide and support students aiming for success in the UPSC CSE 2026. Our program adopts a strategic, outcome-focused approach, providing continuous guidance from experienced mentors and UPSC toppers. We help students identify and strengthen their foundational skills, build their knowledge base, and focus on areas for growth by making them solve PYQs.

Highlights of the Programme



Mentorship Program is designed to assist aspirants in making notes & Answer Writing



Essay + Ethics GS-I to III **complete syllabus** coverage in 6 months



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Thematic coverage of Mains syllabus of specified Topics



Marks Improvement Booklet (MIB) to enrich your Mains answer writing.



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Answer Sheet Points (ASP) from Model Answer



Workshop: Learning by doing approach

Salient Features of Mentorship Program

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- 23 Prelims Tests = 1100 MCQs (Includes PYQ, CSAT NDA, CDS, CAPF) with solution
- 1 Prelims Tests = 50 (GS) + 5 CSAT Questions
- Static Subject wise Notes, Kalam Golden Pages (KGP)
- K-Snippet 365: Summary of Current Affairs
- SAR: Self-Assessment Report
- 40 Half-Sectional Tests + 5 Essay Tests
- 5 Full Length Tests (after Prelims)
- 1 Half-Sectional Test = 10 Questions
- Content: Kalam Golden Pages & Marks Improvement Booklets (MIB) on Mains Topics (Society, Governance, etc.)
- Answer Writing & Face 2 Face Evaluation
- Mentorship: CSE Selected Candidates

SECTIONAL TESTS

Detailed Test Syllabus & Reference Study Material



Prelims Sectional Tests

SUBJECT	No. of Tests
Polity	5
Economy	3
Agriculture	2
Geography	3
Environment	2
S&T	2
History	4
Full Length Tests	2
Total Tests	23

Mains Sectional Tests

SUBJECT	No. of Tests
Polity & Gover.	5
Economy	3
Agriculture	2
Ethics	7
Essay	5
Society	2
Social Justice	1
IR	2
Security	2
Geography	3
Environment	2
S&T	2
History	4
Full Length Tests	5
Total Tests	45



Other Details

PYQ Answer Writing | Model Answer | Face-to-Face Evaluation

- Batch Starting From: **30th June, 2025**
- Course Completion: **8 Months**
- Mode: **Online/Offline**
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News / Explained / Explained Economics / Why rare earths are at the heart of a renewed China-US trade slugfest

W Premium

Why rare earths are at the heart of a renewed China-US trade slugfest

Rare earths are not very rare, but challenges in ensuring the economic viability of extraction and processing mean that one country — China — has effectively monopolised these vital minerals. Now, Beijing is using them as a strategic lever in its ongoing trade war with the US

IE Explained; By Anil Sasi;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations

[Link](#)

Why in News?

China expanded export curbs on 5 more rare earths & refining tech (↑ total to 12), triggering fresh US tariff threats (↑ 100%) amid trade war escalation.

Periodic Table of the Elements

Rare Earths: Basics

- **17 metallic elements (Lanthanides + Sc, Y)** → High density, melting pt, conductivity.
- **Found across crust** → Not geologically rare but economically hard to extract.
- **Key users** → EVs, wind turbines, defence, electronics, medical, optics.
- **♦ Eg: Nd, Dy, Tb** → high-strength magnets; Ce, La → glass polish, catalysts.

China's Dominance

- **Mining share** → 60% global; Processing → >90%.
- **Control built since 1987 (Deng era)** → “Oil of the 21st century.”
- **Heavy REEs (Dy, Tb) more scarce** → tightly controlled.
- **Policy** → Use REEs as strategic “trade weapon” vs US, others.

GLOBAL RARE EARTH ELEMENT MINES & DEPOSITS, 2021



Note: Rare earth elements (REEs) are mined from a number of hard-rock sources and from sources formed by weathering at Earth's surface. Source: British Geological Survey

WORLD RESERVES OF RARE EARTHS

(By principal countries; in tonnes of rare earth ore equivalent content)

COUNTRY	RESERVES
WORLD	13,00,00,000
China	4,40,00,000
Vietnam	2,20,00,000
Brazil	2,10,00,000
Russia	2,10,00,000
India	69,00,000
Australia*	42,00,000
USA	23,00,000
Other countries	42,90,000

Source: USGS, Mineral Commodity Summaries, 2023
 *Australia's Joint Ore Reserves Committee reported much higher equivalent reserves of 30 billion tonnes

WORLD PRODUCTION OF RARE-EARTHS OXIDES

(By principal countries) (In tonnes)

COUNTRY	2020	2021	2022
China	1,80,000 ⁽²⁾	1,80,000 ⁽²⁾	2,10,000 ⁽¹⁾
Myanmar	35,000 ⁽¹⁾	35,000 ⁽¹⁾	24,000 ⁽¹⁾
USA	22,800	25,800 ⁽¹⁾	25,800
Australia	14,562 ⁽¹⁾	15,761 ⁽¹⁾	15,970 ⁽¹⁾
India	4,200 ⁽¹⁾	4,200 ⁽¹⁾	4,200 ⁽¹⁾
Madagascar	5,000 ⁽¹⁾	2,000 ⁽¹⁾	2,000 ⁽¹⁾
Russia	2,663	2,276	2,038 ⁽¹⁾
Vietnam	690 ⁽¹⁾	440 ⁽¹⁾	440 ⁽¹⁾
Malaysia	14	29	52

(1) Estimates; (2) Estimates (includes production from iron ore extraction, bastnaesite concentrates and ion adsorption clays); (3) Estimates (Year ending 31st March following that stated); (4) Estimates (Year ending 30th June following that stated.)
 Source: IGS, World Mineral Production, 2018-22

Latest Curbs (Oct 2025)

- **New additions** → Ho, Er, Tm, Eu, Yb + magnets/materials.
- **Export license mandatory** → tech transfer restrictions widened.
- **Effective Nov 8** → right before 90-day US-China truce expiry.
- **Aim** → ↑ leverage before Xi-Trump APEC meet, ↓ US tech resilience.

US Response & Global Fallout

- **Trump** → threatened 100% tariffs; possible meet cancellation.
- **Wall St** ↓ on escalation fears.
- **US plan** → deep-sea mining & stockpiling; diversify via allies.
- **Japan** → model for re-entering REE chain post-2010 China ban.

Strategic & Economic Importance

- **REEs indispensable** → strong magnets, advanced alloys, green tech.
- **Defence** → missiles, radar, aircraft, drones.
- **Green transition** → EVs, turbines, batteries.
- **♦ Nd-Fe-B magnets** → backbone of EV motors, wind generators.

India's Exposure & Plans

- **Imports FY24** → 2,270 t (↑23% since FY20); 65% from China.
- **Sectors hit** → EVs, electronics.
- **Domestic production modest** → IREL (10k t/y) vs China (200k t+).

- **Expansion plans** → seabed mining (Andaman, 7 blocks), REE parks (Vizag, Bhopal).
- **Goal** → ↓ import dependence, ↑ value chain participation.

Global REE Landscape

- **Major reserves** → China, Brazil, Australia, India, USA.
- **Issues** → economic viability, pollution, tech gap.
- **Trend** → Countries building alt. supply chains (Quad, EU alliances).

Conclusion → Rare earths = small elements, huge leverage. China's monopoly turns them into a strategic tool, reshaping trade, tech, & geopolitics in the new resource race.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to Rare Earth Elements (REEs), consider the following statements:

- 1) They are chemically similar transition metals primarily located in the middle of the periodic table.
- 2) Promethium is the only radioactive rare earth element.
- 3) The term "rare" refers to their limited crustal abundance globally.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Hint:

REEs are lanthanides + Sc, Y (not transition metals); Promethium is radioactive; "Rare" → economic extraction difficulty, not crustal scarcity.

Q. Which of the following pairs are correctly matched?

Rare Earth Element → Key Application

- 1) Neodymium → Permanent magnets in EVs & wind turbines
- 2) Cerium → Glass polishing & automotive catalysts
- 3) Lanthanum → Fuel cells & battery alloys
- 4) Gadolinium → Superconducting wires & MRI contrast agents

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

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

Hint:

All except gadolinium (used in MRI contrast, but not superconducting wires).

Rare Earth Elements	Key Applications
Scandium (Sc 21)	Al-Sc alloys (aerospace, sports goods) ♦ solid oxide fuel cells ♦ lighting systems
Yttrium (Y 39)	Phosphors (TVs, LEDs) ♦ Y-stabilized zirconia ceramics ♦ superconductors ♦ laser crystal
Lanthanum (La 57)	NiMH batteries (hybrid cars) ♦ camera lenses ♦ catalysts ♦ X-ray screens
Cerium (Ce 58)	Glass polishing ♦ catalytic converters ♦ fuel additives ♦ self-cleaning ovens
Praseodymium (Pr 59)	Aircraft engines ♦ Nd-Fe-B magnets (with Nd) ♦ green glass tinting ♦ carbon arc lights
Neodymium (Nd 60)	Strong permanent magnets (EVs, turbines) ♦ lasers ♦ microphones ♦ HDDs
Promethium (Pm 61)	Radioisotope thermoelectric generators ♦ luminous paints ♦ limited due to radioactivity
Samarium (Sm)	Sm-Co magnets (high-temp) ♦ nuclear control rods ♦ lasers ♦ precision motors
Europium (Eu 63)	Red/blue phosphors in TV, LEDs ♦ anti-counterfeiting (Euro notes) ♦ lasers
Gadolinium (Gd 64)	MRI contrast agents ♦ neutron shielding ♦ data storage media ♦ magnet alloys

Terbium (Tb 65)	Green phosphors ♦ solid-state devices ♦ magneto-optical storage ♦ fuel cells
Dysprosium (Dy 66)	High-temp magnets (EVs, turbines) ♦ nuclear control rods ♦ lasers
Holmium (Ho 67)	Strongest magnetic moment → used in magnets ♦ lasers ♦ nuclear control rods
Erbium (Er 68)	Fiber optic amplifiers ♦ lasers ♦ pink glass coloring ♦ medical/dental lasers
Thulium (Tm 69)	Portable X-ray units ♦ lasers ♦ high-efficiency luminescent materials
Ytterbium (Yb 70)	Fiber lasers ♦ stress gauges ♦ stainless steel alloys ♦ optical materials
Lutetium (Lu 71)	PET scan detectors ♦ catalyst in refining ♦ LED phosphors ♦ high-refractive lenses

🌀 Grouped Insight

Light REEs (LREEs) → La → Sm → Catalysts, glass, polishing, magnets

Heavy REEs (HREEs) → Eu → Lu + Y → High-temp magnets, lasers, phosphors, optics

🌀 Sectoral Summary

- 1) **Energy Transition** → Nd, Dy, Tb, Pr, Sm (EV motors, wind turbines)
- 2) **Defence & Aerospace** → Sm, Dy, Ho, Gd (guidance, sensors, magnets)
- 3) **Healthcare** → Gd, Lu, Tm (MRI, PET, radiation therapy)
- 4) **Electronics/Optics** → Eu, Tb, Er, Y (phosphors, displays, fiber optics)
- 5) **Catalysts/Industrial** → Ce, La, Pr (petroleum refining, emission control)

News / Explained / Pakistan-Afghanistan ties: Long history of differences, from Durand Line to the India angle

Pakistan-Afghanistan ties: Long history of differences, from Durand Line to the India angle

Pakistan Afghanistan relations: Afghanistan was the only country to oppose Pakistan's entry into the UN. Despite some shared ties, there has been much to divide Pakistan and Afghanistan. Here are the five broad issues.

IE Explained; By Vivek Katju;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations

[Link](#)

Why in News?

Recent border clashes at Torkham underline persistent distrust & recurring hostility in Pakistan–Afghanistan ties.

Historical Roots → Durand Line Dispute

- **1893:** Sir Mortimer Durand drew 2,640 km line → split Pashtun tribes.
- **Afghanistan view** → not permanent border; **Pakistan** → inherited boundary (1947).
- **1947:** Afghanistan only country opposing Pakistan's UN entry.
- **1950s–70s:** Daud Khan's "Pashtunistan" idea → clashes, border closures (1961).
- **2018:** Afghan protest after Pakistan merged Tribal Agencies → continuity of non-recognition.



Political Regime Shifts & External Interventions

- **1973:** Monarchy ends → Republic → Communist rule (1978–89).
- **Pakistan backed Mujahideen** against USSR (1979–89).
- **Taliban rise (1994–96)** → Pakistan support key to takeover.
- **Post-9/11:** Taliban ousted → US-backed Republic (2001–21).
- **2021:** US exit → Taliban return with Pakistan aid, but ties soon sour.

Trade, Transit & Connectivity

- **Afghanistan land-locked** → reliant on Pakistan routes (Karachi, Torkham).
- **Pakistan blocks India-Afghan land trade** via Wagah → Afghan resentment.
- **Periodic border/port closures** → coercive economic tool.
- **Iran & CARs used as alternate routes** → strategic diversification.

Ethnic Divide → Pashtun vs Punjabi Factor

- **Pashtun cultural identity** ≠ Punjabi-dominated Pakistan state.
- **Abolition of Tribal Agencies (2018)** → seen as insult to Pashtun autonomy.
- **TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan)** seen as kin by Afghan Pashtuns → cross-border sympathy.
- **Pashtun nationalism resurfaces** → undermines Pakistan's internal cohesion.

“Gratitude” Narrative

- **Pakistan claim** → hosted 3–4 mn Afghan refugees + backed Mujahideen & Taliban.
- **Afghan view** → Pakistan acted for own geopolitical gain.
- **Refugee mistreatment & border restrictions** → deepen resentment.
- **Pakistan labels Afghans *ahsanfaramosh*** (ungrateful).

The India Angle

- **Pakistan fear:** “Two-front squeeze” (India east, Afghanistan west).
- **Pressure on Kabul** → curb ties with New Delhi.
- **Afghan stance** → sovereign foreign policy; refuses Pakistan diktat.

- **Current Taliban outreach to India** → seen by Islamabad as betrayal.

Conclusion

♦ Pakistan-Afghanistan ties shaped by unresolved borders, ethnic divides, coercive trade, contested gratitude, and India factor → cycle of mistrust & volatility persists.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. The Durand Line, often a source of friction between Pakistan and Afghanistan, was originally drawn to:

- Mark the international boundary between British India and Afghanistan permanently.
- Define spheres of influence between British India and Afghanistan temporarily.
- Divide tribal territories for administrative convenience under Pakistan.
- Formalize Afghanistan's western boundary with Persia.

Hint:

Drawn in 1893 by Sir Mortimer Durand → intended as a temporary demarcation of influence, not a permanent border.

The UN matters, as a symbol of possibility

TH Premium

The United Nations, at 80, is a work in progress, with a vital role in global affairs

TH Opinion; By Shashi Tharoor;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations
[Link](#)

Why in News?

UN marks 80 yrs (1945–2025) → moment of reflection & reform amid multipolar, crisis-prone world.

Evolution and Significance of UN

- **Born post-WWII** → aim: prevent war, uphold law, promote human dignity.
- **Journey** → Cold War battleground → post-Cold War cooperation forum.
- **Mixed record** → failures: Rwanda, Srebrenica
♦ successes: Namibia, East Timor.

- **Core role** → humanitarian relief (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF), peacekeeping, global norms (HR, gender, SDGs 2015).
- **Symbol of possibility** → not perfect, but indispensable for multilateral dialogue & collective action.

- **Vision** → plural, inclusive global order → dignity > dominance, cooperation > coercion.
- Seeks global governance reflecting diversity, not hierarchy.

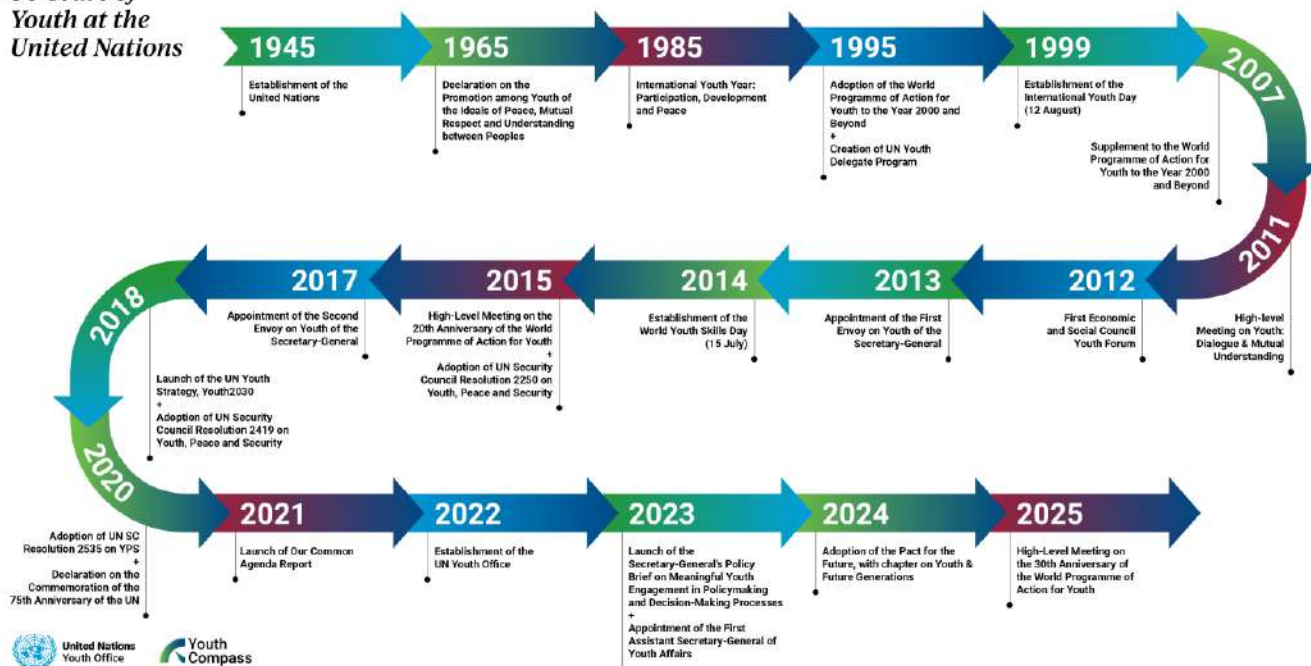
UNSC Reform Imperative and Challenges

- **Structure frozen in 1945** → reflects old power realities, not 21st-century multipolarity.
- **P5 veto misuse** → weakens collective security & accountability.
- **Exclusion of key stakeholders** (India, Japan, Germany, Brazil, South Africa) → ↓ legitimacy, ↓ efficacy.
- **Multilateralism under strain** → nationalism ↑, liberal order ↓.
- **Funding crisis** → defaults (esp. US) → budget cuts, staff freezes, ↓ operational capacity.

Way Forward

- **Reform UNSC** → expand membership, reflect present power distribution.
- **↑ Agility** → streamline decision-making, decentralise ops, adopt digital tools.
- **Reclaim moral voice** → truth to power, defend universal values amid misinformation.
- **Recommitment by members** → ensure funding, political will, institutional trust.
- **Renewed UN ethos** → more representative, responsive, resilient → symbol not of perfection, but of global possibility.

80 Years of Youth at the United Nations



India's Position

- **Strong case for permanent seat** → world's largest democracy, major peacekeeper, 5th largest economy.
- **Advocates** → UNSC reform = equity + effectiveness.
- **Foreign policy** → "strategic autonomy" → balances US–China–Russia rivalries.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to the UN's latest "UN80 Initiative", consider the following statements:

- 1) It aims at consolidation of overlapping UN bodies and streamlining mandates.
- 2) One of its goals is to merge the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).
- 3) It is strictly limited to reform of the UN Secretariat and does not cover its agencies.

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

Hint:

The initiative includes streamlining mandates and consolidation proposals (eg combining UNFCCC & UNEP) from reports. It is broader than just the Secretariat.

US sanctions on Russia's Rosneft and Lukoil pose a tough question for India: How far will it go in resisting pressure?

Washington's strike on Russian oil isn't just about punishing Moscow — it's about reshaping who controls oil, currency, and power



Will India continue to import Russian oil, even as US sanctions mount, or will it gradually comply, risking higher energy costs and economic difficulties at home?

IE Opinion; By Soumya Bhowmick;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations

[Link](#)

Why in News?

US imposed sanctions on Russian oil majors *Rosneft* & *Lukoil* → threatens India's discounted oil imports & tests its strategic autonomy amid rising US pressure.

Impact on Global Energy & Russia

- **Scale of Sanctions** → Rosneft (3.7 mn bpd ≈ 3.3% global supply) + Lukoil (1.6 mn bpd) → nearly ½ of Russia's oil output affected.
- **US Action** → Freeze of US assets + ban on American firms' dealings → full effect post-Nov 21.
- **Market Reaction** → Brent/WTI ↑ ~5% post-announcement → fears of supply crunch.
- **Russia's Response** → Push for de-dollarisation → ↑ trade in ₹/P & ¥/P → energy trade decoupling from West.

India's Energy Dilemma

- **Dependency** → Russia = India's largest seaborne crude supplier; heavy reliance by *Nayara Energy* (Rosneft 49% stake, 400k bpd refinery, Gujarat).
- **Risk** → Secondary sanctions threat to Indian refiners/banks dealing with Russian firms.
- **Choices** →
→ Continue Russian oil → risk US penalties.
→ Shift supply → ↑ costs, import from Gulf/US/Africa.
- **Past Precedent** → 2019 Iran oil ban → India swiftly diversified to US & W. Africa sources.

Economic & Strategic Implications

- **Energy Security** → Russian discounts (~\$10–15/bbl) cushioned India's inflation; loss → ↑ import bill, CAD pressure.
- **Trade Talks with US** → Ongoing Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) → scope for LNG & renewables cooperation.
- **Strategic Balance** → Need to balance ties:
♦ Russia → defence & discounted energy
♦ US → tech, investment, trade access
- **Payment Systems Shift** → Expansion of rupee-rouble trade → gradual challenge to US\$ dominance.

Global Geoeconomic Trends

- **Oil Market Fragmentation** → Multipolar order emerging → non-Western payment blocs (India–China–Russia axis).
- **Western Leverage** ↓ → Sanctions push Global South to alternate systems.
- **India's Role** → Swing consumer shaping next phase of global energy governance.

Core Question

→ How far will India resist US pressure to protect cheap energy vs align with Western sanctions regime?

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following can weaken the dominance of the US dollar in global trade?

- 1) Growth of BRICS payment systems.
- 2) Increasing use of local-currency settlements.
- 3) Expansion of IMF's SDR allocations.

Select the correct answer:

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

Hint:

All three reduce reliance on the US dollar for international payments → promote currency diversification.

Shashi Tharoor writes: India's Taliban outreach requires reconciling principle with pragmatism

Engagement does not require moral whitewashing, but it does require constant public scrutiny and clear red lines. Hard task for New Delhi is to protect both national security and the dignity of the rights-bearing citizenry our government represents

IE Opinion; By Shashi Tharoor;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations

[Link](#)

Why in News?

India's outreach to Taliban-led Afghanistan, marked by Afghan FM Amir Khan Muttaqi's visit to New Delhi and upgraded diplomatic ties, reignites debate on balancing moral principles with strategic interests.

Recent Developments

- **High-Level Visit** → Afghan FM's India visit; joint statement on humanitarian & development cooperation.
- **Diplomatic Upgrade** → India's "technical mission" in Kabul → upgraded to "embassy" (symbolic engagement).
- **Press Controversy** → Taliban excluded women journalists → domestic backlash; MEA distanced itself.
- **Public Reaction** → Protests by media & Opposition → demand to uphold India's gender equality values.



India–Taliban Engagement: Strategic Rationale

- **Security Calculus** → Stable Afghanistan = ↓ anti-India terror, limits Pakistan's proxy leverage.
- **Development Footprint** → \$2.3 bn aid legacy → infrastructure, education, health → maintain influence.
- **Geopolitical Balance** → Counter Pakistan–China influence; ensure regional presence post-US withdrawal.
- **Diplomatic Flexibility** → Engagement ≠ recognition; channels open for aid, security dialogue, connectivity.

Challenges and Concerns

- **Moral Dissonance** → Taliban's gender repression clashes with India's constitutional ethos.
- **Public Scrutiny** → Fear of "normalising" an anti-women regime under guise of realpolitik.
- **Historical Distrust** → IC-814 hijacking legacy → enduring suspicion of Taliban intentions.
- **Ethical Contrast** → 1974 boycott vs apartheid S. Africa ↔ current tolerance of gender apartheid.
- **Regional Instability** → Fragile Afghan economy, internal conflict → uncertain partner for India.

Way Forward

- **Conditional Engagement** → No formal recognition; link cooperation to rights, inclusivity benchmarks.
- **Humanitarian Focus** → Aid delivery → prioritise women's access to education, health, livelihood.
- **Transparency Tools** → Aid audits, periodic rights assessment, public reporting on security assurances.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Vigilance** → Media, civil society, Parliament → maintain moral accountability.
- **Balanced Posture** → Blend realism with values → protect national security *and* uphold democratic ideals.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following global developments most directly influenced India's Afghanistan recalibration?

- (a) China's Belt and Road expansion via CPEC into Afghanistan
- (b) Russia's withdrawal from Central Asia
- (c) The fall of ISIS in Iraq
- (d) The UN's suspension of all aid to Afghanistan

Hint:

Chinese outreach through CPEC and Afghan connectivity projects prompted India's strategic re-engagement.

What is China's complaint against India at the WTO? | Explained

What is the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme in India? Which three specific PLIs does China oppose? What are the World Trade Organization's rules when it comes to subsidies? What does the Subsidies and Countervailing Measures agreement state?

TH Text & Context; By Prabhash Ranjan;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations
[Link](#)

Why in News?

China filed a complaint at WTO alleging India's PLI schemes for EVs, auto, and ACC batteries violate WTO subsidy rules.



PLI Scheme – Overview

- **Launched** → 2020; Aim → boost manufacturing, exports, GVC integration
- **Incentive** → % financial reward on incremental sales
- **Target** → strategic sectors (electronics, pharma, auto, batteries, etc.)
- **Inclusion** → MSME linkages via supply chains

China's WTO Complaint

- **Alleges** → India's 3 PLIs = Import Substitution (IS) subsidies
- **Schemes challenged** →
 → ACC Battery (25% DVA req.)
 → Auto sector (50% DVA req.)
 → EV manufacturing (attract global OEMs)
- **Argument** → DVA conditions = domestic goods preference → discrimination vs Chinese imports
- **Claim** → Violation of SCM Agreement Art. 3.1(b)

WTO Rules on Subsidies

- **Legal basis** → SCM Agreement under WTO
- **Definition (Art.1)** → Govt. financial contribution + specific benefit
- **Categories** →
 ♦ **Prohibited** → export & import-substitution subsidies
 ♦ **Actionable** → cause adverse trade effects → subject to challenge
 ♦ **Non-actionable** → R&D, regional aid (limited cases)
- **IS subsidies** = prohibited → contingent on domestic over imported goods

Related WTO Provisions

- **GATT Art. III.4** → National Treatment → imported goods ≠ less favourable treatment

- **TRIMs Agreement Art. 2.1** → bans local content requirements
- **Local content req.** → example of prohibited TRIM → favors domestic production

India's Likely Defence

- **DVA ≠ mandatory local content** → can achieve value addition via services, tech, design, R&D
- **No explicit import substitution condition**
- **Broader aim** → global competitiveness, not protectionism

Dispute Settlement Process

- **Step 1** → Consultations (bilateral resolution attempt)
- **Step 2** → If failed → WTO panel adjudication (3-member)
- **Step 3** → Appeal → Appellate Body (non-functional since Dec 2019)
- **Implication** → If appealed → status quo; India can continue schemes till appeal resolved

Broader Context

- **Similar subsidy tensions** → US–China, EU–China (EVs, green tech)
- **Reflects** → “Subsidy wars” amid global industrial policy race
- **India's stand** → legitimate industrial strategy for tech self-reliance & green growth

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Under the WTO framework, which of the following correctly distinguishes a Prohibited Subsidy from an Actionable Subsidy under the Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM) Agreement?

- Prohibited subsidies are permissible if they serve environmental objectives; actionable subsidies are not.
- Prohibited subsidies are inherently trade-distorting; actionable subsidies become challengeable only upon proof of adverse effects.
- Both prohibited and actionable subsidies are exempt under Article 27 for developing countries.
- Prohibited subsidies include R&D support and regional development incentives.

Hint:

Prohibited subsidies (export & import-substitution) are per se illegal; actionable ones require evidence of injury or trade distortion.

News / Explained / Explained Global / Explained Interview | ASEAN summit concludes: What the group means for India

Explained Interview | ASEAN summit concludes: What the group means for India

47th ASEAN Summit 2025 Malaysia: What is ASEAN, and why is it relevant for India? Where do its members stand on the US-China trade dispute? Ashok Sajjanhar, who has served as India's ambassador to several countries and negotiated for the India-EU India-ASEAN trade deals, explains.

IE Explained Interview; By Yashee;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – International Relations
[Link](#)

Why in News?

→ 47th ASEAN Summit 2025 concluded in Kuala Lumpur (Oct 28) amid escalating US–China trade war; India represented by PM Modi (virtual) & EAM Jaishankar (in person).

ASEAN: Evolution & Significance

- **Origin** → Est. 1967 (5 nations) → now 11 (incl. Timor Leste, 2025).



- **Transformation** → From anti-communist bloc → dynamic economic & political platform.
- **Economic Weight** → Intra-ASEAN trade 25–30% of total; 2nd only to EU.
- **Strategic Location** → Lies at Indo-Pacific crossroads → key to global trade routes.
- **Demographic Edge** → Pop. ~670 mn; GDP >\$3.7 tn → world's 5th largest economy.
- **Connectivity Role** → IMT Highway, Kaladan Project, Sittwe Port → link India's NE to SE Asia.
- **Cultural Ties** → Deep civilisational & Buddhist linkages; revived via Look East (1992) → Act East (2014).

- **Collective Voice** → Consensus-based diplomacy → increasing influence in global forums.

- **Economic Diversification** → Invest in supply chains, digital trade, fintech, startups.
- **Engage Consistently** → Focus on ASEAN, BIMSTEC, BBIN → avoid Pakistan/China bottlenecks.
- **Soft Power Leverage** → Use civilisational, educational, & cultural diplomacy to deepen bonds.

Challenges before ASEAN

- **Myanmar Crisis** → Democratic backslide post-2021 coup; ASEAN divided on response.
- **China's Assertiveness** → Expansionist "Nine-Dash Line" in SCS → tension with Vietnam, Philippines.
- **Security Paralysis** → No unified military/security mechanism → limited deterrence vs China.
- **External Dependence** → Trade heavily tied to China → vulnerability amid US-China tariff war.
- **Internal Disparities** → Economic & political gaps among members (e.g. Singapore vs Laos).

ASEAN and India – Positives & Negatives

◆ Positives

- **Trade Hub** → ~50% of India's global trade passes through ASEAN waters.
- **Strategic Balancing** → Shared interest in free & open Indo-Pacific (Quad synergy).
- **Economic Links** → FTA in Goods (2009) → trade ↑ to ~\$131 bn (2022–23).
- **Connectivity Projects** → IMT Highway, Kaladan route, maritime & tourism MoUs.
- **Diplomatic Convergence** → India part of East Asia Summit, ASEAN Defence Ministers+ forums.

◆ Negatives

- **FTA Imbalance** → India's trade deficit >\$40 bn; ASEAN's tariff gains > India's.
- **Chinese Entry Route** → FTA used to channel Chinese goods into India.
- **RCEP Withdrawal** → India opted out (2019) citing unfair access & China factor.
- **Slow AITIGA Review** → Started 2022 → incomplete; Malaysia hopes by 2025-end.
- **Limited Leverage** → India's market share in ASEAN trade ↓ vs China, Japan, US.

Way Forward

- **Accelerate AITIGA Review** → Balance trade; curb third-country routing.
- **Deepen Connectivity** → Fast-track IMT Highway, Kaladan, port linkages.
- **Enhance Strategic Presence** → Naval cooperation, joint patrols, Indo-Pacific synergy.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following joined ASEAN as its 11th member recently (2025)?

- (a) Papua New Guinea
- (b) Timor Leste
- (c) Sri Lanka
- (d) Bangladesh

Hint:

Timor Leste (East Timor) added as ASEAN's 11th member in 2025.

NEWS IN SHORT: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Woman candidate for UN chief post declines preferential treatment

Why in News?

Rebeca Grynspan, Costa Rican candidate for next UN Secretary-General, stated that selection should be merit-based, not gender-based.

UN Leadership Context

- UN founded 1945 → 0 women SGs so far
- Only 1 Latin American SG → Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (1982–91)
- Antonio Guterres' 2nd term ends 2026 → succession debate intensifies

Grynspan's Stand

- Advocates equality → "No discrimination, no preferential treatment"
- Argues meritocracy → Equal opportunity > gender quotas
- Emphasizes representation → Capable women exist; system bias persists
- Highlights fairness → "Let process be non-discriminatory"



UN Secretary-General Election Process Nomination Stage

- **Initiated by** → Member States (only governments can propose candidates)
- **Eligibility** → No formal criteria; usually senior diplomats or former heads of state
- **Gender/geography balance** → Informally considered, not mandated

Security Council Role

- **Primary gatekeeper** → Recommends 1 candidate to General Assembly (GA)
- **Informal “straw polls”** → Conducted to gauge support among 15 members
- **P5 (Permanent Members)** → Have veto power → any one can block a nominee
- **Consensus goal** → Candidate usually acceptable to all P5 (US, UK, France, Russia, China)

General Assembly Appointment

- **Final approval** → GA formally appoints the SG based on Security Council recommendation
- **Vote** → By acclamation or simple majority (usually acclamation)
- **Term** → 5 years, renewable once (traditionally two terms)

Summary

UN SG chosen through a two-step process — Security Council recommendation + GA appointment — balancing politics, diplomacy, and consensus rather than a formal election.

Amdavad, India Recommended as Host for the 2030 Centenary Games

Why in News?

Commonwealth Sport Executive Board recommends Amdavad (India) as host city for 2030 Centenary Commonwealth Games.

Significance of Recommendation

- **Marks 100 years since 1st Games** (Hamilton, Canada, 1930)
- **Aligns with ‘Games Reset’** → focus on innovation, collaboration, sustainability
- **Builds on momentum** from Glasgow 2026 Games
- **Aims to provide stability & long-term direction** for Commonwealth Sport Movement



How Commonwealth Games Host City is Selected?

Process

- **Led by Commonwealth Sport (CGF)** → via Evaluation Committee
- **Cities submit bids** → vision, infra, funding, govt. support

Evaluation Criteria

- Tech delivery & infra readiness
- Athlete welfare & experience
- Governance, finance, sustainability
- Alignment with Commonwealth values

Decision

- **Evaluation Report** → Executive Board → makes recommendation
- **General Assembly vote** → majority decides host
- **Post-selection:** Host City Contract + Organising Committee formed

71st BPSC Mains

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India-Brazil Joint Declaration for Deepening of MERCOSUR-India Trade Agreement

Why in news?

On 16 October 2025, India & Brazil issued a joint declaration to deepen and expand the existing Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between India and MERCOSUR, targeting conclusion of expanded deal within 1 year.



Key Facts & Features

- **Existing Trade Framework:** India and MERCOSUR signed a Framework Agreement 17 June
- **PTA In Force** Since June 2009
- **Proposed Expansion**
 - Increase share of bilateral trade under tariff preferences
 - Address both tariff & non-tariff issues
 - Activate technical dialogue via Joint Administration Committee (Article 23) to define scope
 - Conclude expanded agreement within 1 year of launch

About MERCOSUR

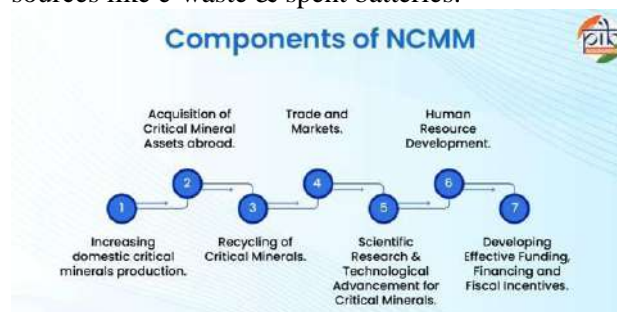
- Establishment: 1991 → Treaty of Asunción (Paraguay)
- Members (Founding): **BR** Brazil, **AR** Argentina, **PY** Paraguay, **UY** Uruguay
- Associate Members: **BO** Bolivia (accession process ongoing), **CL** Chile, **PE** Peru, **CO** Colombia, **EC** Ecuador, **GY** Guyana, **SR** Suriname
- Observers: **MX** Mexico, **NZ** New Zealand
- Suspended Member: **VE** Venezuela (joined 2012 → suspended 2016 for violating democratic clause)
- **Nature:** Regional Trade Bloc → Customs Union + Common Market (free movement of goods, services, factors of production; common external tariff)
- **Combined GDP** ≈ US \$ 3 trillion (2024 est.); **Population** ≈ 295 million

- **Common External Tariff (CET)** applied on imports from non-members

Strong push for critical mineral extraction from recycling – Ministry of Mines (PIB)

Why in News? →

Govt launched ₹1,500 cr incentive scheme under **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)** to promote extraction of critical minerals from recycled sources like e-waste & spent batteries.



Critical Minerals & India's Recycling Push

- **Critical minerals** = key for EVs, renewables, electronics, defence (e.g., Li, Co, Ni, graphite, REEs).
- **India identified 30 critical minerals** (2023); import-dependence > 90 % for Li, Co, Ni.
- **India generated ~1.75 Mt e-waste** (2023); spent Li-ion battery waste ~60 kt /yr → huge recycling potential.
- **Recycling** = low-carbon, resource-efficient alternative to virgin mining; aids Atmanirbhar Bharat & Circular Economy Mission.

🌀 Incentive Scheme – Features & Implementation

- **Cabinet approval:** Sept 2025 → Scheme operational Oct 2025 under NCMM.
- **Outlay ₹1,500 cr** (FY 2025-26 → 2029-30).
- **Target** → Extract ~40 kt critical minerals (Li, Co, Ni, REE) from secondary sources.
- **Incentives up to ₹50 cr** (large), ₹25 cr (SMEs) → for actual mineral recovery (not mere black-mass).
- **Feedstock:** e-waste, spent Li-ion batteries, catalytic converters, end-of-life vehicles.
- **Customs duty** ♦ removed on imported battery scrap (Budget 2025-26).
- **Preference to recyclers** using hydro/pyrometallurgical tech → purity > 95 %.
- Applications opened 2 Oct 2025 via Ministry of Mines portal

Economy and Agriculture

October 2025

TH HUMERES: ☒ Why Gold & Silver Prices Rising?



- 1) **Safe-haven demand** ↑ → Ongoing global tensions (Ukraine, Middle East, South China Sea) → investors shift from equities → **Gold** @ ~\$2,720/oz (record high, Oct 2025).
- 2) **Rate-cut expectations (Fed & ECB)** → Lower yields = ↑ appeal for non-interest assets → COMEX gold futures +15% YTD.
- 3) **US \$ weakens (DXY < 100)** → Dollar-priced metals cheaper for other currencies → global buying ↑.
- 4) **Central bank buying boom** → China, India, Turkey, Poland etc. added > 1,000 tonnes in 2024-25 (WGC data) → demand ↑.
- 5) **Industrial push in silver** → EVs + solar PV = ~55% of total silver use (2025 Silver Institute report).
- 6) **Silver supply deficit** → 4th straight year (≈ 200 million oz shortfall) → spot > \$38/oz.
- 7) **IN India factor** → Pre-festive jewelry demand ↑ + rupee weak → import cost ↑ → domestic gold > ₹72,000/10 g.
- 8) **ETF inflows** ↑ → SPDR Gold Shares (GOLD) holdings +10% in Q3 2025 → reflects investor confidence.
- 9) **Monetary uncertainty** → Rising US & global debt → hedging against fiat risk → metals gain.

News / Explained / Explained Politics / Why Punjab is talking about Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act again

Why Punjab is talking about Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act again

The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 is a central legislation enacted by Parliament to protect workers who migrate from one state to another for employment

IE Explained; By Raakhi Jagga;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News?

Punjab revives debate on Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979 after anti-migrant tensions following Hoshiarpur murder case.

Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979

- Enacted: Parliament, notified Oct 2, 1980
- Objective → Regulate recruitment, ensure registration, contractors' accountability
- Rights → Equal wages, displacement & journey allowance, housing, medical, protective gear
- Punjab adoption → Rules framed in 1983

Migrant Workers in Punjab

- Origins → Bihar, UP, Odisha, Jharkhand; sectors: agri, brick kilns, construction, industry
- Green Revolution (1970s) → ↑ migration for paddy sowing → later industries
- Data → 2016 survey: ~39 lakh migrants; mostly Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Mohali, Bathinda, Phagwara, Hoshiarpur
- Covid-19 lockdown 2020 → 18 lakh registered to return (10L UP, 6L Bihar, rest WB, Odisha, MP)

Punjab Rules & Implementation

- Registration → Mandatory if ≥ 5 migrant workers
- Contractors → License, prior convictions disclosure, deposit, renewal yearly
- Employers → Muster rolls, wage registers, notify changes
- Digital system → e-Labour Punjab portal
- Reality → Mostly non-compliance outside organised industry

Rising Anti-Migrant Sentiment

- Trigger → Hoshiarpur case → Panchayat bans, public anger
- SKM stance → Punish culprit but enforce Act to counter hate
- Historical examples → 2022: Channi's anti-migrant remark; 2024: Khaira proposal (ban migrants from land, vote, govt jobs)
- Demography concern → Exodus of locals abroad → migrants filling labour vacuum

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Under the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979, which of the following benefits are given to migrant workers?

- 1) Displacement allowance
- 2) Journey allowance
- 3) Equal wages with local workers

Select the correct answer:

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

Hint: The Act ensures parity in wages + special allowances (displacement & journey).

News / Explained / Explained Economics / RBI unlocks capital market liquidity with funding boost at a time markets are flat: Here's how the measures would work

Premium

RBI unlocks capital market liquidity with funding boost at a time markets are flat: Here's how the measures would work

RBI liquidity measures, RBI IPO financing boost: RBI on Wednesday rolled out a set of measures designed to make capital more accessible for investors and companies. Here's what has been done, and why.

IE Explained; By George Mathew;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News?

RBI launched major regulatory reforms (22 key measures) to ease capital access and revitalize bank-market lending amid weak equity flows.

BANKS ALLOWED TO FUND M&A

MOVE: Removed cap, charges on large corporate loans; banks can fund M&A and IPOs

IMPACT: Cheaper credit, more M&A, better bank efficiency

MOVE: Raised limits on share/IPO loans; lifted curbs on listed debt lending

IMPACT: Deeper markets, more liquidity, wider investor access

MOVE: Phased increase in provisioning, relaxed ECB, lower NBFC/housing risk weights, new coop bank licences

IMPACT: Stronger stability, global alignment, broader credit flow

“As India strives towards achieving Viksit Bharat... it would need coordinated support of fiscal, monetary, regulatory and other public policies. Recent rationalisation of GST rates is a major step in this direction. Our policy announcements today will also support achievement of this goal — RBI governor **Sanjay Malhotra**

IPO Financing Relaxation

- **Limit** ↑ → Retail IPO funding cap raised from ₹10 lakh → ₹25 lakh per person.
- **Market context** → Megacorps like Tata Capital, LG India IPOs expected soon; strong pipeline of billion-plus issues.
- **Bank/NBFC exposure** → As of July 2025, banks' advances against shares & bonds = ₹9,730 crore; NBFCs' ₹22,432 crore (Dec 2024)
- **Impact** → More retail/institutional subscriptions; deeper primary market; channel savings into equity markets.
- **Risk** → Overextension on IPOs in frothy valuations; need credit assessment for funded investors.

Lending Against Securities

- **Share-backed loan limit jump** → From ₹20 lakh → ₹1 crore per individual (5× increase).

- **Ceiling on listed debt removed** → Regulatory cap on lending vs listed debt (e.g. corporate bonds, debentures) abolished.
- **REITs / InvIT units** → Lending limits for these instruments raised under revised capital market exposure norms.
- **Usage case & commentary** → Zerodha's Nithin Kamath welcomed the higher LAS (loan-against-securities) cap, citing that many retail investors still resort to high-interest personal/credit card debt despite holding stocks.
- **Benefits** → Investors can get liquidity without selling their holdings; banks/NBFCs can expand capital-market-backed lending books.
- **Risk** → In volatile markets, pledged shares may fall; margin calls, forced selling risk; overleveraging dangers.

Large Borrowers Rule Scrapped

- **2016 curbs withdrawn** → The "Guidelines on Enhancing Credit Supply for Large Borrowers" (targeting groups with \geq ₹10,000 crore exposure) will be shelved.
- **Replacement** → Large Exposure Framework (LEF) already caps exposure per bank to a borrower/group — system-level concentration will be managed via macroprudential tools.
- **Impact** → Corporates gain easier access to bank credit; banks have more flexibility in funding large projects, M&A, expansions.

NBFC Funding for Infrastructure

- **Risk weights reduced** → Loans by NBFCs to operational, high-quality infrastructure projects will carry lower risk weights.
- **Rationale** → Operational projects are less risky than construction stage; capital requirement relief enables NBFCs to lend more.
- **Sector response** → Infrastructure financing stocks (HUDCO, IREDA, PFC) jumped over 5% after the announcement.
- **Benefit** → Cheaper credit for roads, renewables, urban transport; fill infrastructure funding gaps.
- **Risk** → NBFCs over-expose to limited infra assets; credit concentration, default risk if project cashflows stress.

ECB Relaxation (External Commercial Borrowings)

- **Borrowing flexibility** → Proposed cap change: firms can borrow up to **US\$1 billion or 300% of net worth (whichever is higher)**.
- **Cost caps scrapped** → Remove rigid interest rate ceilings; allow market-based rates (except short term).
- **Expanded eligibility** → More borrowers/lenders; relaxed end-use restrictions; simplified reporting.
- **Impact** → Easier overseas credit sourcing for firms; lower funding cost; more capital inflow.

IFSC Forex Account Flexibility

- **Repatriation window extended** → From 1 month → 3 months for foreign currency accounts in IFSC (e.g. GIFT City).
- **Parity with offshore** → Aligns onshore IFSC accounts with offshore norms; better exporter flexibility.
- **Effect** → Greater forex liquidity in IFSCs; attract exporters to route via GIFT City/IFSC banking units.

Context & Significance

- **FPI outflows** → \$2.7 billion withdrawn in September alone; Jan–Sep 2025 outflows = \$17.6 billion (second highest in 9-month span).
- **Equity market drag** → In past year, Nifty fell ~4%, lagging regional peers; sentiment weak.
- **Economic targets** → RBI revised FY26 GDP outlook to 6.8% (↑ from earlier 6.5%) while lowering inflation forecast to 2.6%.
- **Banking growth** → Credit growth was ~10% YoY as of early September—below desired levels.
- **Balancing act** → Growth push via credit & liquidity; safeguards via macroprudential oversight.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to Loans Against Securities (LAS), consider the following:

- 1) They are treated as unsecured loans by banks.
- 2) They are considered a form of retail credit exposure.
- 3) Over-leverage through LAS may exacerbate stock market volatility during downturns.

Which of the above is/are correct?

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

- (c) 1 & 3 only
(d) 3 only

Hint:

- LAS are secured (backed by shares/bonds), not unsecured → eliminate 1.
- Retail product offered by banks/NBFCs → 2 is correct.
- Pledging + market fall = forced selling risk → 3 is correct.

Q. Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) withdrawing \$21 billion from Indian equities in 2024–25 has the following implications:

- 1) Downward pressure on rupee
- 2) Reduced equity market liquidity
- 3) Lower current account deficit
- 4) Greater role for domestic institutions in market stability

Select the correct answer:

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

Hint:

- FPI selloff = ₹ pressure (1 ✓).
- Outflows = ↓ liquidity in equities (2 ✓).
- CAD impact? Outflow is capital account, not current → 3 ✗.
- Domestic institutions (mutual funds, LIC, etc.) step in → 4 ✓.

Q. Consider the following pairs (Reform : Likely Impact):

- 1) IPO financing limit ↑ : ↑ Retail market participation
- 2) Loans Against Securities (LAS) limit ↑ : ↑ Liquidity for HNIs
- 3) External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) relaxation : ↓ Domestic savings rate
- 4) NBFC infra risk weight ↓ : ↓ Cost of infra credit

Which of the above pairs are correctly matched?

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

Hint:

- IPO financing ↑ = More retail access (1 ✓).
- LAS ↑ = More liquidity to HNIs (2 ✓).
- ECB relaxation = cheaper foreign funds, not ↓ domestic savings (3 ✗).

- Lower NBFC infra risk weight = cheaper infra lending (4 ✓).

News / Explained / Explained Economics / On declining inflation, improving consumer confidence

On declining inflation, improving consumer confidence

In Explained's new weekly column, titled 'GDP: Graphs, Data, Perspectives', Udit Misra looks at inflation and consumer confidence, and provides key takeaways from latest RBI data.

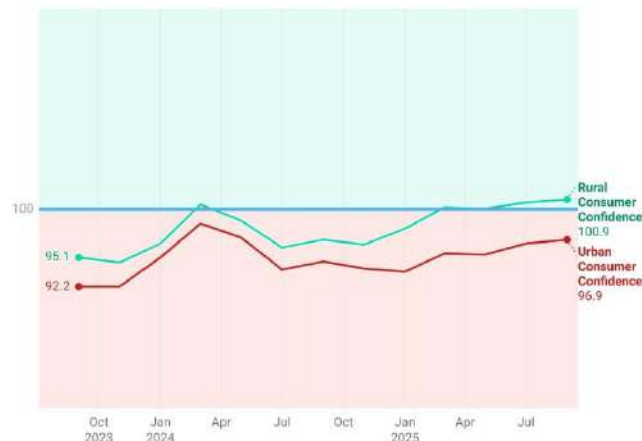
IE Explained; By Udit Misra;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News?

Official data & RBI surveys show retail inflation at ~2% (Aug 2025) → consumer confidence rising, esp. rural; RBI signals room for easing.

Rural consumers are optimistic; Urban consumers still pessimistic

RBI's consumer confidence indices for both rural and urban consumers showed improvement.



A value below 100 shows negative consumer confidence; above 100 values show positive consumer confidence
Chart: Udit Misra • Source: RBI • Created with Datawrapper

Consumer confidence is on the rise.

Inflation trend & monetary policy

- Retail CPI (Aug 2025) = **2.07% YoY** (↑ from 1.61% in Jul).
- Food inflation (Aug 2025) = **-0.69%** → disinflationary impulse on headline.
- RBI has front-loaded **~100 bps cuts in H1 2025** but paused recently; MPC left scope for future cuts.

- Low headline → ↑ real purchasing power → technical room for policy easing. (inference from above data)

Consumer confidence (RBI surveys)

— overall pattern

- RBI's UCCS & RCCS (Sep 2025 rounds) → **marginal improvement** in both urban & rural sentiment.
- Index construction: net responses on economy, income, spending, employment, prices → 100 = neutral. (RBI survey design)

Rural vs Urban — divergence

- **Rural index >100 since Mar 2025** → now at survey-highs (rural highest since RCCS began ~2023).
- **Urban index still <100** → sentiment lagging despite lower inflation; last urban >100 was Mar 2019 (pre-election).
- Drivers: rural → agri incomes, govt rural spending, easing food prices; urban → weak jobs/wages, cautious spending. (synthesis from surveys & macro data)

Key implications

- ↓ Inflation + rural optimism → **potential lift to consumption** (rural demand channel).
- Urban pessimism → **uneven recovery**; growth gains may be partial.
- Policy path → RBI keeping operating framework tight (WACR focus) but **room for measured rate cuts** if disinflation persists.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. If the RBI cuts the policy repo rate following a sustained fall in inflation, the most immediate macroeconomic effect would likely be

(a) Appreciation of rupee due to higher interest differentials

(b) Fall in credit growth and consumption

(c) Rise in bond yields and borrowing costs

(d) Reduction in real interest rates stimulating demand

Hint: ↓ repo → ↓ lending rates → ↑ consumption/investment → demand stimulus.

Across India, state finances tell the same story: Fiscal fragility, ever-expanding welfare state

Small states remain dependent on transfers, while big states rely more on their own resources and borrowing, but the underlying paradox is the same

IE Opinion;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News?

CAG's *State Finances 2022–23* report reveals widening fiscal fragility among Indian states despite expanding welfare spending.

1. Fiscal Map: Divergent Patterns

- **Big States** → Rely on own tax + borrowings (e.g., Maharashtra 70% internal receipts FY23).
- **Small States** → Heavily dependent on Union transfers (<20% own-tax share NE states).
- **Pandemic impact** → Sharp borrowing surge 2020–21; partial rollback by FY23.

2. Borrowing & Debt Trends (2016–17 → 2022–23)

- **Large States:**
 - Andhra ₹59,923cr → ₹1.86L cr (Debt ≈ 33.1% GSDP)
 - Rajasthan ₹1.60 L cr (37.3%) ↑ debt pressure
 - Telangana ₹1.26 L cr (26.2%) → moderate
 - Maharashtra scaled down ₹1.18 L cr → ₹94.7k cr (18.1%)
 - Odisha restrained ₹5.3k cr (19.5%) ♦ prudent model
 - Punjab ≈ 47% liabilities ♦ chronic distress
- **Small States:**
 - Assam ₹3.9k cr → ₹28.3k cr (28.5%)
 - Himachal ₹8.6k cr → ₹22.4k cr (43–44%)
 - Meghalaya ₹6.2k cr ↑; Manipur ₹11.1k cr ↑
 - Goa cut ₹7.6k → ₹2.6k cr (debt < 30%)
 - Nagaland & Uttarakhand → ~45–47% & 34% debt

3. Structural Fiscal Weakness

- **Revenue fragility** → Over-reliance on volatile/non-recurring sources (e.g., Kerala lotteries ₹12k cr).

- **Debt escalation** → Borrowing to fund welfare, not infra → limited growth multiplier.
- **Off-budget financing** → SPVs, guarantees, deferred liabilities → mask true deficits.
- **High fiscal stress** → Punjab, Kerala, Himachal show unsustainable debt ratios.

4. Welfare–Debt Paradox

- **Expanding welfare net** → Free power, farm waivers, subsidies → political compulsion.
- **Limited revenue autonomy** → Especially NE & hill states with high delivery costs.
- **Result** → Welfare state ↑ reach, fiscal base ↓ resilience → structural imbalance.

5. Key Takeaways

- ♦ Common dilemma: *Fiscal fragility + welfare ambition*.
- ♦ Big vs Small contrast hides same core weakness—dependence on debt & transfers.
- ♦ Fiscal prudence (Odisha, Goa) = exceptions; chronic deficits (Punjab, Kerala) = norm.
- ♦ Sustainable reform → Broaden tax base, rationalise subsidies, enhance fiscal transparency.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. In the context of Indian federal finance, which of the following best explains the term “fiscal fragility” as observed in recent CAG findings?

- Persistent inability of states to meet FRBM limits despite increasing GSDP.
- Structural dependence on volatile revenues and debt-financed welfare spending.
- Decline in capital expenditure as a share of total expenditure.
- Excessive borrowing by the Union government crowding out states.

Hint:

Fiscal fragility = imbalance caused by unstable revenues + reliance on loans to sustain welfare.

Q. With reference to the recent trends in state finances, consider the following statements:

- 1) Larger Indian states, due to their broad economic base, depend more on central transfers than smaller states.
- 2) Northeastern and hill states exhibit higher debt-to-GSDP ratios despite lower absolute borrowings.

- 3) States like Odisha demonstrate that lower borrowings necessarily correspond to reduced welfare spending.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Hint:

Big states rely more on own resources, not central transfers; small states rely on Union transfers. Odisha shows fiscal restraint without necessarily cutting welfare → not a universal rule.

News / Explained / Explained Economics / Revisiting India's industrial barometer: Base year revision of IIP

Revisiting India's industrial barometer: Base year revision of IIP

The sector's share in Gross Value Added (GVA) has doubled since the early 1950s, averaging 62.5% over the first half of this decade. Agriculture and allied activities, while still essential, now contribute to about 15% of the GVA. But industry, at around 22% of the GVA, leaves scope for improvement.

IE Opinion; By Saurabh Garg & Mridul Saggarg; Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News?

♦ MoSPI's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC-IIP) has recommended revising the base year of the *Index of Industrial Production (IIP)* to **2022–23**, aligning it with the new GDP base year.

India's Industrial Context

- **Structural shift** → Agriculture ↓ (~15% GVA) → Industry ~22% → Services ↑ (~62.5%).
- **Industrial push** → Make in India, PLI, EoDB reforms, industrial corridors.
- **Post-Covid recovery** → ↑ growth in mining, manufacturing, electricity.
- **Consumption boost** → GST cuts + deregulation + new industries.

Why Base Year Revision?

- **Need for real-time accuracy** → Economy now more market-oriented → data lag ↓ crucial.

- **MoSPI's objective** → Reflect structural, tech & product changes.
- **Users** → Govt., RBI, businesses, analysts, planners rely on IIP.
- **Historical updates** → Base year changed 9× since 1937 → now proposed 2022–23.
- **Alignment** → With International Recommendations for IIP (IRIIP, 2010).

- MoSPI + TAC-IIP to publish *de-seasonalised IIP* → better trend analysis & forecasting.
- **Data Integration & Quality Upgrades**
 - Integration with GST data → ↑ accuracy, ↓ reporting lag.
 - Digital adoption → faster, reliable industrial data.



Key Improvements in New IIP Series

- **Scope & Coverage Expansion**
 - New-age products: laptops, LED bulbs, vaccines, aircraft/spacecraft parts.
 - Outdated dropped: CFLs, kerosene, printing machinery, etc.
 - Inclusion of *gas supply & minor minerals* for first time.
- **Classification Refinement**
 - Based on *Annual Survey of Industries (ASI)* codes.
 - 276 “not elsewhere classified” items reviewed → 95% weight now properly assigned.
- **Factory Substitution Mechanism**
 - Replace defunct/shifted factories systematically.
 - Condition: 12 months overlapping production data for old & new units.
- **Seasonally Adjusted Series**

Broader Significance

- ◆ Revision not just statistical → structural modernization of industrial data system.
- ◆ Ensures IIP reflects *contemporary industrial reality* → vital for *policy, investment, and growth tracking*.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) in India, consider the following statements:

- 1) It is compiled and released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- 2) It measures the volume of production only in the organized manufacturing sector.
- 3) The base year revision of IIP is always done simultaneously with GDP base year revision.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Hint:

IIP covers mining, manufacturing, and electricity (not only organized manufacturing). Base year alignment with GDP is desirable but not always simultaneous.

Q. Consider the following items:

- 1) LED bulbs
- 2) Printing machinery
- 3) Laptops
- 4) Kerosene

Which of the above are likely to be included in the revised IIP basket (Base Year 2022–23)?

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

Hint:

New-age products (LEDs, laptops, vaccines) added; outdated ones (CFLs, kerosene, printing machinery) dropped.

News / Explained / Explained Economics / Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences 2025: How the winners explained economic growth becoming the new normal

Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences 2025: How the winners explained economic growth becoming the new normal

The work of the newly minted Nobel laureates lies at the heart of many of the burning debates at present. Should governments subsidise R&D in companies? Should they subsidise social welfare?

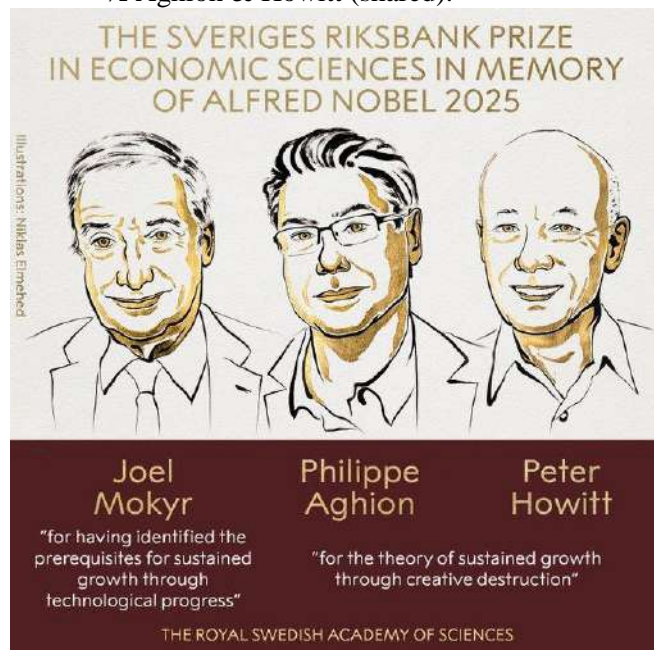
IE Explained; By Udit Misra;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News?

Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences 2025 awarded to **Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion & Peter Howitt** for explaining **innovation-driven sustained economic growth**.

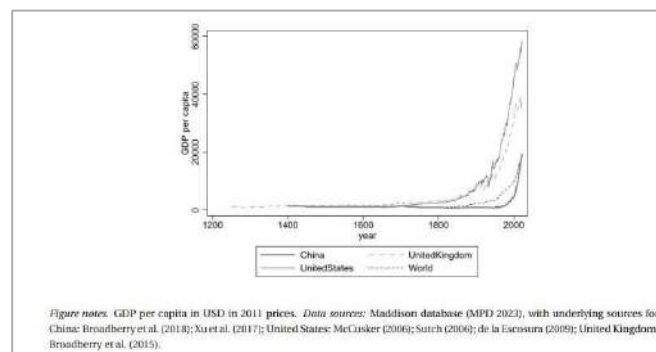
Essence of Award

- ◆ **Mokyr (historical lens) + Aghion & Howitt (mathematical model)** → unified explanation of why growth became “normal”.
- ◆ **Theme** → innovation, knowledge creation, creative destruction → drivers of long-run prosperity.
- ◆ **Prize** → 11 mn SEK (₹10.25 cr); ½ Mokyr, ½ Aghion & Howitt (shared).



Mokyr's Contribution → *Historical Roots of Growth*

- **Pre-Industrial stagnation** → tech progress ≠ sustained growth.
- **Shift (16th–17th c.)** → Scientific Revolution + Enlightenment → fusion of “how” (practical know-how) & “why” (scientific explanation).
- **Knowledge transformation** → from *prescriptive* → *propositional* knowledge.
- **Examples** → steam engine ↔ atmospheric science; steel refining ↔ oxygen-carbon chemistry.
- **Social openness** → key enabler → acceptance of *creative destruction* (Schumpeter, 1942).
- **Institutions enabling change** → British Parliament reforms, defeat of Luddite resistance.
- **Core insight** → sustained growth = tech progress × societal openness to innovation.



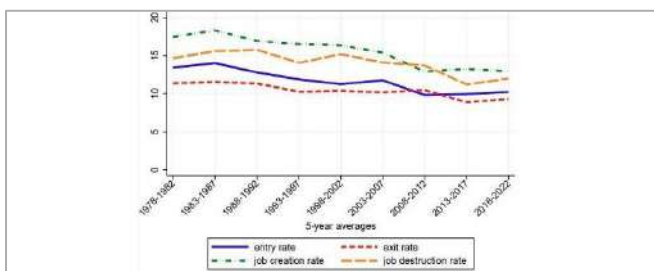
Aghion–Howitt Contribution → *Model of Creative Destruction*

- **Approach** → formal macro model (1992) → innovation-led growth via firm-level churn.
- **Micro turbulence** ↔ **Macro stability** → constant firm births/deaths (~10% US/yr).
- **Innovation cycle** → new patents → monopoly profits → incentive for next innovation.
- **Dynamic equilibrium** → R&D ↔ household savings ↔ financial markets ↔ output → mutually linked.
- **Model novelty** → general equilibrium framework integrating innovation & growth.
- **Empirical reflection** → high firm dynamism sustains aggregate GDP growth.

Policy Implications → *Growth–Welfare Balance*

- **R&D subsidies?** → may spur innovation but risk rent concentration.
- **Social safety nets?** → preserve societal openness amid job churn.

- **Policy dilemma** → subsidise innovation ↑ or protect losers of creative destruction?
- **Takeaway** → balanced state support → innovation ecosystem + inclusive adaptation.



Data Source: Business Dynamics Statistics. The figure shows 5-year averages of the annual firm entry, firm exit, and job creation and destruction rates in percent. The green line shows the job creation rate, i.e., the number of jobs created by entering or expanding establishments relative to the total number of jobs. The orange line is the average annual job destruction rate, i.e., the number of jobs "lost" by exiting or shrinking establishments relative to the total number of jobs.

Broader Significance

- ♦ **Connects history** → *theory* → *policy*.
- ♦ **Explains why growth sustained** post-1800s unlike earlier millennia.
- ♦ **Reframes current debates**: tech disruption, inequality, industrial policy, innovation funding.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. "Creative destruction," as used in modern growth theory, most closely aligns with which of the following real-world phenomena?

- The 19th-century textile mechanisation displacing manual weavers.
- Keynesian fiscal multipliers in depression recovery.
- Cross-border labour migration after World War II.
- State nationalisation of key industries in post-war Europe.

Hint:

Technological innovation displacing older production forms → classical case of creative destruction.

News / Explained / Explained History / The enduring political appeal of swadeshi — and why it is not necessarily good economics

The enduring political appeal of swadeshi — and why it is not necessarily good economics

Swadeshi has been one of the most influential ideas in Indian politics since the mid-19th century. But its empirical track record, as a guide for economic policy, has been wanting

IE Explained; By Arjun Sengupta;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News?

Govt's renewed *Swadeshi* push (e.g. Zoho Mail adoption, digital sovereignty circular) revives debate on its political appeal vs weak economic record.



(from left to right) Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, and Narendra Modi. (Wikimedia Commons, PMO)

Historical Roots of Swadeshi

- **Colonial Critique** → Economic drain (Naoroji), deindustrialisation (Dutt) → India = raw material supplier + British goods market.
- **Moral-Ethical Core** → Ranade: patriotic duty > profit; Gandhi: "law of laws" → use local goods despite cost; economics tied to moral virtue.
- **Political Expression** → Boycott of British goods (Tilak 1896, Bengal 1905); strikes, school & court boycotts → mass mobilisation symbol.

Swadeshi in Economic Thought & Policy

- **Pre-Independence Consensus** → Indian-owned industrialisation = national uplift (except Gandhi's village economy ideal).

- **Post-Independence Model** → Nehruvian mixed economy → import substitution → large public sector dominance.
- **Protectionism Outcomes** → ↓ competition → ↓ quality, ↑ prices, inefficiency; “license raj” capitalism shielded by policy dogma.

Decline & Liberalisation

- **1980s–1991** → Stagnation + BoP crisis → dismantling of rigid swadeshi protectionism.
- **1991 Reforms** → Globalisation phase (↑ trade/GDP ratio); swadeshi ideals recede as liberalisation drives growth.

Re-emergence in 21st Century

- **Post-2008 Context** → Global slowdown + resentment vs offshoring → revival of economic nationalism.
- **Political Revival** → RSS/BJP reframe swadeshi via *Aatmanirbhar Bharat*, *Make in India*, digital sovereignty → pandemic & China tensions reinforce.
- **Corporate Cases** → Govt promotion: Koo (failed), Zoho (adopted); mixed record reflects risk of policy-driven patronage.



Economic Pitfalls & Future Outlook

- **Empirical Weakness** → Protectionism ≠ capability building; moral nationalism ≠ competitiveness.
- **Expert Critique** → Nitin Pai: nationalism → “samarthya” (capability), not rigid self-production; Desai: export pessimism = dogma.
- **Balanced Path** → Strategic self-reliance + global integration → build tech & industrial capacity without isolationism.

◆ **Conclusion** → *Swadeshi* = enduring political symbol of nationalism & moral purity, but poor economic guide unless redefined toward *capability-based self-reliance*.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. The Swadeshi principle of “use local goods even if costlier” violates which core economic principle?

- (a) Marginal utility
- (b) Opportunity cost
- (c) Comparative advantage
- (d) Law of diminishing returns

Hint:

Comparative advantage favours specialisation & trade efficiency; Swadeshi defies this by moral over economic calculus.

News / Explained / Explained Economics / How grain, not sugar, is fuelling India's ethanol production

Premium

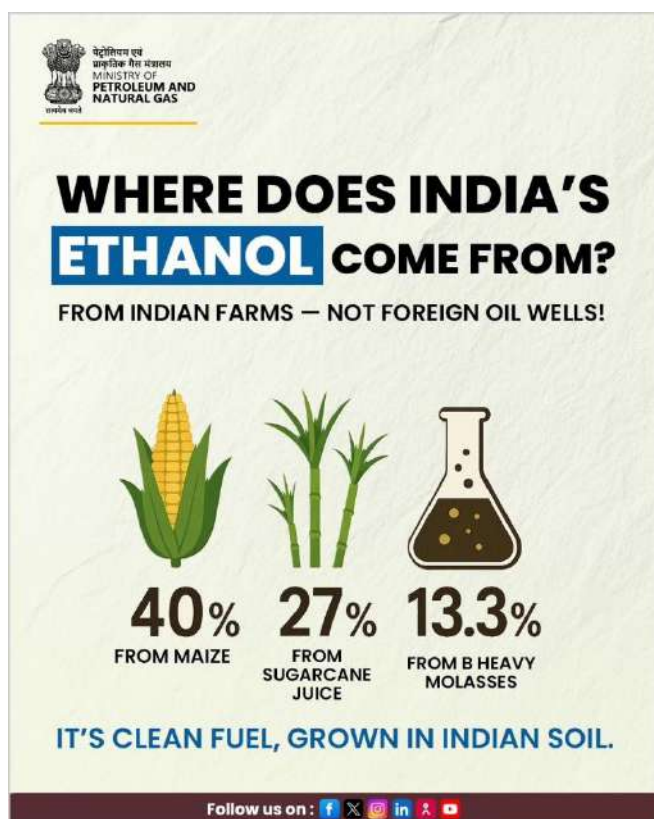
How grain, not sugar, is fuelling India's ethanol production

A programme that was originally meant to support sugarcane growers has attracted Rs 40,000 crore of investment and turned out more beneficial for standalone grain-based ethanol manufacturers

IE Explained; By Harish Damodaran;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News?

India's ethanol blending programme, initially meant for sugarcane support, now majorly driven by grain (esp. maize) with ₹40,000 cr investment & capacity overshoot.



Evolution of Ethanol Programme

- **Launch Objective** → Support sugar mills → timely farmer payments via alternate cane-based revenue.
- **Phase 1 (≤2017-18)** → Ethanol only from C-heavy molasses.
- **Phase 2 (2018-19 on)** → B-heavy molasses & direct cane juice/syrup → ↑ ethanol supply (38 → 189 cr L; blend 1.6 → 4.9%).
- **Govt Incentives** → Higher price for B-heavy/juice routes; multi-feedstock distilleries promoted.

Rise of Grain-Based Ethanol

- **Policy Shift (2018-19 on)** → Fixed prices for ethanol from rice, maize, damaged grain.
- **Multi-feed distilleries** → Operate on cane (Nov-Apr) & grain (May-Oct).
- **Rapid Expansion** → Punjab, Bihar, MP, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh etc.
- **Feedstock mix (2023-24)** → Total 672.49 cr L → Cane 270.27 (40.2%) vs Grain 402.22 (59.8%).
 ♦ Maize 286.47 cr L > all cane combined.
- **2024-25 projection** → ≈ 920 cr L → 620 cr grain (↑ share to ~2/3); maize ~420 cr L.

ETHANOL SUPPLIED TO OIL-MARKETING COMPANIES

(in crore litres)

SUPPLY YEAR	FROM SUGARCANE	FROM GRAINS	TOTAL SUPPLY	BLENDING IN%	SUGAR DIVERSION@
2013-14	38.00	0	38.00	1.60%	0
2014-15	67.41	0	67.41	2.33%	0
2015-16	111.40	0	111.4	3.51%	0
2016-17	66.51	0	66.51	2.07%	0
2017-18	150.50	0	150.50	4.22%	0
2018-19	179.05	9.5	188.55	4.92%	3.37
2019-20	157.09	15.94	173.03	5.00%	9.26
2020-21	260.90	41.50	302.40	8.10%	22.00
2021-22	339.75	68.34	408.09	10.02%	36.00
2022-23	369.30	137.10	506.40	12.00%	45.00
2023-24	270.27	402.22	672.49	14.60%	24.00
2024-25*	300.00	620.00	920.00	19.12%**	35.00
2025-26*	400.00	650.00	1050.00	20.00%	50.00

Note: Supply years are Dec-Nov till 2021-22, Dec-Oct for 2022-23 and Nov-Oct from 2023-24.
 *Projected: **All-India average for Nov-Aug @ lakh tonnes.

Why Grain Dominates?

- **Supply Shock** → Drought → ↓ sugarcane output (359 lt → 261 lt in '24-25); govt restricted B-heavy & juice routes.
- **Price Advantage** → Maize Rs 71.86/L > C-molasses 57.97, B-molasses 60.73, juice 65.61, broken grain 64.
 → Higher profitability → ↑ grain-only distilleries.

Current Status (2025-26 Tender)

- **OMC Requirement** → 1,050 cr L (target 20% blend; actual 19.12%).
- **Industry Offer** → 1,776 cr L (> need) → Grain 1,305 cr L vs Cane 472 cr L.
 ♦ Maize 831.9 cr L, FCI rice 396.6 cr L.
- **Expected Procurement** → Grain ~650 cr L + Cane ~400 cr L.

Policy & Economic Implications

- **Excess Capacity** → 499 distilleries; 1,822 cr L capacity; ₹40,000 cr invested > technical blend limit (~20%).
- **Fuel vs Food Conflict** →
 • Maize ethanol (380 L/t) → 420 cr L needs > 11 Mt maize (~1/4 of India's 42 Mt output).
 • ↑ feed demand (milk + meat sector) → possible feed shortage & price rise.
 • Rice-based ethanol dependent on FCI surplus (unstable).
- **Sugar Sector Impact** → Ethanol shift ↓ sugar diversion (45 lt → 24-35 lt); less benefit to mills/farmers.

Takeaway

→ Ethanol policy pivoted from *sugar support* → *grain dominance* (esp. *maize*).
 → Creates new market for farmers but raises sustainability & “food vs fuel” concerns amid capacity surplus.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Consider the following statements about India's Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP):

- 1) It is implemented by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas through OMCs.
- 2) Ethanol price differentiation is based on feedstock origin.
- 3) The blending target of 20% was originally planned for 2030 but advanced.
- 4) Only sugar-based ethanol is eligible for price support.

Which of the above are correct?

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

Hint:

Feedstock-based pricing exists; target 20% advanced to 2025; grain-based ethanol also incentivized, so 4 is wrong.

Q. Compared to sugarcane-based ethanol, grain-based ethanol in India may have which of the following environmental implications?

- 1) Lower water intensity per litre of ethanol produced
- 2) Higher greenhouse gas emissions due to energy-intensive starch breakdown
- 3) Lower risk of groundwater depletion in semi-arid regions
- 4) Greater land-use competition with food crops

Select the correct answer:

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

Hint:

Grain ethanol often energy-intensive & competes with food; water savings possible vs cane, but land competition ↑.

Microplastics pollution threatens Goa's estuarine fisheries, human consumers

A study has traced microplastic contamination in fish along the Goan coast; it also analysed factors that increase the uptake of these particles and the resulting risks for fish and human health; scientists examined the habitats and feeding behaviour of 251 fishes belonging to nine species of finfish and shellfish captured from various depths

IE Explained; By Udit Misra;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News?

Study by CSIR-NIO & AcSIR reveals microplastic bioaccumulation in Goa's estuarine fish → potential threat to fisheries & human health.



Study Overview

- Location → **Mandovi estuarine system** (≈97% of Goa's fish output)
- Sample → 251 fishes, 9 spp. (mackerel, sardine, anchovy, catfish, clam, oyster, etc.)
- **Findings** → 4,871 particles; 3,369 plastic polymers (19 types)
- **Contamination zones** → ↑ benthic (sediment) vs pelagic (open water)
- **Major sources** → degraded fishing gear, wastewater discharge

Bioaccumulation & Trophic Transfer

- **Microplastics** → ingested by plankton → move ↑ food chain (trophic transfer)
- **Anchovy, sardine, mackerel** → filter feeders → ↑ ingestion
- **Bamboo shark (apex predator)** → evidence of accumulation via prey
- **Bioaccumulation effects** → amplified toxicity across trophic levels

Microplastic Characteristics

- **Shape types** → fibres 53%, fragments 29.9%, films 13.1%, beads 4%
- **Colours** → blue 37.6%, black 24.3%, red 12%, etc. → sources: fishing gear, tires, packaging, textiles
- **Polymer toxicity** → 11/19 types = highly toxic

Fish-wise Findings

- **Anchovy (pelagic)** → 8.8 MP/in → highest
- **Catfish (benthic)** → >10 MP/in → highest overall
- **Bamboo shark** → 3.5 MP/in → lowest
- **Water column** → 120 MP/L
- **Trend** → longer fish → ↓ particles; benthic habitats → ↑ ingestion
- **Organs** → digestive tract > gills → ingestion via prey/water

Ecological & Health Impacts

- **Fish effects** → disrupted genes, oxidative stress, ↓ growth, reproductive damage
- **Human effects** → immune dysfunction, ↑ cancer risk, neurotoxicity
- **Nutritional impact** → 66/71 shellfish = poor nutritional status
- **Market impact** → ↓ demand → livelihood loss for coastal fishers

Risk & Way Forward

- **Risk level** → overall “low” but ↑ for benthic ecosystems
- **Key concern** → persistence & bioaccumulation of toxic polymers
- **Call to action** → better plastic waste mgmt., biodegradable material R&D, estuarine monitoring

Core Message: Goa’s estuarine ecosystem faces silent microplastic-driven toxicity threatening aquatic life, fisheries sustainability, & human food safety.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. The bioaccumulation and trophic transfer of microplastics in marine systems primarily depend on:

- 1) Feeding guild (filter feeder, planktivory, carnivore)
- 2) Position in the trophic pyramid
- 3) Water column stratification

- 4) Photosynthetic efficiency of phytoplankton

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

Hint:

Depends on feeding behaviour, trophic level, and habitat depth — not on photosynthesis.

Restoring fiscal space for the States

With rising public aspirations and widening service gaps, States’ expenditure commitments are steadily increasing; GST introduction has altered the resource position of the States, in addition to centralising the authority to levy tax

IE Text & Context; By K. Shanmugam;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News?

End of GST compensation cess & restructuring of slabs → revived debate on States’ fiscal autonomy & Centre–State tax sharing.

□ GST & Fiscal Centralisation

- **GST reform (2017)** → shifted tax power from States → GST Council (Centre-dominant).
- **Destination-based tax** → erosion of origin-based States’ revenue.
- **End of compensation cess** (₹2 lakh cr relief to consumers) → ↑ revenue uncertainty for States.
- **Cess/surcharge** → non-shareable → Centre’s fiscal leverage ↑, States’ devolution ↓.

□ Fiscal Federal Design & Imbalances

- **Constitutional basis** → Art. 246A (GST), 268–293 (Centre–State finance).
- **Power centralised**; expenditure decentralised → vertical imbalance.
- **Pre-GST**: Centre collected 67%, States 33% → **Post-GST** same ratio → autonomy ↓.
- **States’ expenditure** ↑ (law & order, health, edu, agri, local govts).
- **Heavy dependence on Central transfers** → 44% avg; Bihar 72%, Haryana 20%.

□ Finance Commission & Transfers

- **FC (Art. 280)** → recommends devolution + grants.

- **Criticism** → criteria penalise progressive States, inconsistent weights.
- **14th FC:** 42% share → ↓ to 41% post J&K bifurcation.
- **Actual devolution < recommendation** due to ↑ cesses/surcharges (₹4.23 lakh cr BE 2025–26).
- **CSS & Central Sector schemes** → Centre's indirect control ↑ post-Planning Commission abolition.

❏ Fiscal Stress on States

- **Rising aspirations + service delivery gaps** → ↑ revenue pressure.
- **Heavy reliance on Central funds** → liquidity & autonomy issues.
- **Political friction** → Oppn-ruled States allege fiscal discrimination.
- **Progressive States (TN, KA, MH, GJ)** → want flexibility to raise own revenue.

❏ Reform Proposals → Toward Fiscal Autonomy

- **Share personal IT base** → 50:50 Centre–State split → ↓ dependence.
- **Allow State IT “top-up”** → States add marginal tax over Central IT.
- **Merge cess/surcharge with shareable pool** → fairer vertical devolution.
- **Redesign CSS** → align with State priorities.
- **Canadian model reference** → sub-nationals collect 54%, spend 60% → ↑ autonomy.

❏ Way Forward

- **Revisit fiscal sharing** → uphold *cooperative federalism*.
- **Dynamic re-adjustment of resource assignment** → match expenditure responsibilities.
- **Empower States fiscally** → strengthen accountability, efficiency, and growth outcomes.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following correctly identifies the relationship among the following constitutional provisions?

- 1) Article 270 – Distribution of taxes between Union and States.
- 2) Article 275 – Grants-in-aid to States.
- 3) Article 282 – Discretionary grants for public purposes.

(a) All three are mechanisms of compulsory transfers.

(b) Articles 270 & 275 are compulsory; 282 is discretionary.

(c) Only Article 282 is binding on the Union government.

(d) All three are decided by the Finance Commission.

Hint:

270 & 275 statutory (Finance Commission linked); 282 → discretionary (CSS, Central Schemes).



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Pratibimb PYQ Mentorship Program 2026



What is Pratibimb Mentorship?

Pratibimb Mentorship Program 2026 is designed to guide and support students aiming for success in the UPSC CSE 2026. Our program adopts a strategic, outcome-focused approach, providing continuous guidance from experienced mentors and UPSC toppers. We help students identify and strengthen their foundational skills, build their knowledge base, and focus on areas for growth by making them solve PYQs.

Highlights of the Programme



Mentorship Program is designed to assist aspirants in making notes & Answer Writing



Essay + Ethics GS-I to III **complete syllabus** coverage in 6 months



Kalam Golden Pages (KGP)
Thematic coverage of Mains syllabus of specified Topics



Marks Improvement Booklet (MIB) to enrich your Mains answer writing.



Face 2 Face Evaluation for Internalization of Personal Feedback



Self-Assessment Report (SAR) is a TOOLKIT for objective assessment of answer on self-basis



Answer Sheet Points (ASP) from Model Answer



Workshop: Learning by doing approach

Salient Features of Mentorship Program

- GS Prelims Syllabus Covered in 150+ Subject Themes
- 23 Prelims Tests = 1100 MCQs (Includes PYQ, CSAT NDA, CDS, CAPF) with solution
- 1 Prelims Tests = 50 (GS) + 5 CSAT Questions
- Static Subject wise Notes, Kalam Golden Pages (KGP)
- K-Snippet 365: Summary of Current Affairs
- SAR: Self-Assessment Report
- 40 Half-Sectional Tests + 5 Essay Tests
- 5 Full Length Tests (after Prelims)
- 1 Half-Sectional Test = 10 Questions
- Content: Kalam Golden Pages & Marks Improvement Booklets (MIB) on Mains Topics (Society, Governance, etc.)
- Answer Writing & Face 2 Face Evaluation
- Mentorship: CSE Selected Candidates

SECTIONAL TESTS

Detailed Test Syllabus & Reference Study Material



Prelims Sectional Tests

SUBJECT	No. of Tests
Polity	5
Economy	3
Agriculture	2
Geography	3
Environment	2
S&T	2
History	4
Full Length Tests	2
Total Tests	23

Mains Sectional Tests

SUBJECT	No. of Tests
Polity & Gover.	5
Economy	3
Agriculture	2
Ethics	7
Essay	5
Society	2
Social Justice	1
IR	2
Security	2
Geography	3
Environment	2
S&T	2
History	4
Full Length Tests	5
Total Tests	45



Other Details

PYQ Answer Writing | Model Answer | Face-to-Face Evaluation

- Batch Starting From: **30th June, 2025**
- Course Completion: **8 Months**
- Mode: **Online/Offline**
- Validity: Till **Mains 2026**
- Test Timing: 5 PM – 6:30 PM

Fee

₹15,000/-

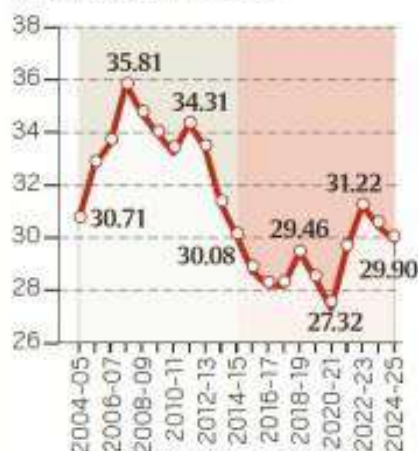
Enroll: <https://bit.ly/4edRmsB>

Concession Details

Kalam IAS Students: 20%	UPSC Interview Student: 30%	Selected Students: 50%
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EXPENDITURE TOWARDS INVESTMENT: A WORRY

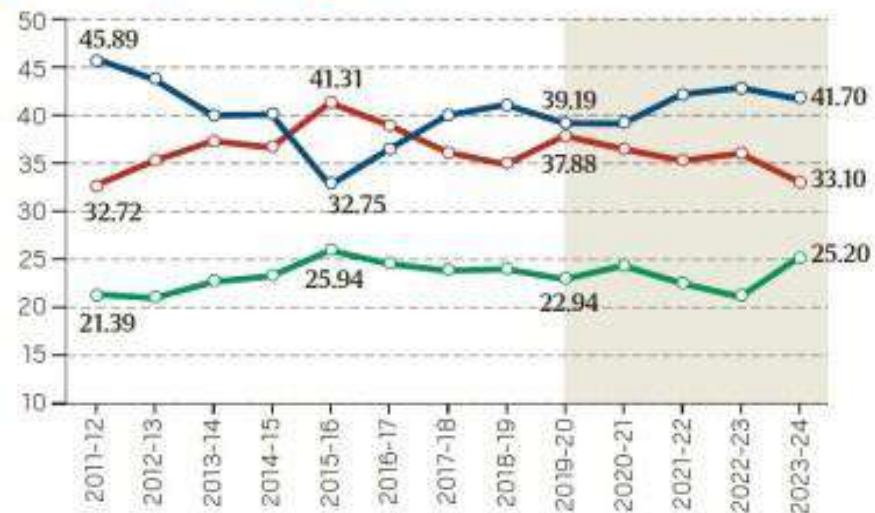
■ Share of expenditure on investment (as % of total nominal GDP)



Source: CMIE

CONTRIBUTION (IN%) IN TOTAL INVESTMENT (in nominal terms)

■ Households ■ Government ■ Pvt sector



Source: CMIE

- **Ideal model** → Private sector leads; Govt reduces fiscal burden (“Min Govt, Max Governance”).
- **FM Sitharaman (Sep’25)** → urged industry to expand capacities & invest.

Evidence of Weak Private Capex

- **GFCF components** → Govt + Households + Pvt firms.
- **Pvt share ↓ notably post-2019-20** (even after corporate tax cut).
- **FY24** → Pvt & household shares ↓; Govt share ↑ → growth driven by public capex.
- **FY25 (proj.)** → Overall investment share ↓ further → Pvt role likely stagnating.

Causes (Implied/Underlying)

- **Demand uncertainty** → post-pandemic uneven recovery.
- **High leverage & balance-sheet repair** → corporate caution.
- **Global slowdown** → export & manufacturing demand weak.
- **Capacity utilization only ~75–80%** → limited incentive for new capex.
- **Regulatory/institutional bottlenecks** → land, clearances, financing.

Implications / Upshot

- **Structural risk** → Growth over-dependent on Govt spend.
- **Fiscal stress ↑** → limits space for welfare/infra in future.

News / Explained / Explained Economics / Explained: The private sector (lack of) investment problem

Explained: The private sector (lack of) investment problem

The government has rapidly increased its expenditure on creating physical infrastructure and brought in several policies to boost consumption. Yet, private sector investments into the economy are lagging

IE Explained; By Udit Misra;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News?

→ Despite ↑ Govt infra spend & policy incentives (tax cuts, PLI, etc.), private investment in India ↓, raising concern over growth sustainability.

Nature of the Problem

- **GDP composition** → Consumption (~60%) + Investment (Gross Fixed Capital Formation, GFCF) + Govt spend + Net exports.
- **GFCF ↓ since 2011–12** → <30% of GDP most yrs post-2014.
- **FY24** → Nominal GDP ↑12%, yet private & household shares in investment ↓; Govt share ↑.
- **Weak private investment persists** despite policy push.

Why Investments Matter?

- **Consumption boost (PFCE)** → income tax reliefs, cash transfers, GST cuts.
- **Aim** → trigger demand → spur private capex → self-sustaining growth cycle.
- **Govt infra push** → intended “crowding-in” of private investment.

- **Pvt capex lag** → job creation ↓ → unemployment, inequality persist.
- **Modi govt's growth strategy** (private-led expansion) faces credibility test.
- **Need** → restore business confidence, stable policy regime, real demand revival.

Conclusion: Despite headline GDP growth, India's investment engine is Govt-driven; private sector still on investment pause, signaling structural fragility in the growth model.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Consider the following about India's Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) trends:

- 1) It has been on a declining trajectory since 2011–12.
- 2) It has largely remained below 30% of GDP after 2014.
- 3) The government's share in total investment has consistently fallen post-2019.

Which of the above are correct?

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

Hint:

Pvt & household share ↓; govt share ↑ → 3 is incorrect.

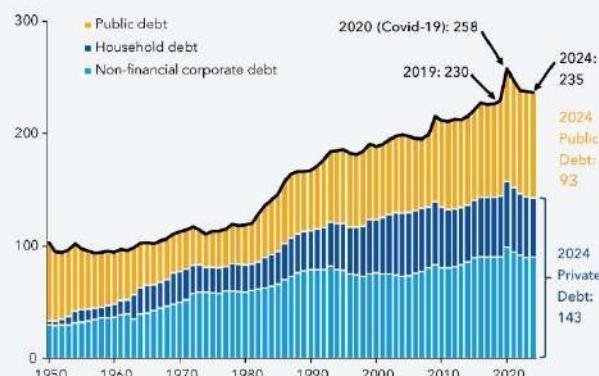


Global Debt Scenario: IMF Fiscal Monitor

- **Global avg debt** → 93% (2024) → 100%+ by 2029 (IMF)
- **Advanced economies** → avg 112% of GDP; Japan JP 230%, US 123%, Italy IT 137%
- **Emerging markets** → avg 69%; India IN ≈ 81%, Brazil BR 88%, China CN 84%
- **Low-income nations** → avg 50–55%, but 40% already in debt distress (World Bank)
- **Fiscal divergence** → ageing, welfare states, slow growth in AEs → structural ↑ in debt ratios

Global debt nearly stabilized in 2024

In percentage of global GDP



Sources: IMF 2025 Global Debt Database, and IMF staff calculations.
 Note: The rounded estimated ratios of global debt to GDP are weighted by each country's GDP in US dollars.

IMF

News / Explained / Explained Economics / On countries becoming more debt-ridden, and why that has far-reaching consequences

On countries becoming more debt-ridden, and why that has far-reaching consequences

In Explained's weekly column, titled 'GDP: Graphs, Data, Perspectives', Udit Misra breaks down how high deficits and public debts can impact countries and tax-payers over a long period, and the global trends in recent years.

IE Explained; By Udit Misra;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News → *IMF Fiscal Monitor* (Oct 2025) warns: 🌐 global public debt ↑ → projected >100% of GDP by 2029 (↑ from 93% in 2024) → highest since 1948 (post-WWII rebuild).

Causes of Rising Debt

- **Persistent fiscal deficits** → global avg $\approx 5.3\%$ of GDP (IMF 2024)
- **↑ Defence outlays** → NATO target 2% GDP; US defence spend \$850B (↑10%)
- **Climate finance** → \$4T/year needed by 2030 (IEA) → govt-led funding ↑
- **AI & automation** → job disruption → ↑ reskilling + social safety nets (OECD)
- **Pandemic legacy** → avg debt ↑ by 9% of GDP (2020–23) due to stimulus
- **Ageing societies** → OECD pension outlays projected ↑ by 2.5% of GDP (2030)
- **Political cycle** → populist spending (subsidies, farm waivers, wage hikes) → fiscal slippage

Cost of Debt & Interest Rate Shift

- **Global avg govt bond yields** → ↑ from 1.5% (2019) → ~4% (2025)
- **US 10-yr Treasury** → 4.7% (2025) vs 0.6% (2020)
- **EU avg borrowing cost** → tripled since 2021 (ECB data)
- **Roll-over dependency** → >60% of global debt short-term refinanced (IMF)
- **Interest payments** → now ~10% of govt revenue (vs 6% pre-COVID)
- **India's interest outgo** → ₹11.9 lakh crore (2025–26 BE) → 39% of revenue receipts

Consequences & Risks

- **Fiscal rigidity** → limited room for stimulus during shocks (e.g. pandemic, wars)
- **↑ taxpayer burden** → VAT hikes (UK, Japan), subsidy cuts (Argentina, Egypt)
- **↓ dev. expenditure** → infrastructure & health squeezed
- **Credit downgrades** → e.g. Fitch downgraded US (2023), Italy (2024)
- **Financial stability risk** → high debt → market volatility (UK gilt crisis 2022)
- **IMF warning** → “Unsustainable path → threatens global fiscal & monetary stability”

Way Forward

- **IMF urges fiscal consolidation** → target: ↓ debt-to-GDP by 1% annually (avg)
- **Structural reforms** → broaden tax base (GST digitalisation, property tax), rationalise subsidies
- **Green & digital growth** → diversify revenue, ↓ carbon debt load
- **Emerging economies** → improve debt transparency & domestic bond markets

- **Lesson** → Fiscal prudence + medium-term frameworks = key to stability amid high-rate era

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Consider the following statements:

- 1) Advanced Economies (AEs) on average have a lower debt-to-GDP ratio than Emerging Market Economies (EMEs).
- 2) Low-Income Developing Countries (LIDCs) have the lowest debt ratios but highest debt distress risk.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Hint:

AEs have higher debt ratios (~112%), but LIDCs face distress due to low revenue base & weak currencies.

Ashok Gulati and Ritika Juneja write: Make the farm atmanirbhar

Self-sufficiency in pulses and oilseeds will not only improve India's nutritional security but also heal soils, conserve groundwater and save air from pollution



As nutrition is the central concern of regenerative agriculture, India must prioritise nutritional security by enhancing domestic production of pulses and oilseeds—crops that require fewer inputs and naturally fix nitrogen in the soil. To address this, the government has launched the Rs 11,440 crore 'Mission for Aatmanirbhar in Pulses' (2025–26 to 2030–31) — it aims to scale up domestic pulse production to 350 lakh tonnes. (C R Sasikumar)

IE Opinion; By Ashok Gulati, Ritika Juneja;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Agriculture [Link](#)

Why in News?

Govt launched ₹11,440 cr “Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses” (2025–31) → target 350 lakh tonnes → aim: nutritional security + regenerative agriculture + soil-water-air restoration.

#ViksitBharatBudget2025

MISSION FOR AATMANIRBHARATA IN PULSES

6-year 'Mission for Aatmanirbharata' in Pulses to be launched with special focus on **Tur, Urad and Masoor**

Central Agencies (NAFED and NCCF) will be ready to procure these 3 pulses as much as offered during next 4 years from farmers who register with these agencies

Emphasis of the Mission will be on development and commercial availability of **climate resilient seeds**; enhancing **protein content**; increasing **productivity**; improving post-harvest storage & management; and assuring **remunerative prices to farmers**



Agri Crisis – Global

- **Population pressure** ↑ → 8.2 bn (2025) vs 1 bn (1804) → 8× in 200 yrs → strain on finite resources.
- **Land use** → Only 29% Earth = land; just 10.7% farmed → overuse → soil erosion, fertility ↓.
- **Soil degradation** → 33% of world soils degraded (FAO) → nutrient loss, GHG↑.
- **Water stress** → 70% freshwater used in farming → irrigation inefficiency → aquifer depletion.
- **Climate link** → Agri emits ~1/3 global GHGs (FAO 2023) → feedback on yield ↓ & food insecurity ↑.

IN Agri Crisis – India

- **Resource stress** → 52% land arable; 46% workforce in agri → but soil, water, biodiversity ↓.
- **Soil Organic Carbon (SOC)** <0.3% vs ideal 1% → esp. Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan → fertility ↓.
- **Nutrient imbalance** → N:P:K ratio ~7:3:1 vs ideal 4:2:1 → due to subsidised urea → pollution↑, GHG↑.
- **Groundwater depletion** → 60% districts in “critical” zone (CGWB) → over-irrigation (rice-wheat belt).
- **Nutritional gap** → Pulses per capita availability ~20g/day vs WHO norm 50g/day → imports↑ (India = world’s largest importer).

Steps Taken – Global

- **FAO 80 yrs (2025)** → theme “Hand in Hand for Better Food & Better Future” → focus: regenerative systems.
- **Innovations** → HYV crops (Borlaug, Khush) + Haber-Bosch fertiliser → Green Revolution averted famine.
- **Current shift** → “Regenerative Agriculture” → restore soil carbon, biodiversity, resilience.
- **Private push** → Global AgXelerate (2025) → connects agri-innovators globally (AgVaya–BioSTL–ICRIER).

IN Steps Taken – India

- **Green Revolution legacy** → Self-sufficiency in cereals; but soil-water imbalance created.
- **Policy reforms** → AIM & ANRF to foster agri-innovation (still evolving).
- **Mission for Aatmanirbharata in Pulses** (₹11,440 cr) → 2025–31 → target 350 lakh tonnes.
- **Oilseed focus** → National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP, 2021) → ↓ import dependence (currently 60%+).
- **Collaborations** → ICRIER + AgVaya + BioSTL seminar (Oct 2025) → “Innovations for Regenerative Agriculture.”

Way Forward

- **Crop-neutral incentives** → Equal MSP/procurement for pulses & oilseeds → shift from rice-wheat bias.
- **R&D investment** ↑ → Breeding for drought tolerance, high-protein, pest-resilient varieties.
- **Soil health mission** → SOC restoration → organic inputs, crop rotation, legume inclusion.
- **Water-smart practices** → Micro-irrigation, rainwater harvesting, millet promotion.
- **Market linkages** → FPOs + digital platforms → better price discovery.
- **Regenerative focus** → Heal soils, conserve groundwater, cut GHGs, ↑ biodiversity, ensure nutritional security.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. In the context of India’s agricultural policies, what does the term “crop-neutral incentive” refer to?

(a) Equalising subsidies across all crops irrespective of yield.

(b) Providing equal policy support (MSP, procurement, R&D) to all major crops to avoid bias.

(c) Promoting only rainfed crops to save groundwater.

(d) Linking crop choice strictly to nutritional value.

Hint:

Current MSP & procurement policies favour rice-wheat; crop-neutral incentives aim to give equal support (price, R&D, procurement) to pulses & oilseeds too.

News / Explained / Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses: How it aims to increase pulses production, why

Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses: How it aims to increase pulses production, why

India is the largest producer and consumer of pulses in the world. But with yield lower than other countries and demand exceeding production, the country is dependent on imports.

IE Explained; By Harikishan Sharma;

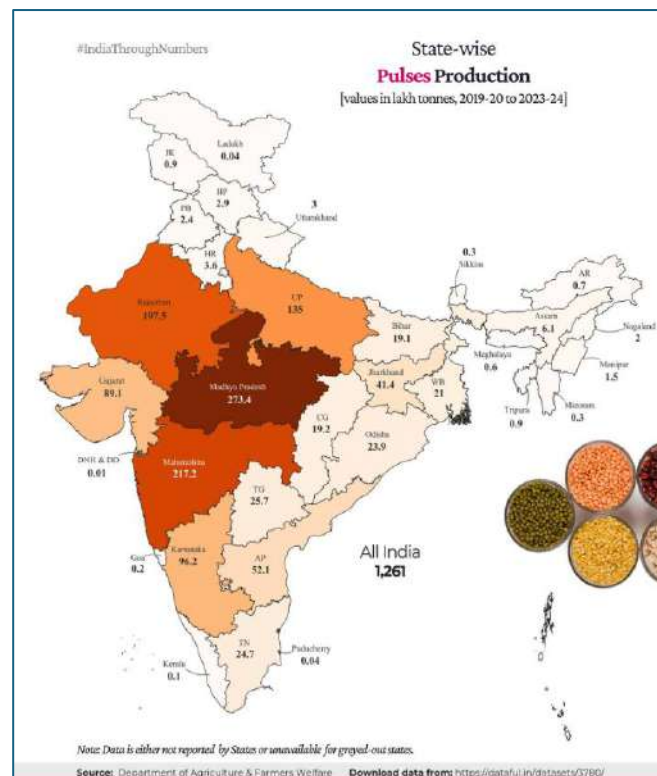
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Agriculture [Link](#)

Why in New?

→ Govt launched *Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses (2025-31)* to boost domestic production & reduce import dependency.

Mission Overview

- Duration → 2025-26 to 2030-31 (6 yrs)
- Outlay → ₹11,440 cr
- Targets → ↑ production by 45% (242→350 LMT), ↑ area by 13% (275→310 lakh ha), ↑ yield by 28% (881→1130 kg/ha)



Core Focus →

- Climate-resilient, high-protein seeds
- Productivity ↑ via tech & FLDs
- Better post-harvest mgmt & storage
- Assured remunerative MSP

Current Pulse Scenario (2023-24)

- **Top states (area ha)** → Rajasthan (54.7 L ha), MP (51), Maharashtra (44), UP (30)
- **Top states (production L MT)** → MP (59.7), Maharashtra (40), Rajasthan (33), UP (31)
- **Seasonal share** → Rabi ≈ 50% area & >60% output
- **Major crops** →
 - Gram > Moong > Tur > Urad > Masoor
- **Yield gap** → India 881 kg/ha vs Canada 2200 kg/ha & China 1815 kg/ha

Need & Significance

- **India** = 🌐 largest producer + consumer of pulses
- **Demand** ↑ → 268 L MT (by 2030), 293 L MT (by 2047)
- **Imports** ↑ from Myanmar, Mozambique, Tanzania, Australia, Canada
- **Aim** → cut import bill, ensure protein security, strengthen rural incomes

Focus Crops → Tur, Urad, Masoor

- Share ≈ 34% of total pulse area
- High yield gap → priority for intervention
- **Area Expansion Plans** →
 - **Tur** (+9 L ha) → Karnataka, Maharashtra, UP, Gujarat, Jharkhand + NE
 - **Urad** → rice fallows of UP, AP, Maharashtra
 - **Masoor** → rice fallows of WB, Bihar, Chhattisgarh

Institutional & Financial Framework

- Mission to **subsume Pulses component of NFSM**
- ↑ FLD assistance → ₹10k/ha (vs ₹9k earlier)
- **100% procurement (4 yrs)** → Tur, Urad, Masoor by NAFED & NCCF under PM-AASHA (PSS)
- **Tech integration** → Aadhaar-based farmer verification + direct procurement

Implementation Strategy

- **Cluster-based model** → ≥10 ha (per cluster), 2 ha in NE/hilly areas
- **Selection criteria** →
 - HA-HY / HA-LY / LA-HY / LA-LY districts (NITI Aayog typology)
 - Rice-fallow & rainfed zones
 - PM Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana districts
 - Aspirational, LWE, Border & Adarsh Gram districts
 - NE & Himalayan regions prioritized

Expected Outcomes

- Domestic self-sufficiency (Aatmanirbharta) in pulses by 2030-31
- ↓ Imports → saves foreign exchange
- ↑ Farmer income + protein nutrition security
- Boost to climate-resilient agriculture & rural value chains

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to the Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses (2025–31), consider the following statements:

- 1) It aims to increase the total pulses production in India by 45% by 2030–31.
- 2) The Mission will subsume the pulses component of the National Food Security Mission (NFSM).

- 3) It targets an increase in average yield to match the global average of 2200 kg/ha.

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

Hint:

Target yield = 1130 kg/ha (not 2200 kg/ha). The mission subsumes NFSM-pulses component.

Q. With reference to India's pulse economy, which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1) Over 60% of India's pulse production occurs during the rabi season.
- 2) Rajasthan has the largest area under pulses cultivation.
- 3) India's pulse yield is higher than China's but lower than Canada's.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

Hint:

India's yield (881 kg/ha) < China (1815 kg/ha) < Canada (2200 kg/ha).

News / Explained / Explained Economics / Eighth Pay Commission terms of reference approved: What this means, likely impact on salaries, pensions of govt employees

Eighth Pay Commission terms of reference approved: What this means, likely impact on salaries, pensions of govt employees

8th pay commission 2025 terms, impact | old pension scheme vs nps: The Eighth Pay Commission's recommendations are expected to be announced in April 2027. They will, however, be effective from January 1, 2026, retrospectively. Here's all you need to know.

IE Explained; By Aanchal Magazine;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Economy [Link](#)

Why in News?

→ GoI approved Terms of Reference (ToR) for the **8th Central Pay Commission (CPC)**; pay & pension revision for ~50L employees & ~69L pensioners effective **1 Jan 2026**.

Composition & Timeline

- **Headed by** → Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai (ex-SC judge)
- **Members** → Pulak Ghosh (IIM-B), Pankaj Jain (Petroleum Secy)

- **Submission** → within 18 months → likely **Apr 2027**
- **Implementation** → retrospectively from **Jan 2026** → arrears payable
- **Pattern** → ~10-year cycle; 7th CPC implemented 2016 (↑6 months delay)

Mandate & Scope

- **Core focus** → Salary, pension, allowance revision
- **Economic lens** → Fiscal prudence + developmental expenditure balance
- **Inter-govt impact** → States' finances as they usually adopt CPC outcomes
- **Benchmarking** → vs CPSU & private sector pay structures
- **New clause (♦)** → Evaluate **unfunded cost of non-contributory pensions (OPS)** → crucial amid OPS vs NPS debate

Pension Landscape

- **OPS (Old Pension Scheme)** → Defined benefit → 50% of last pay; unfunded
- **NPS (Post-2004)** → Defined contribution → market-linked returns
- **Unified Pension Scheme (2024)** → Hybrid → assured pension (₹10k min), full payout after 25 yrs service, family pension provision
- **8th CPC** → May assess fiscal risk of OPS restoration demand

Fiscal Implications

- **Current outgo (FY26)** → ₹7 lakh cr (≈18% of rev. exp.) on pay+pension+allowances
- **7th CPC impact** → ↑23.55% overall → +₹1.02 lakh cr annual burden
- **Likely 8th CPC effect** → Minimum pay may ↑ from ₹18k → ~₹46k (projected)
- **Fiscal concern** → Higher wage bill → limits capex room, ↑pressure on state finances

Broader Significance

- **Economic impact** → ↑consumption demand → short-term GDP boost
- **Inflationary risk** → Possible spike post-implementation
- **Equity concern** → Wider gap between govt & private pay scales
- **Policy signal** → Balancing fiscal discipline with employee welfare

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following is newly included in the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the 8th Pay Commission (not present in 7th CPC)?

- Benchmarking with private sector pay
- Review of pay structure of PSUs
- Assessment of unfunded cost of non-contributory pension schemes
- Revision of DA formula

Hint:

New clause added to evaluate financial sustainability of Old Pension Scheme (OPS).



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NEWS IN SHORT: ECONOMY & AGRICULTURE
Centre extends RoDTEP export sop plan till March 2026
Why in News?

Centre extends RoDTEP scheme till 31 Mar 2026.

RoDTEP Scheme

- **Launched 2021** → replaces MEIS (WTO-non compliant)
- **Refunds** → embedded duties/taxes/levies (fuel, electricity, mandi tax, VAT, etc.)
- **Coverage** → all export sectors; May 2024 restored for AA, EOUs, SEZs
- **Mode** → credit via e-scrips (transferable, usable for customs duty payment)

Extension Significance

- **Removes uncertainty** → exporters can plan pricing/contracts
- **Export headwinds** → global slowdown, geopolitical tensions, ↓ demand
- **Boosts competitiveness** → aligns with global trade norms (WTO compliant)
- **Support to MSMEs** → labour-intensive sectors (textiles, leather, gems, agri) benefit most

Nations must prepare to deal with stablecoins: FM Nirmala Sitharaman

Why in News? FM Nirmala Sitharaman: Nations must prepare to deal with stablecoins → crypto innovations reshaping money & capital flows.

Stablecoins & Monetary Architecture

- **Defn** → Crypto pegged to assets (currencies, metals) → price stability
- **Transformation** → Alters money flows, cross-border payments, trade finance
- **Binary choice** → Adapt (↑integration) vs resist (risk exclusion)



- **Global impact** → No nation insulated from systemic change

India's Position & Policy Tensions

- **Current status** → No legalisation; transactions taxed (30% + 1% TDS)
- **RBI stance** → Push for ban on private cryptos; CBDC pilots underway
- **CBDC vs Stablecoins** → CBDC = legal backing; stablecoins = private innovation
- **Policy dilemma** → Harness innovation ♦ contain risks (fraud, volatility, illicit flows)

Strategic & Economic Context

- **India's leverage** → Strong shock absorption, evolving global economic weight
- **Global shifts** → Wars, rivalries → new coalitions, fractured alliances
- **Strategic independence** → Needs agility, vigilance, performance (no complacency)
- **Role in G20** → India advocating global crypto regulations & coordinated approach

Key Implications

- **Financial stability** → Stablecoins may bypass banks, affect monetary policy
- **Sovereignty risk** → Private currency vs state-issued legal tender
- **Tech opportunity** → Blockchain, cross-border remittance, fintech growth
- **Regulatory urgency** → Balance innovation ↔ stability; global harmonisation essential

Reserve Bank of India rolls out deposit tokenisation pilot
Why in News?

RBI has launched a pilot for deposit tokenisation, converting bank deposits into blockchain-based digital tokens settled via its wholesale CBDC (e₹-W) network.



What is deposit tokenisation?

- Converting bank deposits into digital tokens stored/settled on a blockchain or DLT
- Token = digital claim over the underlying deposit, enabling smoother transferability and programmability

Pilot scope & structure

- To begin October 8, 2025
- Uses wholesale CBDC (e₹-W) as the settlement backbone
- Initial participation limited to “a few banks” in interbank / bank-to-bank settings

Benefits

- ↑ Settlement speed, ↓ costs & reconciliation
- Enables smart-contract-based transfers
- Boosts digital infra, liquidity & transparency

Regulatory risk considerations

- Integrity and enforceability of digital tokens must be ensured under law
- Risks like operational, legal, counterparty, and cyber must be mitigated via regulatory guardrails
- Interoperability & regulatory harmonisation needed

Wider Context

- Follows tokenised CDs pilot (2024)
- RBI exploring tokenisation for money-market instruments
- Step toward broader digital asset ecosystem under RBI supervision

India launches “Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses” to achieve self-reliance in pulses

Why in News? → On 11 October 2025, PM Modi launched the Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses

with ₹11,440 crore outlay to boost domestic pulse production and reduce import dependence.

Pulses Atmanirbharta Mission

Key Objectives

- Increase pulse production to achieve self-reliance
- Enhance production and availability of high-yielding seeds for farmers
- Expand the area under pulse cultivation
- Promote research and development
- Strengthen post-harvest storage and processing facilities
- Ensure 100% procurement of Arhar (Tur), Urad, and Masoor from all registered farmers through NAFED and NCCF

Kisan Call Center 1800-180-1551 (6 AM – 10 PM)

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Key Features & Targets

- Mission period: **2025-26 to 2030-31**
- Budget outlay: **₹11,440 crore**
- **Production target:** 350 lakh tonnes of pulses by 2030-31
- **Area expansion goal:** 310 lakh hectares under pulses
- **Assured procurement:** 100% MSP procurement for Tur (Arhar), Urad, Masoor for 4 years
- **Seed support:** 88 lakh free seed kits + 126 lakh quintals of certified seeds to farmers
- **Beneficiaries:** ~2 crore farmers
- **Value chain push:** 1,000 processing & packaging units (subsidised up to ₹25 lakh each)
- **Seed tracking:** **SATHI portal** for seed authentication, traceability & inventory (seedtrace.gov.in)

Rationale & Background

- Pulses provide ~20-25% of protein intake in Indian diet; per capita consumption still below recommended (~85 g/day)
- In 2023-24, India imported ~47.38 lakh tonnes of pulses, despite being top producer & consumer

- **Past production growth:** from 192.6 lakh tonnes (2013-14) → 252.38 lakh tonnes (2024-25)
- **Mission is aligned with prior schemes** (e.g., National Food Security & Nutrition Mission) and policy thrust on Aatmanirbharta in agriculture

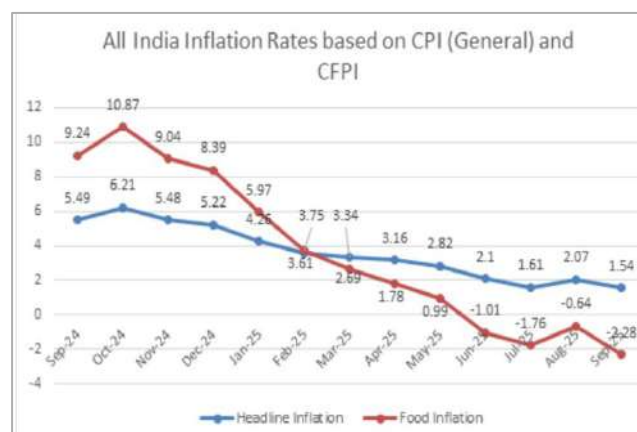
Implementation Strategy

- **Nodal agencies:** DAC&FW + ICAR + State Agri Depts + KVKs → coordinated execution
- **Seed plan:** States to prepare 5-yr seed production roadmaps; certified seed supply via SATHI portal
- **Crop promotion:** Pulses in rice-fallow areas, intercropping, crop diversification
- **MSP procurement:** NAFED/NCCF → assured buy-back for Tur, Urad, Masoor
- **Infra push:** Local processing, packaging & storage units (subsidy up to ₹25 lakh/unit)
- **Cluster approach:** District/block-level clusters → integrated input, marketing, and training support

Retail inflation hits 8-year low of 1.54% in Sept.

Why in News?

CPI-based retail inflation fell to **1.54% in Sept 2025** — lowest since June 2017.



Consumer Price Index (CPI) Overview

- Released by → NSO, MoSPI
- Measures → Price change of a fixed basket of goods/services consumed by households
- **CPI Components** → Food & beverages, Housing, Fuel & light, Clothing & footwear, Misc.
- Base Year → 2012

- RBI's inflation target → **4% ± 2% band** (set under Monetary Policy Framework Agreement, 2016)

Current Data Highlights (Sept 2025)

- **Headline CPI** → 1.54% (↓ from 2.1% in Aug 2025)
- Lowest since → June 2017 (1.46%)
- Below RBI's lower comfort limit (2%)
- **Food & beverages inflation** → -1.4% (vs 0.05% in Aug; 8.4% in Sept 2024)
- **Fuel & light inflation** → 1.98% (↓ from 2.3% in Aug)
- **Clothing & footwear inflation** → 2.28% (↓ from 2.33% in Aug; ↓ trend for 5 months)
- **Pan, tobacco & intoxicants** → ↑ 2.7% (from 2.5%)
- **Housing inflation** → ↑ 4% (from 3.1%)

Policy Implications

- MPC has cut inflation forecast for 2025–26 4th time in a row
- Low inflation → ↑ probability of repo rate cut in Dec 2025 meeting
- Supports household purchasing power → ↑ consumption demand

PM GatiShakti – Offshore Launched to Strengthen Integrated Offshore Planning and Boost India's Blue Economy

Why in News?

DPIIT has launched a new geospatial digital platform "PM GatiShakti – Offshore" for coordinated planning of offshore projects, aiming to strengthen India's Blue Economy.



PM GatiShakti – Programme Context

- Launched in 2021 as a National Master Plan (NMP) for multimodal connectivity & integrated infrastructure planning.
- Seeks inter-ministerial coordination, data integration, last-mile connectivity, logistics efficiency.
- In its 4th anniversary event, the Government unveiled further expansions including Offshore module.

What is PM GatiShakti – Offshore?

- Digital geospatial platform for integrated planning & management of offshore projects (wind farms, marine resource exploration, coastal infrastructure)
- Consolidates datasets (geospatial layers) from multiple ministries:
 - Energy & resources (offshore wind, tidal, ocean thermal)
 - Oil & gas fields, pipelines
 - Marine ecology: coral reefs, mangroves, marine mammal zones
 - Coastal regulation zones, port/airport infrastructure, fish landing centers
 - Oceanographic & hazard data: currents, wave heights, seismic risk zones
- Provides a unified interface for planners, regulators & investors to visualise multi-layer interactions & make data-driven (eco + technical) decisions
- Example use: planning subsea HVDC link to Andaman & Nicobar

EPFO eases money withdrawal terms: What has changed, why some are unhappy

Why in News?

EPFO (13 Oct 2025) eased withdrawal norms for EPF, simplified categories, & allowed greater flexibility in withdrawals — raising both support & criticism.



■ New Withdrawal Framework

- **Categories** ↓ → 13 → 3 (♦ Essential needs: illness/education/marriage; ♦ Housing; ♦ Special circumstances)
- **Withdrawal frequency** ↑ → Education: 10× during service; Marriage: 5× (earlier 3 combined)
- **Illness/Special Circumstances** → 3× & 2×/FY respectively
- **No reason needed** → “Special circumstances” category → earlier needed justification (lockout, calamity, etc.)

■ 100% Eligible Balance Rule

- **Now allowed** → Withdraw up to 100% of eligible balance (employee + employer share)
- **Mandatory retention** → 25% of cumulative annual contributions to stay as min balance
- **Corpus size** → EPFO manages ₹26 lakh cr for 30 cr+ accounts
- **Interest benefit** → 8.25% p.a. + compounding → ensures long-term corpus growth
- **Objective** → Simplify scheme + 100% auto claim settlement (no documentation)

■ Service Period Relaxation

- **Housing** → 12 months (↓ from 5 yrs)
- **Education/Marriage** → 7 yrs (↓ from 7 yrs earlier combined rule)
- **Others** → Any time during service

■ Criticism & Concerns

- **Ex-CBT Member KE Raghunathan** → Called move “regressive” & “social security dilution”
- **Risk** → Frequent withdrawals → ↓ retirement savings; ↑ short-term consumption

- **Trade unions' stance** → Backed move → seen as compromising long-term worker welfare
- **Core concern** → Provident Fund meant for retirement dignity, not recurring liquidity

▣ “Vishwas Scheme” for Dispute Resolution

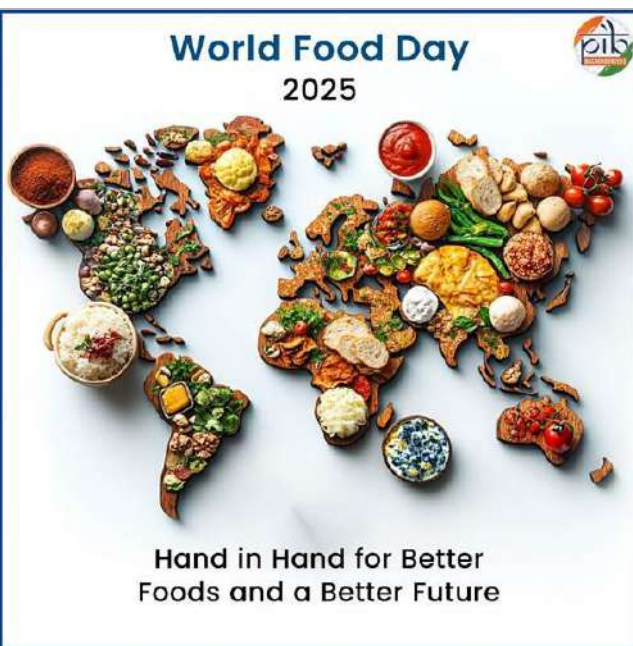
- **Aim** → Cut litigation on delayed PF remittances (Sec 14B cases)
- **New penal rate** ↓ → Flat 1%/month (vs earlier 5–25% p.a.)
 - Defaults ≤2 months → 0.25%
 - ≤4 months → 0.5%
- **Covers** → Pending/finalised/unpaid/pre-adjudication cases → will abate on compliance
- **Earlier rates** → 17–37% p.a. (pre-2008) → led to heavy litigation

World Food Day 2025

Why in News?

Observed annually on 16 October, marks the founding of FAO in 1945.

- **Theme 2025:** "Hand in Hand for Better Foods and a Better Future"—emphasizes global cooperation for transforming food systems.



India's Achievements:

- Foodgrain output up by 90 million tonnes over the last decade.
- 1st in global milk & millets, 2nd in fish, fruits & vegetables.
- Major rise in honey, egg production, and agricultural exports.

Major Schemes:

- **National Food Security Act, 2013:** Food security coverage for up to 81 crore people → 75% rural, 50% urban population covered, entitlement: 5 kg grains/person/month (priority households), 35 kg/family/month (AAY), subsidised prices.
- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana:** Free foodgrains (wheat/rice) to NFSA beneficiaries → extended till December 2028, entire cost borne by Centre, launched during COVID-19.
- **Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (earlier Mid-Day Meal):** School feeding scheme, primary/upper primary children in government & aided schools, now includes fortified rice for better nutrition, covers about 11 crore children.
- **Rice Fortification Initiative:** Fortified rice (added iron, folic acid, B12) supplied under TPDS, ICDS, PM POSHAN, OW Schemes → nationwide coverage from March 2024, extended to December 2028, ₹17,082 crore outlay, targets malnutrition & anemia reduction.
- **Aatmanirbhar Pulses Mission:** Self-reliance initiative for pulses, 2025–2031, ₹11,440 crore allocation, aims to increase area by 35 lakh hectares, targets 2 crore pulse farmers, boost domestic pulse production.

Recognition: Indian Thali listed by WWF as a sustainable, nutritious food template.



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Abhishek Vashishtha, **AIR-14** [CSE 2024]

Devansh M. Dwivedi, **AIR-228** [CSE 2024]

Sarthak Singh, **AIR-393** [CSE 2024]

I am Abhishek Vashishtha, I have secured AIR 14 in CSE 2024. Kalam IAS played an important role in my UPSC journey. I practiced PYQs at Kalam IAS, which helped me understand the exam pattern and improved my answer writing skill.

The face-to-face evaluation of my answers was very helpful. Interview video analysis by Rajendra Chaudhary Sir was very useful. The detailed feedback provided to me by him helped me a lot.

Thank you Kalam IAS for being a constant support during my journey.

Abhishek Vashishtha
UPSC CSE Rank 14.

Hello everyone,

I am Devansh Mohan Dwivedi AIR 228 (UPSC CSE 2024). Kalam IAS's programmes like RLP+ and PYQ module with face to face evaluation was very helpful during mains preparation. whole team was very helpful and kind.

Kudos to the team.

Devansh Mohan Dwivedi
AIR 228 (CSE 2024).

Hello aspirants,

I am Sarthak Singh AIR 393 UPSC CSE 2024. Kalam IAS's mains PYQ courses were very beneficial in main marks improvement from my previous attempts.

Specially, Pratibimb and face to face evaluations ensure specific pointers for improvement are provided.

Additionally, content books like Essay MIB and Ethics MIB are very useful in preparation.

I wish you all the best!

SARTHAK SINGH
(AIR 393 CSE 2024) AIR 584 CSE 2022.

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Date	Topic/Theme
Day 01	Accounting theory
Day 02	Rules of Debit and Credit
Day 03	Books of Accounts (1)
Day 04	Books of Accounts (2)
Day 05	Financial Statements (Basics: Trading A/c, P&L)
Day 06	Financial Statements (Balance Sheet)
Day 07	Partnerships
Day 08	Not-for-Profit Organisations
Day 09	Companies (Share Capital, Debentures, Financial Ratios)
Day 10	Companies (Financial Statements of Companies)
Day 11	Overview+ new laws/old laws
Day 12	Definition of workmen, employees
Day 13	Trade Unions
Day 14	Strikes and Lockouts, Retrenchment
Day 15	Industrial Disputes, Employer vicarious liability for public damage
Day 16	Wages
Day 17	Insurance
Day 18	Pension
Day 19	Compensation claims

20 Hours Approx

These lecture are pre-recorded by
Shubham Jain, AIR152 [CSE 2022], NLU Delhi

Test Schedule

Test Code	Date	Topic/Theme
EPFO_2501	24 Aug	INDIAN POLITY(80)+ CA(20)+ ENGLISH(10)+GEN. SCIENCE (10)
EPFO_2502	31 Aug	INDIAN CULTURE AND HERITAGE(40)+INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE (40)+ CA(20)+ ENGLISH(10)+GEN. SCIENCE (10)
EPFO_2503	07 Sept	ECONOMY & GLOBALIZATION (80)+ CA(20)+ ENGLISH(10)+GEN. SCIENCE (10)
EPFO_2504	14 Sept	ENGLISH(30) + CA(60)+GEN. SCIENCE (30)
EPFO_2505	21 Sept	GENERAL MENTAL ABILITY AND QUANTITATIVE APTITUDE(60)+ CA(30)+ ENGLISH(10)+GEN. SCIENCE (30)
EPFO_2506	28 Sept	INDUSTRIAL AND LABOUR LAWS(60)+SOCIAL SECURITY(60)
EPFO_2507	05 Oct	GENERAL ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES,ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING(100)+ CA(20)
EPFO_2508	12 Oct	FULL SYLLABUS
EPFO_2509	26 Oct	FULL SYLLABUS
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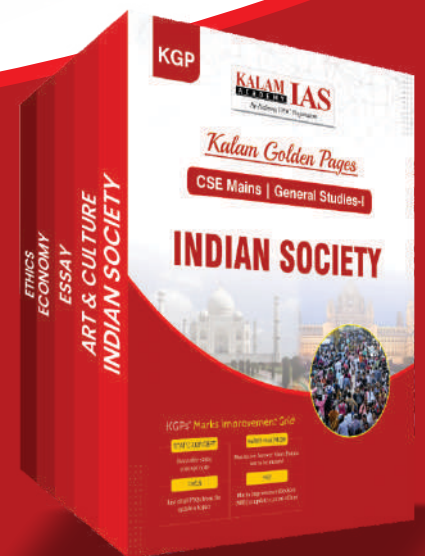


CSE Mains | General Studies I-IV & Essay

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Science and Technology

October 2025

News / Explained / Nobel Prize for Medicine 2025: Why immune system doesn't attack the body

Nobel Prize for Medicine 2025: Why immune system doesn't attack the body

Sakaguchi swam against the tide, and in a 1995 paper presented evidence for a new type of T cell "police" that essentially keeps other T cells from attacking the body's own cells

IE Explained; By Anonna Dutt;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Science & Tech [Link](#)

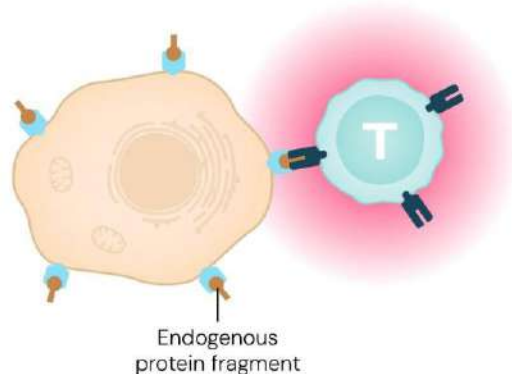
Why in News?

Shimon Sakaguchi (Japan), Mary E. Brunkow & Frederick J. Ramsdell (USA) awarded Nobel Prize for uncovering mechanism of **peripheral immune tolerance** via **Regulatory T cells (Tregs)** that prevent autoimmunity.

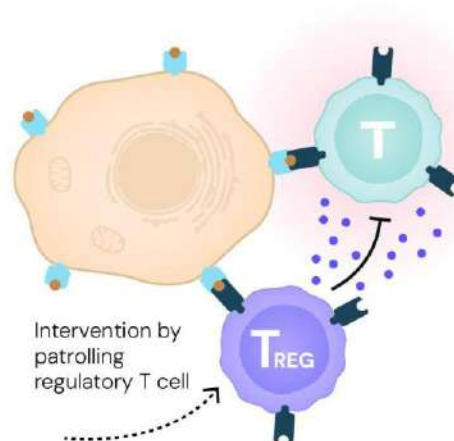


How regulatory T cells protect us

1 A T cell that has slipped through the test in the thymus reacts to a fragment from one of the body's proteins.



2 Regulatory T cells discover that the attack is a mistake and calm it down. This prevents autoimmune diseases.



© The Nobel Committee for Physiology or Medicine. Ill. Mattias Karlén

□ Background: The Immunity Paradox

- Immune system → must attack pathogens ♦ not self-tissues
- Known process (till 1980s) → **Central tolerance** in thymus eliminates self-reactive T cells
- Missing link → why self-reactivity still occurs despite thymic selection

☐ Sakaguchi's Breakthrough (1995)

- Discovery → New T cell subtype = **Regulatory T cells (Tregs)** ♦ act as “immune police”
- Method → Removed thymus in newborn mice → autoimmune reaction ↑
- Rescue experiment → Injected T cells from healthy mice → disease ↓ → confirmed presence of suppressor T cells
- Concept → **Peripheral tolerance** – active suppression of self-reactive T cells outside thymus

☐ Brunkow & Ramsdell's Genetic Proof (2001–03)

- Model → “Scurfy” mice → autoimmunity due to unknown mutation
- Genetic mapping → narrowed 500,000 nucleotides → identified **FOXP3 gene**
- Mutation in FOXP3 → causes autoimmunity in mice ♦ human equivalent = **IPEX syndrome**
- Sakaguchi (2003) → proved FOXP3 controls Treg development → linking genetics + immunoregulation

☐ Biomedical Significance

Cancer →

- Tumours recruit Tregs → suppress immune attack → therapy resistance
- Immunotherapies (e.g., CAR-T, checkpoint inhibitors) → aim to ↓ Treg activity ♦ ↑ anti-tumour T cells

Autoimmune & Transplantation Therapies →

- ↑ Treg formation → potential to control autoimmunity & prevent organ rejection
- Ongoing clinical trials → Treg-based cell therapy under test

Dual Edge →

- Overactive suppression → cancer escape ♦ Underactive → autoimmunity

☐ Core Impact

→ Revolutionised immunology understanding ♦
 Bridged autoimmunity ↔ cancer immunotherapy ♦
 Enabled Treg-targeted therapies for balanced immune control

Test Your Knowledge

Q. In the context of immune regulation, the term “peripheral tolerance” refers to:

- (a) Elimination of self-reactive T cells during their maturation in the thymus
- (b) Genetic recombination of antibody genes to increase immune diversity
- (c) Suppression of self-reactive immune responses by specialized T cells after maturation
- (d) Destruction of pathogens through complement-mediated cytolysis

Hint:

Peripheral tolerance operates outside the thymus, where Regulatory T cells (Tregs) prevent mature T cells from attacking self-tissues — unlike central tolerance, which occurs in the thymus.

Q. Which of the following statements best captures the relationship between Tregs and cancer immunotherapy?

- (a) Tregs enhance CAR-T therapy by boosting immune activation
- (b) Tregs suppress tumour-killing T cells, reducing therapy efficacy
- (c) Tregs convert cancer cells into non-malignant ones
- (d) Tregs increase antigen presentation by tumour cells

Hint:

Tumours recruit Tregs to inhibit immune attack; immunotherapies aim to block or deplete Tregs to restore anti-tumour immunity.

News / Explained / Explained Sci-Tech / Physics Nobel 2025: How winners revealed quantum physics in action

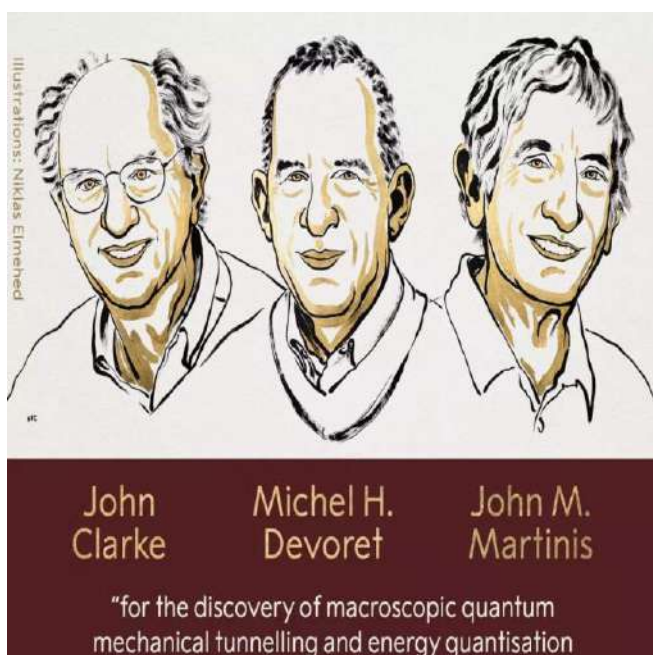
Physics Nobel 2025: How winners revealed quantum physics in action

Nobel Prize Winners 2025 in Physics: This year's Nobel Prize in physics has gone to three scientists who showed that it was possible even for large systems, made up of billions of these small particles, to exhibit quantum behaviour under carefully controlled conditions.

IE Explained; Amitabh Sinha;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Science & Tech [Link](#)

Why in News?

2025 Physics Nobel → **John Clarke, Michel H. Devoret & John Martinis** ♦ awarded for demonstrating *macroscopic quantum tunnelling & energy quantisation in electric circuits*.



Quantum Behaviour in Large Systems

- Quantum → governs atomic/subatomic particles (superposition, tunnelling)
- Classical vs Quantum → macrosystems rarely show quantum effects
- Nobel work → proved large systems (billions of particles) can show quantum traits under controlled isolation

Core Discovery

- Experiments (1984–85, UC Berkeley) → Clarke (Prof), Devoret (Postdoc), Martinis (PhD)
- Used **Josephson Junction** → 2 superconductors + thin insulator barrier
- Normally no current → but superconductivity allows *quantum tunnelling*
- Observed → circuit shows discrete energy levels (quantised states)
- Quantum jump between states → *macroscopic quantum tunnelling* confirmed

Theoretical & Historical Link

- Based on **Brian Josephson's** (1973 Nobel) supercurrent tunnelling principle
- Influenced by **Tony Leggett's prediction** → macroscopic quantum behaviour possible
- Set-up isolated from environment → avoids decoherence (external disturbance destroys quantum state)

Significance

- 1st proof → entire electric circuit (not just electrons) can act as a quantum system
- Answered → “How large can a system be & still show quantum effects?”
- Foundation → key precursor for **quantum computing**
- Modern qubits → built on superconducting circuits (legacy of this work)
- Applications → precision metrology, quantum sensors, fundamental constant measurements

Broader Impact

- Bridged micro–macro divide in physics understanding
- Inspired development of scalable qubit architectures
- Shifted focus of condensed matter physics → from microscopic particles to engineered quantum devices

Conclusion:

Their 1980s breakthrough turned *quantum theory* from *microscopic curiosity* to *macroscopic engineering reality*, laying the groundwork for today's quantum technologies.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which among the following phenomena best characterises macroscopic quantum tunnelling?

- Transmission of electrons across a semiconductor junction
- Supercurrent flow across an insulating barrier between superconductors
- Energy loss during current flow in resistive circuits
- Collapse of wave function due to measurement

Hint:

Supercurrent tunnelling through an insulating barrier (Josephson junction) is a hallmark of macroscopic quantum tunnelling.

News / Explained / Explained Sci-Tech / Nobel Prize 2025 Chemistry Winners: What have the three done, what are the real-world uses of their work

Nobel Prize 2025 Chemistry Winners: What have the three done, what are the real-world uses of their work

Nobel Prize 2025 Winners in Chemistry: The 3 winners have created metal-organic frameworks, or MOFs. MOFs can trap moisture from desert air to get water, or ethylene gas from fruits so they spoil slowly. We explain how MOFs were created, what they do, and how.

IE Explained; By Yashee;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Science & Tech [Link](#)

Why in News?

Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2025 → Awarded to *Richard Robson, Susumu Kitagawa & Omar Yaghi* → For developing **Metal–Organic Frameworks (MOFs)** — crystalline porous materials with vast applications in gas storage, purification & water harvesting.



III. Niklas Elmehed © Nobel Prize Outreach
Susumu Kitagawa
Prize share: 1/3



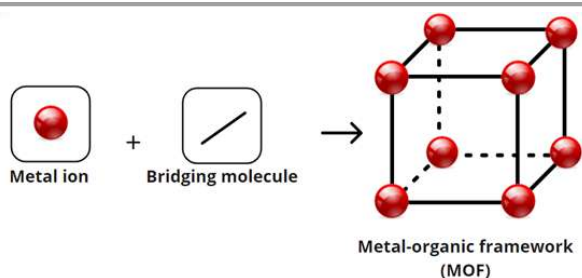
III. Niklas Elmehed © Nobel Prize Outreach
Richard Robson
Prize share: 1/3



III. Niklas Elmehed © Nobel Prize Outreach
Omar M. Yaghi
Prize share: 1/3

What are MOFs?

- Metal ions ↔ linked by organic molecules → 3D crystalline “frameworks”
- Structure → network of pores/cavities (“molecular rooms”)
- Metals = nodes/joints; organics = linkers
- Porous, customizable → tunable chemical affinity for gases/liquids
- Coined by Omar Yaghi (1995, *Nature*)



How MOFs were Created?

- **1970s Robson (Australia)** → concept of linking molecules via metal ions (molecular scaffolds)
- **Kitagawa (Japan)** → stabilized porous structures; demonstrated gas permeability
- **Yaghi (USA)** → systematized synthesis; coined term MOF; achieved stable 2D/3D nets (Cu/Co based); thermally stable ↑ to 350°C

Key Properties

- Extremely high surface area → up to 10,000 m²/g
- Adjustable pore size & chemical environment
- Selective adsorption/desorption of gases/liquids
- Stable under heat & pressure (↑ durability)

Real-world Applications

- **Water Harvesting** → MOFs pull H₂O from desert air (e.g., MOF-303, Yaghi's device in Arizona desert)
- **Food Preservation** → Trap ethylene gas → ↓ fruit ripening/spoilage
- **Carbon Capture** → Adsorb CO₂ → climate mitigation tool
- **Hydrogen Storage** → Safe, compact energy storage for fuel cells
- **Pollution Control** → Remove PFAS & toxins from water
- **Gas Separation** → Industrial purification (e.g., CH₄/CO₂, N₂/O₂ separation)

The Laureates

- **Richard Robson (b. 1937, UK)** → Univ. of Melbourne → early MOF architecture pioneer
- **Susumu Kitagawa (b. 1951, Japan)** → Kyoto Univ. → demonstrated porous functionality
- **Omar M. Yaghi (b. 1965, Jordan/USA)** → UC Berkeley → coined “MOF”, advanced reticular chemistry

Significance

- New paradigm in **reticular chemistry** → predictable molecular design
- Bridges **materials science, chemistry & sustainability**
- Enables **energy transition, water security & environmental cleanup**

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which among the following properties of Metal–Organic Frameworks (MOFs) makes them particularly suited for carbon capture and hydrogen storage?

- 1) High specific surface area
- 2) Adjustable pore size
- 3) Chemical inertness
- 4) Strong covalent bonding within the framework

Select the correct answer:

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

Hint:

MOFs' large surface area + tunable pores allow gas adsorption; they are coordination (not covalent) frameworks, and chemical inertness is variable.

Why we need to change the way we talk about antibiotic resistance

Antimicrobial resistance has become, above all, a communication crisis; instead of talking only about the future collapse of healthcare systems, the focus must be on the present impact on individual bodies; changing the language, bringing in positivity, biology, and human connection, can help keep AMR on the agenda

IE Opinion: By Abdul Ghafur;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Science & Tech [Link](#)

Why in News?

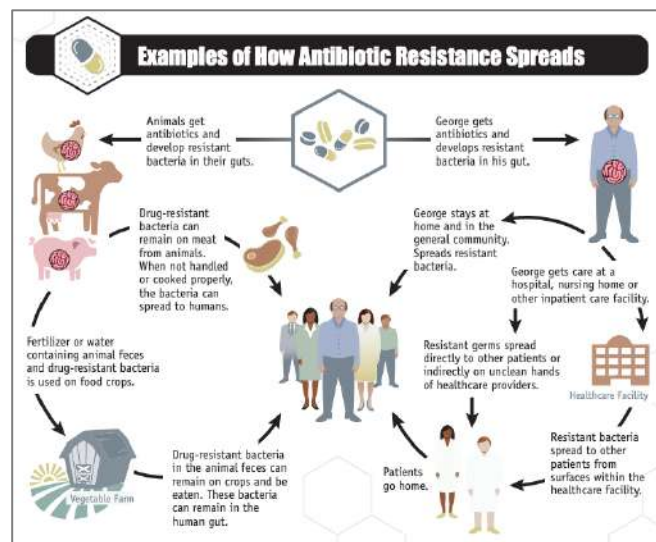
AMR (Antimicrobial Resistance) communication needs reframing → from fear-based, distant crisis narrative → to personal, biological, and hopeful storytelling.

Evolution of AMR Discourse

- **2010 NDM discovery** → Lancet paper on *New Delhi Metallo-beta-lactamase* → India's political-scientific controversy → led to *Chennai Declaration*.
- **Fear narrative phase** → "10 mn deaths by 2050," "\$100 tn loss" (O'Neill Report) → triggered global policy (G7/G20).
- **Habituation effect** → Repeated doomsday messaging ↓ public & media engagement → "psychic numbing" (Slovic).
- **Current status** → AMR threat ↑ but attention ↓ → communication fatigue → policy inertia.

From Catastrophe to Connection

- **Shift focus** → From *future system collapse* → to *current body impact*.
- **Microbiome awareness** → Human body = ecosystem of trillions of microbes → crucial for digestion, immunity, mood, metabolism.
- **Antibiotic fallout** → Even 1 dose → disrupts microbiome for months → ↑ anxiety, asthma, obesity, eczema, autoimmune diseases.
- **Real-time crisis** → AMR affects health *now*, not 2050.



Reframing the Narrative

- **Language shift** → From "bad bugs killing us" → to "good bugs protecting us."
- **Positive biology stories** → Skin microbes + perfume chemistry → individuality & microbial beauty.
- **Communication pivot** → Replace fear with personal responsibility → "Protect your good bugs — they protect you."
- **Tone** → From war rhetoric → to harmony, balance, and biological resilience.

Strategic Takeaways

- **Message redesign** → Focus on *body resilience*, not *global catastrophe*.
- **Public connect** → Personal, relatable, science-backed stories → ↑ engagement.
- **Goal** → Keep AMR on agenda via *hope, biology & human link*, not *fear statistics*.

Conclusion

→ AMR = not just microbial war but communication failure → Success lies in humanizing microbes, personalizing risk, and inspiring protection through connection.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. The Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS) is coordinated by:

- (a) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- (b) World Health Organization (WHO)
- (c) World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH/OIE)
- (d) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Hint:

WHO-led framework for global AMR data collection & standardization (since 2015).

Killer cough syrup

Twenty-four children have died in Madhya Pradesh and three others are in a critical condition after consuming an adulterated cough syrup. Lab tests show that the syrup contained a high concentration of diethylene glycol, an industrial solvent that is never used in medicine. Bindu Shajan Perappadan and Mehul Malpani report on the horror that highlights the dangers of India's weak regulatory system

TH Ground Zero; By Bindu P;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Science & Tech [Link](#)

Why in News?

27 children (24 dead, 3 critical) in Madhya Pradesh after consuming *adulterated cough syrup* Coldrif containing **diethylene glycol (DEG)** — exposes India's weak drug regulation.

⚠ The Incident

- Coldrif syrup (Sresan Pharma, Tamil Nadu) → prescribed to children for cold & fever in Parasia, MP.
- Symptoms after use → vomiting, stomach pain, drowsiness → kidney failure (Acute Tubular Necrosis).
- Deaths: Aug–Sept 2025 → mostly <6 yrs old → 24 dead, 3 critical (Nagpur).
- 600+ bottles dispatched → 543 seized; door-to-door search ongoing (ASHA & health workers).

🔍 Toxic Findings

- Lab test (TN govt): DEG contamination ↑ 48.6% w/v in Coldrif.
- DEG → industrial solvent (antifreeze, cosmetics) → nephrotoxic, non-medical use banned.
- 3 tainted syrups identified:
 → Coldrif (Sresan Pharma, TN) – 48.6% DEG
 → Respifresh TR (Rednex, Gujarat) – 1.34%
 → ReLife (Shape Pharma, Gujarat) – 0.62%

- Cause → non-pharmacopoeial Propylene Glycol contaminated with DEG/EG.

⚖ Regulatory & Administrative Failures

- **Split control** → CDSCO (Central) + State Drug Controllers → weak coordination.
- Manufacturing license: TN govt (2011, renewed 2016) → no recent central inspection (last in 2019).
- MPFDA failed random batch testing; poor sale records.
- Tamil Nadu → 2 drug inspectors suspended; 39 critical & 325 major violations found at plant.
- CDSCO ordered production halt & license cancellation.

🏠 Accountability & Legal Action

- Arrest: G. Ranganathan (Sresan Pharma owner) – booked under BNS §§105, 276 + Drugs & Cosmetics Act §27A.
- Dr. Praveen Soni (paediatrician) booked → IMA protests “not doctor's fault.”
- 3 MP FDA officials suspended for negligence.
- SIT & Health Ministry probe underway; WHO notified.

🔗 Systemic Issues

- Repeated DEG tragedies →
 → 1986: 14 deaths (Mumbai J.J. Hospital)
 → 2022: 300+ child deaths (Gambia, Indonesia, Uzbekistan) via Indian-made syrups.
- Loopholes → ↓ inspection frequency, poor inter-State data sharing, substandard excipients use.
- Cost-cutting → DEG substituted for glycerin/propylene glycol.
- State-wise drug licensing → inconsistent enforcement & weak national oversight.

🔍 Aftermath & Reforms

- CDSCO directive → list all cough syrup manufacturers, joint national audit.
- WHO informed → global alert, recall of 3 contaminated brands.
- Stop-production orders issued; none exported.
- Renewed call for stronger *pharma surveillance*, unified licensing, stricter excipient sourcing.

Core Takeaway:

Coldrif tragedy = symptom of India's fragmented, under-enforced drug regulatory system → urgent need

for unified, transparent, and science-based pharmaceutical oversight.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Diethylene Glycol (DEG):

- 1) It is pharmacologically active as a cough suppressant.
- 2) It is commonly used in antifreeze and as an industrial solvent.
- 3) Even small quantities can cause acute renal failure.
- 4) It is legally permitted in limited concentrations in oral medicines under Indian law.

Which of the above are correct?

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

Hint:

DEG → industrial solvent, nephrotoxic; not permitted in medicines; replaced glycerin/propylene glycol illegally to cut costs.

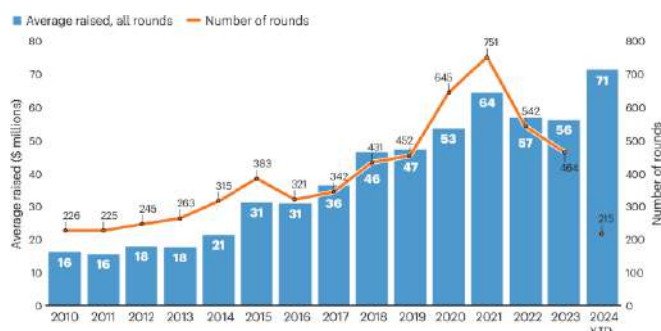
Biotech surge builds momentum but faces scaling bottlenecks

Leadership in biotechnology will require India to streamline its ecosystem and channel resources into high-impact areas; the government, industry leaders, and academia need to consolidate funding, build integrated infrastructure, and reconcile regulation with international best practices

IE Text & Context; By Deepakshi Kasat;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Science & Tech [Link](#)

Why in News?

India's biotech boom (≈500 → >10,000 startups, 2018→2025) is creating global-scale opportunity but faces financing, infrastructure & regulatory bottlenecks that threaten scale-up.



Current snapshot

- **Scale:** startups ↑ from ~500 (2018) to >10,000 (2025).
- **Infrastructure:** 94 incubators across 25 states, but many lack end-to-end facilities.
- **Policy push:** BioE3 + target → \$300B bioeconomy by 2030.
- **Investment:** headline VC ≈ \$3B last 2 years; deep financing for late-stage remains scarce.
- **Market strength:** India supplies >60% global doses (DPT/BCG/measles); vaccine & generics track record (Serum, Bharat Biotech, Biocon).

Core bottlenecks (what's stopping scale)

- **Funding gap:** early proof-of-concept OK; tens of \$M needed for Phase II/GMP — investors scarce. (example: hypothetical Mumbai AI-cancer startup stalled at \$15M).
- **Fragmentation:** 70+ incubators but few with pilot purification / fill-finish / regulatory affairs → founders shuttle cities, duplicate costs.
- **Regulatory lag:** trial, patent, approval frameworks misaligned with AI/novel biologics → delays, lower FDI/collab.
- **Talent mismatch:** brain drain; need CRISPR/GMP/AI-biostat skills at scale.

Strategic priorities (concise actions)

- **Consolidate clusters** → create GMP Commons (Genome Valley / Mumbai-Pune corridor) to pool downstream kit + expertise.
- **Dedicated biotech scaling fund** → blended-finance (venture equity + venture debt + DFIs + pension/insurance capital + partial guarantees).
- **Late-phase trial hubs** → dedicate AI/clinical trial wards + EHR/integrated labs (eg: AI-trial nodes in AIIMS network).
- **Reverse brain-drain incentives** → tax holidays, relocation grants, soft loans + micro-credentials (GMP data integrity, CRISPR engineering, AI biostat).
- **Risk-based regulation** → adopt tiered, context-specific rules (mirror EU AI Act tiering + FDA Predetermined Change Control Plans) to speed validation without blanket rules.

High-impact opportunity areas

- **AI-driven drug design & diagnostics** → cost + time ↓, examples: MedGenome, Strand Life Sciences.
- **Precision genomics & affordable gene therapies** → chronic-disease export potential (CRISPR-enabled).
- **Vaccines/biosimilars/generics** → leverage existing scale for higher-value biologics.
- **Sustainable agri-biotech** → precision farming for smallholders (85% farms <2 ha); examples: Cropin, Fasal.

Expected payoff (why act)

- **Concentration + blended capital + trial hubs** → faster Phase II→market, ↑FDI, reduced acquisition-driven value leakage.
- **Talent + regs aligned** → export of higher-value biologics, leadership beyond generics/vaccines.

Bottom line → India has quantity + nascent quality; strategic consolidation (GMP commons, blended finance, trial hubs, talent incentives, risk-based regs) is the multiplier needed to convert scale into sustained global leadership.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to India's biotechnology ecosystem, consider the following statements:

- 1) India permits up to 100% FDI under the automatic route in most biotech segments.
- 2) The BioE3 Policy aims to create a \$500 billion bioeconomy by 2030.
- 3) India accounts for over half of global vaccine doses supplied for immunisation programmes.

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

Hint:

BioE3 target = \$300B by 2030; India supplies ~60% global vaccine doses.

NEWS IN SHORT: SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Google's AI Model for Cancer Drug Discovery

Why in news?

Google unveiled **Cell2Sentence-Scale 27B** (C2S-Scale) — AI model that discovered a new drug pathway for cancer detection.



Sundar Pichai
@sundarpichai

Follow

An exciting milestone for AI in science: Our C2S-Scale 27B foundation model, built with @Yale and based on Gemma, generated a novel hypothesis about cancer cellular behavior, which scientists experimentally validated in living cells.

With more preclinical and clinical tests, this discovery may reveal a promising new pathway for developing therapies to fight cancer.

7:03 PM · Oct 15, 2025 · 4M Views

417

3.1K

15K

2.9K



Key Facts:

- **Developer:** Google DeepMind + Google Research
- **Model Type:** 27-billion parameter foundation model → understands “language of individual cells”
- **Platform:** Research paper published on bioRxiv (pre-print server)

Objective:

- Detect emerging tumours before immune system response
- Force tumours to display antigen presentation → triggers immune detection

Mechanism:

- **Model trained on:**
 - Real-world patient tumour-immune interaction data
 - Cell-line data (no immune context)
- **Task:** find drug boosting immune signals only when interferon (IFN) levels are low

Why Interferon (IFN) important?

- IFNs = body's frontline defence proteins against infection & tumours
- Low IFN → tumours evade detection → early cancer stage

Findings:

- Simulated >4,000 drugs
- Discovered: **Silmitasertib** → boosts immune response only under low-IFN condition
- ~10–30% drugs = known hits; remainder = novel predictions

Geography and Environment

October 2025

Philippines pioneers coral larvae cryobank to protect threatened reefs

The facility will freeze and preserve coral larvae — the small, free swimming ‘seeds’ of corals — at very low temperatures; these larvae can later be used to revive damaged reefs for research, thus protecting genetic diversity that might otherwise be lost. The project is part of an initiative that seeks to create cryobanks across the Coral Triangle

IE Explained; By Neelanjana Rai;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Environment [Link](#)

Why in News?

Philippines set up SE Asia’s 1st *coral larvae cryobank* to preserve coral genetic diversity & revive damaged reefs under the Coral Triangle initiative.



Coral Triangle: Global Marine Biodiversity Hotspot

- 5.7 mn sq.km. area → Indonesia, Malaysia, PNG, Philippines, Solomon Is., Timor-Leste
- Houses 75% world coral spp., 33% reef fish spp., 6/7 marine turtle spp.
- Supports 120+ mn people → food, livelihood, tourism

Mounting Threats to Reefs

- 14% global coral loss (2009–18) → Status of Coral Reefs 2020
- Projected 70–90% loss by 2050 if warming >1.5°C → UNEP warning
- Causes → ↑CO₂, ocean warming, destructive fishing, pollution, bleaching
- Consequence → biodiversity & livelihood collapse risk

Coral Cryobank Initiative

- Lead: Univ. of Philippines Marine Science Institute
- Aim → Freeze coral larvae (genetic “seeds”) at –196°C using *vitrification*
- Part of Coral Research & Development Accelerator Platform
- Regional Network → Philippines, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand
- Supported by Marine Environment & Resources Foundation Inc.

Cryopreservation (Scientific Core)

Process

- Technique: *Vitrification* → protective solution + liquid nitrogen plunge → glass-like state (no ice crystals)
- Revival → laser thawing in milliseconds → prevents recrystallisation
- Post-revival check → rehydration + swimming/settling signs → tank growth
- Output → long-term coral genetic repository

Broader Goals & Significance

- “Genetic insurance policy” → safeguard diversity for restoration
- Supports future reef regeneration projects → “living seed bank” model
- Initial focus: model spp. (*Pocillopora*, *Acropora*, *Galaxsia*) → later applied to endangered spp.
- Emphasis → “All coral spp. endangered” (Dr. Lin)

Regional & Community Dimensions

- Linked cryobanks across Coral Triangle → regional resilience network
- Collaboration: scientists + universities + governments + local communities
- Community role vital → tourism, waste, fishing pressure aggravate decline
- Education & engagement essential for sustainable reef protection

Outlook

- Cryobank = proactive adaptation & conservation tool

- Potential dual future →
 - ◆ Hope: restoration & genetic continuity
 - ◆ Risk: “museum for extinct species” if climate crisis unchecked

Test Your Knowledge

Q. In the context of coral conservation, vitrification refers to:

- A natural process of coral skeleton mineralization
- A genetic modification method for coral larvae
- Rapid freezing into a glass-like state without ice crystal formation
- Use of lasers to identify coral DNA structures

Hint: Vitrification prevents ice crystal damage in cryopreserved biological cells.

India's invasive species present a dilemma: document or conserve

Invasive alien species were introduced as ornamental fish and decorative shrubs, or as a solution to a problem, such as revegetating land; eventually they took over and displaced much of the local biodiversity, even rendering some native species locally or globally extinct, and destroyed habitats

IE Explained; T. V. Padma;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Environment [Link](#)

Why in News?

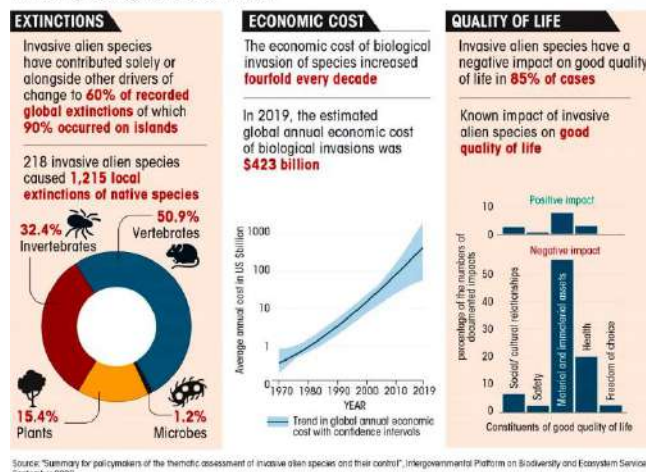
Scientists warn invasive alien species (IAS) are rapidly degrading India's ecosystems, forcing debate: *document first or conserve parallelly?*

❖ Invasive Alien Species (IAS): Scale & Impact

- 37,000 alien spp. globally → +200/year (10% harmful) ◆ Source: K.V. Sankaran
- India → 139 invasive spp. (↑ insect pests) ◆ Source: ATREE
- Effects → Biodiversity loss, native spp. extinction, habitat destruction, altered ecosystem functions

TRIPLE BURDEN

Spread of invasive alien species does not just threaten survival and well-being of biodiversity, but also imposes huge costs across the world



❖ Key Invasive Examples & Ecological Effects

1. Terrestrial Flora

- **Lantana camara** → from ornamental shrub → invasive in elephant habitats → ↓ mobility, ↑ human-wildlife conflict
- **Prosopis juliflora (Gando Bawar)** → introduced for soil salinity control → now covers 50–60% Banni grassland → ↓ grasses, ↑ soil salinity, ↓ groundwater, disrupts pastoralism

2. Aquatic Flora

- **Water hyacinth, Alligator weed, Duck weed, Water lettuce** → choke lakes/rivers → ↓ light penetration, ↑ eutrophication, threaten migratory birds (Kaziranga, Assam)

3. Fauna

- **Yellow crazy ant** → ↓ native ants → pest control imbalance
- 626 alien aquatic spp. in India (via aquarium trade, aquaculture) → threaten 1,070 native freshwater fishes

❖ Ecological & Functional Disruptions

- Soil → altered porosity, nutrient balance
- Water → ↑ turbidity, ↓ oxygen, light blockage
- Species-level → ↓ survival, reproduction, genetic diversity
- Population-level → ↓ size, range; local extinctions
- Ecosystem-level → altered food webs, energy flow, nutrient cycling; ecosystem regime shift

❖ Challenges: Poor Documentation & Knowledge Gaps

- Few spp. well-studied (e.g. *Parthenium*, *Lantana*, *Prosopis*)
- Limited invasion history, spatial mapping, or impact data
- Freshwater invasion biology → still nascent in India

❖ Policy & Research Dilemma: Document vs. Conserve

- Two paths → (i) Document fully before conservation, or (ii) Parallel documentation & management
- Consensus → Parallel approach better → site-specific studies endless, resources limited
- Use global data → adapt to Indian ecosystems

❖ Way Forward

- Develop **standardised quantitative frameworks** → map cumulative IAS effects
- Identify **high-impact spp. & hotspots** → prioritise management
- Promote **interdisciplinary collaboration** → scientists + policymakers + local communities
- Enable **citizen science atlases** → track spread & intensity
- Combine **impact assessment + eradication** → holistic ecosystem restoration

Core Insight:

Invasive Species management in India needs dual-track action — *simultaneous documentation & conservation* — guided by quantitative mapping, participatory science, and adaptive ecological planning.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following pairs is correctly matched with its ecological consequence in India?

Species → Impact

- 1) *Lantana camara* → Enhances forage for elephants
- 2) *Prosopis juliflora* → Increases soil salinity and groundwater depletion
- 3) Water hyacinth → Improves oxygen availability in aquatic systems
- 4) Yellow crazy ant → Increases population of native pest-controlling ants

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

Hint:

Prosopis juliflora worsens salinity and depletes water. Others have negative effects: *Lantana* reduces forage, Water hyacinth depletes oxygen, Yellow crazy ant reduces native ants.

Q. Consider the following impacts:

- 1) Reduction in predator–prey balance
- 2) Genetic erosion of native populations
- 3) Decline in primary productivity
- 4) Enhancement of nutrient cycling efficiency

Which of the above are true impacts of invasive alien species?

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

Hint:

Invasive Species reduce biodiversity and disrupt productivity, but they do not enhance nutrient cycling; they generally destabilize it.



☞ Scan to get more Study Material

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News / Explained / State of the soil: How have floods affected farm productivity in Punjab?

State of the soil: How have floods affected farm productivity in Punjab?

Around 2 lakh hectares of cultivable farmland experienced flooding and waterlogging in the monsoon. Has this affected soil fertility?

IE Opinion: By Anju Agnihotri Chaba;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Environment [Link](#)

Why in News?

~2 lakh ha of cultivable land in Punjab flooded/waterlogged (2025 monsoon) → Concerns over soil fertility & rabi crop prep.



Impact on Soil Health

- **Erosion of topsoil** → Loss of nutrient-rich layer (N, P, C ↓) → ↓ fertility
- **Silt deposition** (±) → Fertile alluvial silt (beneficial) vs. thick sand layers (harmful)
- **Waterlogging** → Soil compaction, ↓ aeration, nutrient leaching (esp. N)
- **pH imbalance** → Temporary acidity/alkalinity variations → Affects nutrient uptake
- **Microbial activity** ↓ → Anaerobic conditions hamper decomposition & soil respiration

Soil Test Findings (PAU, 2025)

- **Districts surveyed** → 6+ flood-hit zones
- **Results** → Nutrient loss (mainly N), pH imbalance manageable
- **Topsoil erosion zones** → Nutrient ↓ but restorable via targeted fertilisation
- **Key advice** → Soil testing before rabi sowing, organic amendments, deep ploughing
- **PAU stance** → “Setback but reversible” → Proper management = fertility retention

Recovery & Management Strategy

- **Silt depth-based approach** →
 - ≤3" → Normal ploughing
 - 3–9" → Deep chiselling
 - >9"/heavy soil → Manual/mechanical removal
- **Soil restoration tools** → Compost, green manure, organic matter ↑ soil texture
- **Field levelling** → Early levelling ensures timely rabi prep
- **Weed control** → Flood-introduced weeds → Vigilance & timely removal
- **Govt policy (♦Jisda Khet Usdi Ret♦)** → Farmers can sell deposited sand/silt → Income recovery + field clearance

Outlook for Rabi 2025–26

- **Normal sowing likely** → In moderate-silt areas; heavy-silt zones need quick action
- **Wheat window** → Late Oct–Nov 20 → Moisture from floods may aid sowing
- **Alternative short crops** → Toria, potato, maize → Use lost time effectively
- **Fodder combos** → Maize+cowpea / Sorghum+cowpea → Maintain livestock feed
- **Long-term resilience** → Timely intervention + scientific & govt support → No lasting fertility loss

Conclusion → Floods caused short-term nutrient loss & siltation, but not irreversible fertility damage. With soil testing, organic enrichment & policy support, Punjab’s farmlands likely to recover fully by rabi 2025.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following processes is most likely to occur under prolonged waterlogging conditions?

- Increased oxidation of soil minerals
- Enhanced aerobic microbial activity
- Nitrogen leaching and soil compaction

(d) Decrease in soil moisture retention capacity

Hint:

Waterlogging → anaerobic conditions → compaction & leaching of soluble nutrients (esp. N).

Q. Consider the following effects of floods on soil systems:

- 1) Leaching of nitrates to groundwater
- 2) Accumulation of heavy metals from floodwater sediments
- 3) Increased microbial diversity due to anaerobic conditions

Which of the above are plausible impacts?

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

Hint:

Anaerobic → microbial reduction, not diversity
 ↑. Heavy metals can deposit with flood silt.

News / Explained / Explained Climate / India may witness a colder winter: What is La Niña?

India may witness a colder winter: What is La Niña?

Experts suggest that La Niña may lead to a colder winter in several parts of India, especially in the northern region. It may result in cold waves and increased snowfall in hilly regions

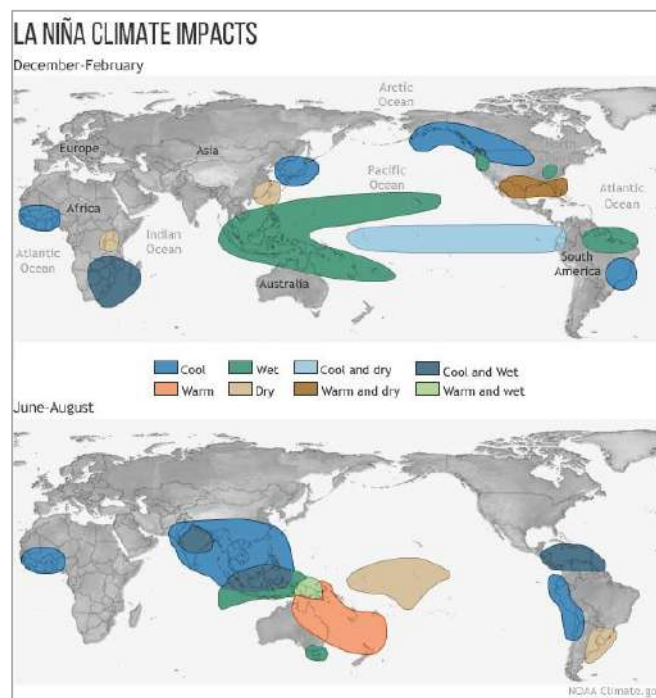
IE Explained;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Geography [Link](#)

Why in News?

La Niña conditions have re-emerged in the Pacific (Sep 2025), likely to persist till Feb 2026 → May cause colder winter & ↑ snowfall in N India.

What is La Niña?

- **Definition** → Cool phase of ENSO (El Niño–Southern Oscillation) → ↓ sea surface temp in central & eastern Pacific.
- **Mechanism** → Stronger trade winds → push warm waters west (→ Indonesia) → upwelling of cold waters near South America.
- **Cycle** → ENSO phases recur irregularly every 2–7 yrs (El Niño / Neutral / La Niña).
- **Contrast** →
 - *El Niño* → ↓ winds → warmer eastern Pacific → ↓ India rainfall, ↑ temp.
 - *La Niña* → ↑ winds → cooler eastern Pacific → ↑ India rainfall, ↓ temp.



Current 2025 La Niña Outlook

- **Emergence** → Sept 2025 (NOAA confirmation, Oct 9).
- **Duration** → Likely till Dec 2025–Feb 2026.
- **Strength** → Weak & short-lived (5th event in 6 yrs).

Impact on India

- **Winter 2025–26** →
 - N & NW India → Colder than usual, ↑ cold waves.
 - Hill states (J&K, HP, Uttarakhand) → ↑ snowfall.
- **Rainfall Link** → Typically ↑ monsoon rainfall, esp. central & southern India (carryover moisture may affect winter fog).
- **Variability** → Not uniform → Local factors & jet stream shifts influence pattern.

Interaction with Climate Change

- **Offsetting Effect** → Global warming may neutralize La Niña cooling → overall temps may stay above normal.
- **WMO Note (2025)** → Despite La Niña, global avg temp ↑ due to anthropogenic climate change.
- **Trend** → ↑ frequency of ENSO fluctuations amid warming → erratic seasonal extremes.

Broader Context

- **ENSO–IOD Link** → Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) can modulate ENSO effects; positive

IOD may weaken El Niño/strengthen La Niña influence.

- **Recent Pattern** → Repeated ENSO flips (2020–2025) → climate volatility ↑.

Bottom Line → 2025–26 La Niña likely to cause **colder, wetter winter in N India**, but **global warming may moderate** its intensity.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following best explains the physical mechanism underlying the La Niña phase of the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO)?

- Weakening of Walker circulation leading to warming of eastern Pacific waters.
- Strengthening of trade winds enhancing upwelling of cold water near the South American coast.
- Reversal of equatorial current flow resulting in warming of western Pacific waters.
- Weakening of equatorial westerlies promoting stratification in the eastern Pacific.

Hint:

La Niña → stronger trade winds → enhanced upwelling of cold water near Peru → cooling eastern Pacific.

Q. In the context of the 2025 La Niña event, which of the following factors could moderate its expected cooling impact over India?

- Strengthening of easterly jet stream over the equatorial Pacific.
- Positive phase of the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD).
- Global warming and anthropogenic radiative forcing.
- Weakening of monsoon trough over the Bay of Bengal.

Hint:

Global warming offsets La Niña's cooling → overall above-normal global temps (as per WMO 2025)

News / Explained / Explained: What the delayed elephant census says about India's 22,446 jumbos and their future

Explained: What the delayed elephant census says about India's 22,446 jumbos and their future

A change in methodology has meant that the latest estimates of India's elephant population are not directly comparable with previous ones. But looking beyond the numbers, India's national heritage animal continues to face significant challenges

IE Explained; By Nikhil Ghanekar;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Environment [Link](#)

Why in News?

Results of delayed *Synchronous All India Elephant Estimation (SAIEE) 2021–25* released → India's wild elephant popn. = **22,446** (↓ vs 2017, but new baseline due to new methodology).

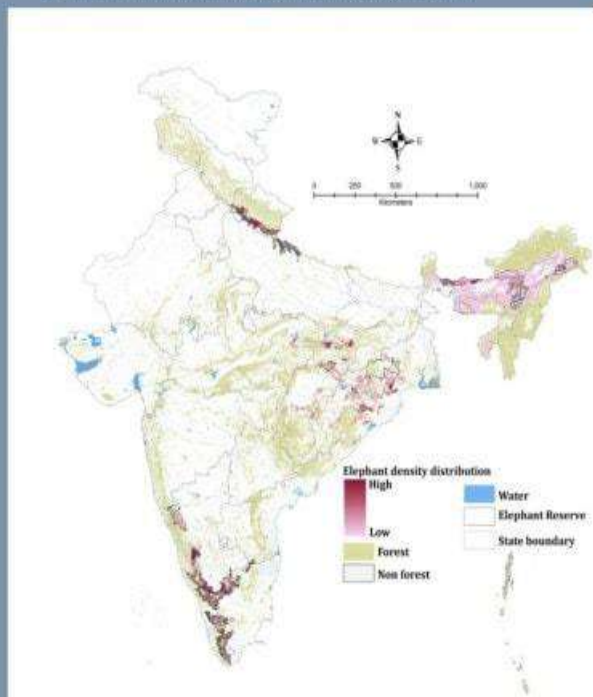
India's Elephant Population – Key Distribution

- **Total (2021–25)** → 22,446 elephants
- **Major Landscapes** →
 - Western Ghats → **11,934 (54%)**
 - NE Hills & Brahmaputra Floodplains → **6,559**
 - Shivalik Hills & Gangetic Plains → **2,062**
 - Central India & Eastern Ghats → **1,891**
- **Top States** →
 - Karnataka → 6,013
 - Assam → 4,159
 - Tamil Nadu → 3,136
 - Kerala → 2,785
 - Uttarakhand → 1,792
 - Odisha → 912
- **Habitat Continuity** → Brahmagiri–Nilgiri–Eastern Ghats block = largest sub-population (Mysuru–Nilgiri–Wayanad–Coimbatore Reserves).

Methodology Shift & Data Implications

- **New protocol** → Tiger estimation methodology (camera traps, DNA, landscape sampling).
- **Old vs new** → Not directly comparable → treated as “**new baseline.**”
- **Delay** → Due to expanded sampling esp. in NE region.
- India hosts **>60%** of global *Asian elephant* (*Elephas maximus*) popn. → **IUCN: Endangered (since 1986).**

Figure 1.3: Elephant density distribution across India, modelled through Phase I data



⚠ Conservation Challenges

- **Habitat Loss/Degradation** → Mining, linear infra (roads, rail, canals, power lines).
- **Fragmentation** → ↓ connectivity → ↑ human-elephant conflict (HEC).
- **Regional Declines (vs 2017)** →
 - Jharkhand ↓68%
 - Odisha ↓54%
 - NE & Central India major dips.
- **Migration Trend** → Elephants shifting from Jharkhand–Odisha → Chhattisgarh–MP–Maharashtra (Gadchiroli).
 - Chhattisgarh ↑82.6% (influx-driven, not natural growth).
 - New habitats → Sanjay Dubri, Bandhavgarh, Kanha TRs, Vidarbha.
- **Conflict Hotspots** →
 - Central India (<10% elephants) → causes ~45% of human deaths.
 - Assam: Forest clearance in Sonitpur, Golaghat → ↑ fragmentation, HEC.

⚙ Way Forward

- Strengthen **corridor protection & habitat restoration**.
- Integrate **HEC mitigation** → fencing, crop compensation, early-warning systems.
- **Sustainable mining & infra planning** → wildlife-friendly clearances.
- Regular, standardized **pan-India synchronised counts** → trend reliability.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to the Synchronous All India Elephant Estimation (SAIEE) 2021–25, consider the following statements:

- 1) It was the first time that the elephant estimation was conducted concurrently with the tiger census using a harmonized methodology.
- 2) The population estimate obtained is comparable with the 2017 elephant census as both used the same sampling and statistical models.
- 3) The 2025 estimation exercise recorded the highest elephant density in the North Eastern Hills and Brahmaputra Floodplains.

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

Hint:

Statement 1 is correct — SAIEE 2021–25 was synchronized with the tiger count.

Statement 2 is incorrect — different methodology; new baseline.

Statement 3 is incorrect — Western Ghats, not NE region, had the highest density.

Green rhetoric versus the practical reality

The recent deaths of six tigers at M.M. Hills and repeated cases of man-animal conflict expose Karnataka's continued prioritisation of infrastructure projects over environment, despite the loud sustainability rhetoric, argues R. Krishna Kumar

TH Ground Zero; By R. Krishna Kumar;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Environment [Link](#)

Why in News?

→ 6 tiger deaths & ↑ human–wildlife conflict in Karnataka expose policy contradiction between “green” rhetoric & infra-driven reality.

Policy–Practice Contradiction

- Lofty sustainability talk → reality: infra > environment
- Forest Dept. itself approves ecologically harmful projects
- Activists note pattern → prioritising “development” at cost of ecology

Major Environment–Infra Flashpoints

a) Sharavathi Pumped Storage Project

- 2,000 MW hydro by KPCL → 42.51 ha forest + 60.53 ha non-forest from Sharavathi Valley Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary
- Threat → endemic species (≈700 lion-tailed macaques), evergreen forests
- NBWL ‘in-principle’ ok → weak opposition, cosmetic mitigation
- Citizens’ movement “Parisarakkaagi Naavu” opposing; demand eco-integrity in renewables

b) Mini-Hydel Projects – Cauvery WLS

- 3 proposals (Ranganathaswamy, Bharachukki, Balaji Cauvery) → 4.863 ha + others diverted
- Small individually, but cumulative ecological loss → habitat fragmentation, wildlife barrier
- Linked to ↑ conflict & recent 6 tiger deaths (5 in June + 1 in Oct 2025)

c) Goa–Tamnar 400 kV Line

- 94 km line (72 km forest stretch, incl. 6.6 km through Anshi–Dandeli TR)
- 177 ha forest diverted, 62,000 trees felled
- Govt U-turn → revived despite prior caution

d) Hubballi–Ankola Railway

- Risks fragmenting pristine Western Ghats forest → long-term biodiversity loss

Conflict & Conservation Fallout

- Human deaths (2023–24): 48 by elephants; (2019–25): 160 total; 12 by tigers (2021–24)
- 2024–25: 35,580 conflict cases (₹21.61 cr compensation) → elephants (22,483) > boar (6,226) > leopards (3,738) > tigers (554)
- Root causes → habitat loss + encroachment + infra fragmentation
- Local resentment ↑ → ↓ community support for conservation

Encroachment & Habitat Erosion

- Pending encroachment cases (2025): 44,812 (↑ 559 new)
- Only 243 cleared → slow action
- Bengaluru Circle → 4,849 cases; highest conflict numbers (8,149 crop loss + 1,123 cattle kill)

Forest Cover & Land Diversion

- Forest cover (2025): 40,678 sq km = 21.21% (↓ from 22.64% in 2018–19)
- Till Mar 2024 → 807 projects cleared = 32,422 ha forest diverted
 - ↳ 72 irrigation, 148 mining, 83 roads, 19 rail, 129 power lines

- 2024–25 → 143 more projects = 277 ha diverted

Broader Implications

- “Renewable” ≠ “sustainable” if biodiversity compromised
- Fragmentation → ↑ conflict, ↓ ecological stability
- Rhetoric ↑ vs Green cover ↓ → credibility gap
- Without local inclusion + strict eco-screening → conservation goals fail

Conclusion: Karnataka’s “green” claims mask systemic policy failure — relentless infrastructure expansion, forest diversion & weak enforcement are pushing wildlife, forests, and people into unsustainable conflict.

Test Your Knowledge 02

Q. In India, the term “Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ)” is legally defined under which of the following instruments?

- (a) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980
- (b) Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
- (c) Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
- (d) National Green Tribunal Act, 2010

Hint:

Declared under EPA 1986 using MoEFCC notifications → regulate activities around protected areas.

Why cloud seeding is not a solution to Delhi’s air pollution crisis

Delhi’s air remains polluted due to emissions from vehicles, construction, power plants, waste burning and agricultural fires; cloud seeding cannot create rain without clouds, provides only temporary relief at best, and diverts attention from evidence-based solutions that address the root causes

IE Explained; By Shahzad Gani, Krishna Achuta Rao;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Science & Tech [Link](#)

Why in News?

Delhi govt exploring *cloud seeding* as emergency step to reduce toxic smog (AQI > severe).

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WHAT IS POLLUTING DELHI'S AIR? REVIEW FROM 1990 to 2022
Summary of source apportionment studies for Annual PM_{2.5}

All transport
 10-30%

This includes all road, rail, and aviation modes and combustion of petrol, diesel, and gas.


All dust
 10-30%

This includes dust from resuspension on the roads and construction activities.


All industries
 10-30%

This includes all small, medium, and large industries, including power plants and brick kilns.


All Residential
 <10% in summer
 <30% in winter

This includes all cooking, lighting, and heating activities.


Waste burning
 5-15%

This includes all open waste burning at kerb and residential sides, and at the landfills.


Power plants
 <7%

This is mostly from power plants outside the city limits.


Dust storms
 <5%

This is a seasonal source.


Agricultural residue burning
 <3%

This is a seasonal source.


Firecrackers
 <1%

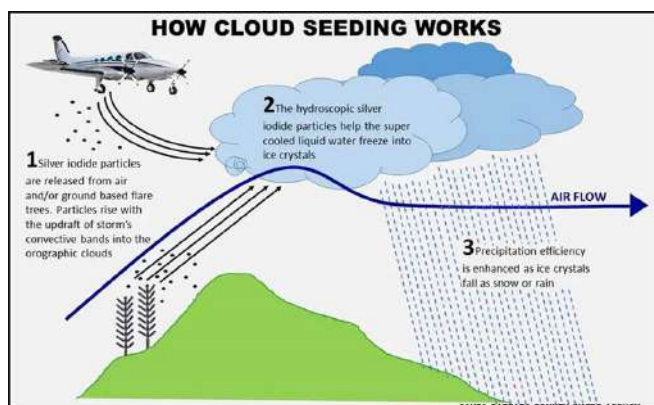
This is a seasonal source.

Earliest known results are from the 1997 White Paper on Delhi's air pollution by the Central Pollution Control Board.

The latest results in this pool are from 2023 real time source apportionment experiment by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee on their premises.

Majority of the results follow the filter sampling, chemical analysis, and receptor modeling method.

 Detailed paper is published @ MDPI Sustainability: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/5/4209>

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Why Delhi's Air Is Worse in Winter?

- **Meteorological trap** → Post-monsoon, dry NW winds + weak circulation → ↓ dispersion of pollutants.
- **Stable high-pressure system** → Prevents upward mixing, traps pollutants near surface.
- **Cooler air** → ↓ humidity → limited cloud formation, no vertical convection.
- **Haze ≠ clouds** → Visual opacity from fine PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀, not moisture.
- **Western Disturbances** → Occasional Mediterranean-origin systems bring sporadic rain; unpredictable, short-lived.
- **Result** → Pollutants accumulate → AQI crosses "hazardous" (>400) levels.

About Cloud Seeding & Possibilities

- **Concept** → Artificially inducing rainfall by dispersing particles into clouds (Silver Iodide, Sodium Chloride, Dry Ice).
- **Mechanism** → Particles act as *condensation nuclei* → help water vapour condense/freeze → rain.
- **Prerequisite** → Presence of moisture-laden clouds (not haze or dry air).
- **Use cases globally** → China, UAE, US — mainly for drought mitigation, not pollution control.
- **India trials** → Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu (rain enhancement) → mixed outcomes, limited success.
- **Scientific consensus** → Effectiveness uncertain; depends on cloud type, microphysics, humidity & wind.

Cloud Seeding: Limitations, Risks & Concerns

- **Dependence on clouds** → Ineffective during Delhi's dry winter; cannot *create* rain clouds.
- **Weak empirical proof** → Rain enhancement <15% on avg; inconsistent across studies.
- **Short-lived benefit** → Rain may temporarily wash pollutants, but levels rebound within 24–48 hrs.
- **Environmental risk** → Silver Iodide accumulation → potential soil & water contamination, eco-toxicity.

- **Health risk** → Long-term bioaccumulation effects poorly studied.
- **Ethical issue** → Manipulating weather without public consultation → governance, consent concerns.
- **Accountability void** → If flooding/crop loss coincides with seeding → unclear responsibility.
- **Public perception risk** → Mistrust in science if coincidental heavy rain/flood blamed on seeding.
- **Diversions politics** → Shifts focus from emission control → optics of “visible action.”

Way Forward – Real Solutions

- **Address sources, not symptoms:**
 - **Transport** → promote EVs, CNG, strict vehicular emission norms.
 - **Industry** → enforce stack monitoring, adopt cleaner fuels.
 - **Construction** → dust control, material recycling norms.
 - **Agriculture** → alternatives to stubble burning (Happy Seeder, bio-decomposers, MSP reform).
 - **Waste** → ban open burning, expand segregation & processing.
- **Policy & Governance:**
 - Strengthen GRAP (Graded Response Action Plan).
 - Integrate NCR states in regional emission strategy.
 - Real-time monitoring, transparency, accountability.
- **Urban Planning & Public Behaviour:**
 - ↑ Green cover, open spaces, non-motorized transport.
 - Awareness & citizen participation in pollution reduction.
- **Scientific approach:**
 - Evidence-based policymaking, not headline-driven experiments.
 - Long-term emission inventory & meteorological modeling.

Test Your Knowledge

2025 Q. Artificial way of causing rainfall to reduce air pollution makes use of

- Silver iodide and potassium iodide
- Silver nitrate and potassium iodide
- Silver iodide and potassium nitrate
- Silver nitrate and potassium chloride

Hint:

Used in cloud seeding → both act as condensation nuclei; Silver iodide (AgI) &

Potassium iodide (KI) mimic ice crystals → trigger rain formation.

News / Explained / Explained Climate / CO2 levels at an unprecedented high: Why this matters

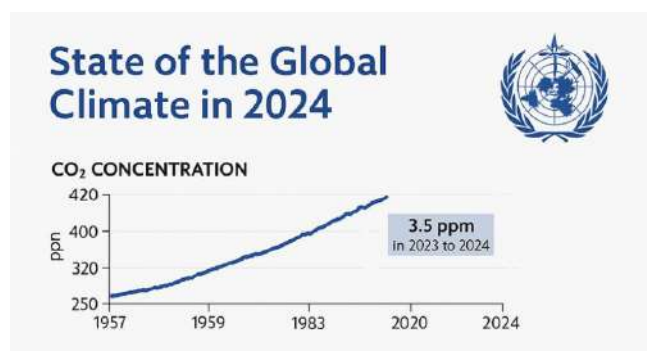
CO2 levels at an unprecedented high: Why this matters

Carbon dioxide concentrations increased by a record amount between 2023 and 2024. Man-made activities like burning of fossil fuels, and natural variabilities in CO2 loop lead to this unprecedented rise

IE Explained; By Anjali Marar, Amitabh Sinha;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Environment [Link](#)

Why in News?

WMO data: CO₂ levels ↑ by record **3.5 ppm** (2023→2024) → Reached **423.9 ppm**, highest since 1957 records began.



CO₂ Concentration Trends

- 2024 avg → **423.9 ppm** → ↑3.5 ppm YoY (record rise)
- 2011–20 avg rise → **2.4 ppm/yr**, 1960s → **0.8 ppm/yr**
- Now **152% > pre-industrial (278.3 ppm)**
- No decline in 40 yrs → continuous accumulation
- 2024 → **Warmest yr ever**, +1.55°C vs pre-industrial → 1.5°C threshold breached

Causes → Anthropogenic + Natural Factors

Man-made sources → Fossil fuel burning, deforestation, industry

Natural sinks weakening →

- Oceans ↓ CO₂ absorption → ↑temp → ↓solubility
- Land sinks ↓ → droughts, forest fires, vegetation stress

Natural emissions ↑ → record wildfires, ocean releases

→ Feedback loop: Warming → weaker sinks → more CO₂ retained

Comparative GHGs Data

Gas	2024 Conc.	Avg Rise (2010s)	Potency CO ₂	vs	Lifetime	Warming Share
CO ₂	423.9 ppm	+2.4 ppm/yr → +3.5 ppm (2024)	1×		100–1000 yrs	66% (since 1850), 79% (last decade)
CH ₄	1,942 ppb	+10.6 ppb/yr → +8 ppb (2024)	25×		12–14 yrs	16%
N ₂ O	338 ppb	+1.07 ppb/yr → +1 ppb (2024)	270×		100–120 yrs	6%

Climate Governance Failure

- **Paris Agreement (2015)** → Aim: limit <1.5°C → missed in 2024
- **Emission cuts lagging** → Global emissions ↑ despite pledges
- **Natural feedbacks worsening** → beyond direct human control
- **2030 targets** → “Almost certain to be missed” per WMO

Implications

- **CO₂ longevity** → Cumulative irreversible warming
- **Ecosystem destabilization** → Oceans, forests as carbon sinks failing
- **Higher warming trajectory** → Irreversible tipping points risk ↑
- **Urgent need** → Net-zero acceleration + sink restoration

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Consider the following gases:

- 1) Carbon dioxide (CO₂)
- 2) Methane (CH₄)
- 3) Nitrous oxide (N₂O)

Arrange them in increasing order of global warming potential (GWP).

- (a) N₂O < CH₄ < CO₂
- (b) CH₄ < CO₂ < N₂O
- (c) CO₂ < CH₄ < N₂O
- (d) CO₂ < N₂O < CH₄

Hint:

CO₂ (1×) < CH₄ (~25×) < N₂O (~270×).

Q. Which of the following statements regarding natural carbon sinks is/are correct?

- 1) Higher ocean temperatures reduce CO₂ solubility, lowering oceanic absorption.
- 2) Droughts and wildfires enhance the land's CO₂ absorption capacity.
- 3) Around half of anthropogenic CO₂ emissions are reabsorbed by natural sinks.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Hint:

- (1) Warm oceans absorb less CO₂;
- (2) Droughts/wildfires reduce absorption;
- (3) ~50% absorbed by sinks.

Why has IUCN red-flagged the Western Ghats?

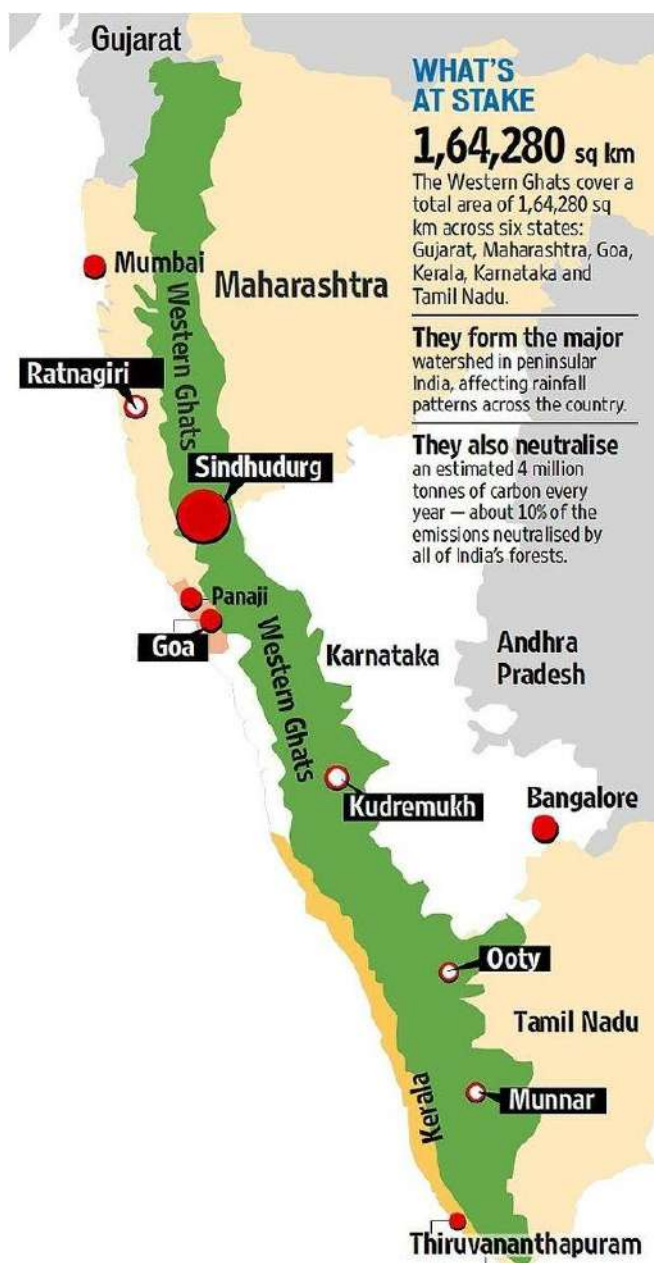
What has the International Union for Conservation of Nature's World Heritage Outlook 4 report said? What are the four main threats to the loss of habitats and species in South Asia? Are the Western Ghats highly endangered? What are the factors threatening the Sundarbans mangroves?



TH Text & Context; By Divya Gandhi;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Environment [Link](#)

Why in News?

IUCN's *World Heritage Outlook 4* (2025) has downgraded the **Western Ghats**, **Manas NP**, and **Sundarbans NP** to “significant concern” status due to worsening habitat and species loss in South Asia.



Western Ghats → Status & Significance

- **“Significant concern”** → sharp ↓ in conservation outlook.
- **UNESCO heritage** → older than Himalayas; mosaic of forests + grasslands.
- **Biodiversity hotspot** → ~325 globally threatened spp. (flora, fauna, amphibians, reptiles, fishes).
- **Endemics** → Nilgiri tahr, Malabar civet, lion-tailed macaque, endemic birds (Nilgiri flycatcher).

Western Ghats → Key Threats

- **Hydropower projects** → eg. ₹5,843 cr Sillahalla (Nilgiris) → dams on Sillahalla & Kundah rivers → 1,000 MW generation.
- **Tourism pressure** → garbage ingestion by elephants → ↑ human–wildlife conflict.
- **Plantation expansion** → tea, coffee, eucalyptus, acacia → replace native ecosystems.
- **Climate change** → species migration ↑ from low → high altitudes (e.g., flycatchers).
- **Invasive exotics** → eucalyptus, acacia colonizing forests → ↓ native biodiversity.

Sundarbans Mangroves → Threat Factors

- ↑ **Salinity & heavy metal contamination.**
- **Unsustainable resource extraction** (fishing, fuelwood).
- **Sea-level rise + storm surges** → ↓ mangrove biodiversity.
- **Habitat fragmentation** → ↑ tiger–human conflict risk.

South Asian Conservation Context

- **Indian sites “Good with some concerns”** → Great Himalayan NP, Kaziranga, Keoladeo, Nanda Devi–Valley of Flowers.
- **“Good” status** → Khangchendzonga NP (Sikkim).
- **Protected area degradation** → rapid due to encroachment & infrastructure expansion.

Global Perspective & Way Forward

- **Natural World Heritage sites** → <1% Earth's area but host >20% species richness (75k plants, 30k vertebrates).
- **Positive examples** → 7 China sites rated “best protected”.

IUCN World Heritage Outlook 4 → Key Findings

- **4th assessment cycle since 2014** → covers 228 sites (natural/mixed).
- ↓ **Positive outlook sites** → 63% (2020) → 57% (2025).
- **Categories** → Good / Good with some concerns / Significant concern / Critical.
- **South Asia threats** ↑ → Climate change, Tourism, Invasive species, Roads.
- **New major threat** → Roads & railroads (entered top 5 for 1st time).
- **Other pressures** → Forest fires, hunting, waste, encroachment, illegal logging.

- **IUCN urges** → align with *Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022)* → halt biodiversity loss.
- **Call for** → stronger eco-restoration, management, climate adaptation, & waste control measures.

Conclusion: Western Ghats & Sundarbans face escalating multi-dimensional stress (hydro projects, tourism, invasives, climate change). IUCN flags urgent action to reverse declining conservation outlook across South Asia.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to the IUCN World Heritage Outlook 4 Report (2025), consider the following statements:

- 1) It assesses only natural World Heritage Sites and not mixed sites.
- 2) It has categorized the Western Ghats as a site of “significant concern”.
- 3) Climate change, invasive species, tourism, and road expansion are the four key threats identified for South Asia.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Hint:

The report assesses both natural and mixed sites (228 total). Western Ghats = “significant concern”. Four key threats correctly stated.

Q. The Sillahalla Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Project recently mentioned in context of the Western Ghats is located in:

- (a) Kerala
- (b) Karnataka
- (c) Tamil Nadu
- (d) Goa

Hint:

Located in Nilgiris district, Tamil Nadu — proposed ₹5,843 crore project across Sillahalla & Kundah rivers.

A start for North–South carbon market cooperation

Premium

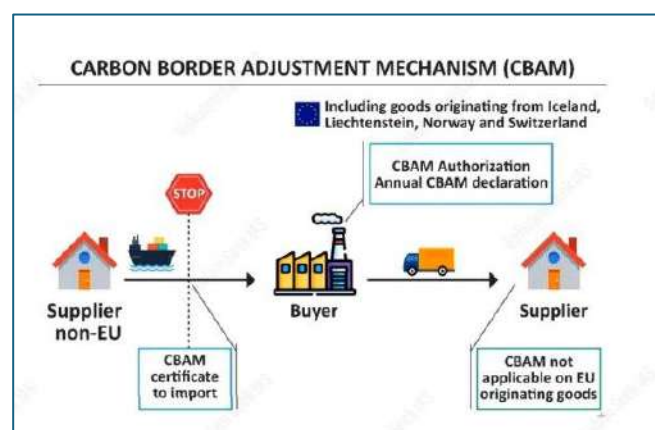
The linking of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism with the Indian carbon market is significant but there are hurdles to cross

TH Editorial; By Shashank Pandey;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Environment [Link](#)

Why in News? → EU–India *New Strategic Agenda (Sept 2025)* links **Indian Carbon Market (ICM)** with **EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** — a potential first for *North–South carbon market cooperation*.

India–EU Carbon Linkage: Concept & Significance

- **CBAM ↔ ICM** → carbon price paid in India deducted from CBAM at EU border
- **Aim** → avoid “double penalty” on exporters, reward early decarbonisation
- **Potential** → model for Global South–North carbon market integration



Challenges in Indian Carbon Market (ICM)

- **Weak architecture** → ICM under *Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)* still evolving, project-based offsets ≠ absolute emission caps
- **Institutional gap** → no EU-style independent regulators / emission registries → ↓ credibility, ↓ environmental integrity
- **Price disparity** → EU ETS: €60–80/t; India: ₹5–10/t → EU may deduct minimal carbon cost
- **Double burden risk** → exporters face both ICM compliance + full CBAM levy → industry pushback likely
- **Structural redesign needed** → shift to compliance-grade market, strong penalties, transparent verification

Political–Legal Contradictions

- **WTO stance** → India earlier opposed CBAM as unilateral & protectionist → linkage = policy contradiction
- **Sovereignty issue** → CBAM gives EU leverage to judge India's carbon adequacy
- **Trade tensions** → partial deductions may trigger disputes / WTO cases
- **Domestic volatility** → policy rollback under industrial pressure → exporters exposed to full CBAM levy

Way Forward: Cooperation over Conflict

- **Market strengthening** → India: enforce caps, ↑ carbon price, build robust verification
- **EU role** → technical assistance, phased recognition of Indian credits
- **Negotiated price floor / sectoral contracts** → align ICM–CBAM expectations
- **Trust-building** → transparent MRV (Measurement, Reporting, Verification) + clear dispute protocols

Test Your Knowledge

Q. India's opposition to the CBAM at international fora is primarily based on which of the following arguments?

- It violates the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR).
- It mandates developing countries to adopt EU-style emission caps.
- It offers subsidies only to EU exporters, creating a trade distortion.
- It allows carbon-intensive goods to enter developing markets unchecked.

Hint:

India argues CBAM is unilateral, protectionist, and inconsistent with CBDR — developed-developing differentiation under UNFCCC.

News / Explained / Explained Climate / Cyclone Montha likely to hit east coast: How do tropical storms occur, and who names them?

Cyclone Montha likely to hit east coast: How do tropical storms occur, and who names them?

Cyclone Montha alert, impact: Here is what to know about how tropical storms are formed, why the Bay of Bengal witnesses them frequently, and why this storm has been named Cyclone Montha.

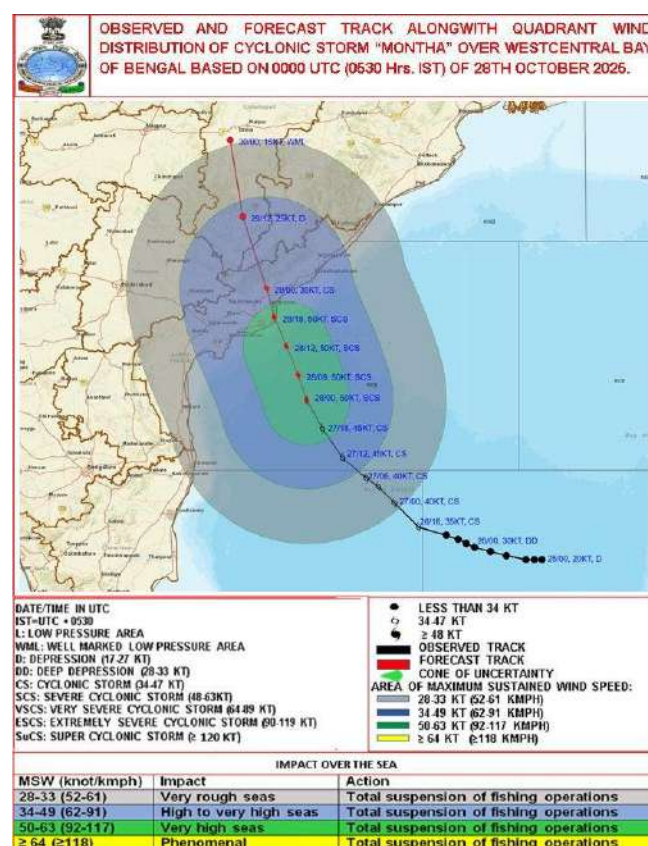
IE Explained;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Disaster Management

[Link](#)

Why in News?

IMD warns that a deep depression over SE Bay of Bengal is intensifying into **Cyclone Montha**, expected to impact east coast states with heavy rainfall.



☛ Formation of Tropical Cyclones

- **Definition** → Large low-pressure system → inward spiralling winds → anticlockwise (N hemisphere) / clockwise (S hemisphere)
- **Conditions** → Warm Sea ($>27^{\circ}\text{C}$) + Coriolis force + high humidity + weak vertical wind shear
- **Energy source** → Latent heat release → condensation of water vapour → warm core forms

- **Stages** → Low Pressure → Depression (31–49 km/h) → Deep Depression (50–61 km/h) → Cyclonic Storm (≥ 62 km/h)
- **Types** →
 - *Tropical Cyclones* → warm core, develop over tropics
 - *Extratropical Cyclones* → cold-core, form outside tropics

Why Bay of Bengal Faces More Cyclones?

- **Topography** → Funnel-shaped bay → concentrates storm surges & wind energy
- **Coastline shape** → Complex deltas (Ganga–Brahmaputra–Meghna) ↑ vulnerability
- **Sea Surface Temp (SST)** → BoB warmer than Arabian Sea → ↑ convection → ↑ cyclone intensity
- **Moisture inflow** → From Pacific (via South China Sea) → fuels storms
- **Seasonal pattern** → Oct–Nov = post-monsoon peak → ideal SST + low wind shear
- **Climate change** → Rising SSTs → ↑ intensity + frequency (Arabian Sea also catching up)

Naming of Cyclones

- **System** → WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones (PTC), 2000 onwards
- **Members (13 nations)** → India, Bangladesh, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, +5 (Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Yemen)
- **Naming method** → Rotational list → 13 names/country → 169 names (IMD 2020 list)
- **Purpose** → Easy ID, communication, public awareness, disaster coordination
- **Rules** → Neutral to politics/religion/culture; short & easy to pronounce
- **Current name** → *Montha* → given as per PTC naming sequence

Expected Impact of Cyclone Montha (IMD Forecast)

- **Regions likely hit** → Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana, Odisha, Chhattisgarh
- **Effects** → Heavy–very heavy rain, gusty winds, storm surges
- **Preparedness** → CM Naidu's alert → essential services readiness, fishermen recalled

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Consider the following statements about the Bay of Bengal's cyclone proneness:

- 1) Its funnel-shaped topography amplifies storm surges.
- 2) It has higher sea surface temperatures than the Arabian Sea.
- 3) Low vertical wind shear over the Bay enhances cyclone formation.
- 4) The Bay witnesses more landfalls due to the orientation of monsoonal winds.

Which of the above are correct?

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

Hint:

All statements valid—topography + warm SST + conducive shear + monsoon wind direction → high landfall frequency.

Setting up early warning in the Himalaya poses unique challenges

Climate change and development have made the Himalayas acutely vulnerable to floods, landslides and lakebursts, killing hundreds. Why are early warning systems not a priority?

TH Science; By Divya Gandhi;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Disaster Management

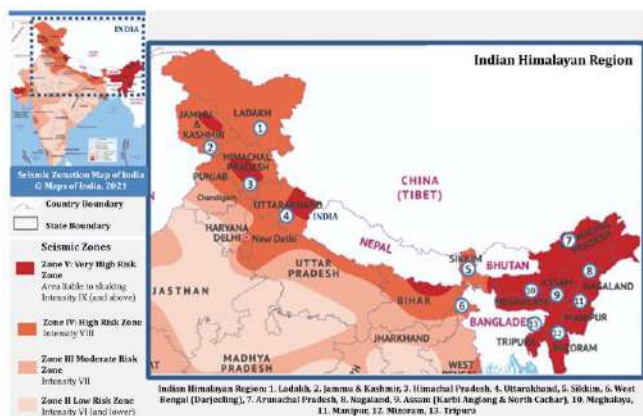
[Link](#)

Why in News?

Frequent extreme weather & disasters in the Himalayas highlight urgent need for robust, locally operable Early Warning Systems (EWS).

Himalayan Vulnerability

- **Rapid ↑ in disasters** → 11 (1963–72) → 68 (2013–22) = 44% of all India's disasters
- **1,121 landslides (2007–17, NASA)** → glacial lake bursts, floods, quakes, fires
- **Warming rate ↑ 0.15–0.60°C/decade** → faster than global avg
- **Climate + developmental stress** → fragile terrain, glacier melt, erratic precipitation



Early Warning Systems (EWS): Present Gaps

- **Sparse coverage** → few functional systems in 2,400 km Himalayan arc
- **Tech challenges** → rugged terrain, remoteness, weak mobile networks
- **Lack of indigenous, low-cost, weather-proof, easy-to-operate models**
- **Drones** → limited range in windy, icy zones; Satellites → costly, low scalability
- **Local participation** ↓ → poor training, maintenance, response readiness

- **Learn from Alps model** → local vigilance + tech synergy → lives saved

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following is not a direct monitoring parameter for a GLOF EWS?

- (a) End-moraine displacement
- (b) Ice-collapse signals
- (c) Downstream runoff volume
- (d) Precipitation variability in lower plains

Hint:

GLOF EWS focuses on glacial & hydrological variables, not plain rainfall.

News / Explained / How Odisha become a model state in handling cyclones

How Odisha become a model state in handling cyclones

Odisha, with more than 480km-long coastline along the Bay of Bengal, is vulnerable to cyclones, as experts said the state was hit by about 110 cyclones between 1891 and 2020

IE Explained; By Sujit Bisoyi;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Disaster Management
[Link](#)

Governance & Policy Issues

- **Low priority** → limited funding, institutional inertia
- **Weak coordination** → centre-state-local agencies
- **Absence of national Himalayan disaster policy integration**

Why in News?

Cyclone *Montha* → Odisha reactivates its robust disaster management system aiming for 'zero casualty'.



Technological & Scientific Solutions

- **AI models** → transform live data → credible, predictive alerts
- **Multi-input systems** → in-situ + remote sensing → real-time transmission
- **Example** → Chinese Cirenmaco GLOF EWS (unmanned boat, satellite data)
- **Hazard maps** → flood depth, velocity, intensity levels → guide evacuation
- **India examples** → hailstorm EWS (U'khand, H.P.) using AI + local weather models

Odisha's Cyclone Preparedness

- **High Vulnerability** → 480 km coastline; 110 cyclones (1891–2020); Bay of Bengal = warm + funnel-shaped → frequent storm surges.
- **Focus Districts (2025)** → Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Gajapati, Ganjam, Kandhamal, Kalahandi.
- **Proactive Actions** → 32,000 evacuees → safe shelters; 2,600 pregnant women → hospitals; 160 teams (NDRF + ODRAF + Fire).
- **Preventive Measures** → Schools closed; Govt. leave cancelled; tourist movement restricted.

Way Forward

- **Deploy EWS valley-wise** → trans-boundary coverage
- **Empower local communities** → training, ownership, rapid response
- **Use affordable AI-satellite hybrid systems** → scalable, rugged design

- **Target** → “Zero casualty” benchmark from past cyclones.

Institutional Evolution Post-1999 Super Cyclone

- **1999 Super Cyclone Impact** → >10,000 deaths; poor forecasting & no mitigation infra.
- **Systemic Reforms** → Creation of *Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA)* (2000).
- **Infrastructure** → >1,000 multipurpose cyclone shelters; ODRAF formed (India's 1st state disaster response force).
- **Tech & Equipments** → Modern early warning systems, rescue gear, satellite-based alerts.
- **Community Decentralisation** → PRI members, volunteers, SHGs, youth → evacuation & relief core teams.

Proven Results from Past Cyclones

- **Phailin (2013)** → 1 million evacuated in record time → “Zero casualty” success; UN praise.
- **Fani (2019)** → Category V equivalent cyclone → extensive infra loss but minimal deaths.
- **Frequent Drills** → Mock exercises, local training → ↑ readiness.
- **Restoration Efficiency** → Roads, power, water restored within hours post-cyclone.

Odisha: A Model for Disaster Governance

- **Integrated Approach** → Early warning + mass evacuation + community participation.
 - **Policy Continuity** → Lessons institutionalised since 1999 → constant improvement.
 - **Outcome** → Human casualty ↓ drastically despite ↑ cyclone frequency.
 - **Recognition** → UN & NDMA hailed Odisha's “zero-death” cyclone management model.
-



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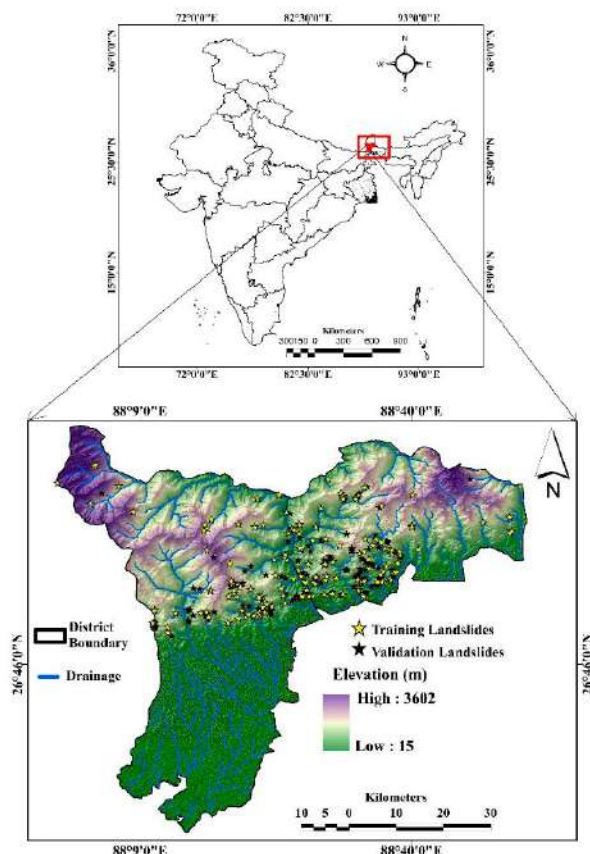


NEWS IN SHORT: GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENT

Darjeeling Landslides

Why in News?

A series of massive landslides triggered by heavy rainfall in Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts killed at least 25 people and displaced hundreds.



Cause:

Continuous torrential rain for over 48 hours led to slope failures and flash floods across hilly areas of North Bengal.

Government Response:

- **PM Narendra Modi** expressed condolences and assured “all possible assistance” from the Centre.
- **NDRF and SDRF teams** were deployed for rescue and relief operations.
- **Indian Army and BRO** assisted in clearing roads and restoring connectivity to remote areas.

State response:

- **CM Mamata Banerjee** visited affected sites on October 6 to oversee rescue operations.
- **The West Bengal government announced ₹2 lakh ex-gratia** for the families of the deceased and ₹50,000 for the injured.

Infrastructure impact:

- **Major highways like NH-10** were blocked; Darjeeling–Siliguri connectivity was disrupted.

- **Rail services** between New Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling were temporarily suspended.

Broader context:

Experts linked the severity to unregulated construction and deforestation in the ecologically fragile Himalayan zone, warning of future climate-related disasters.

National Red List Roadmap

Why in News?

India unveiled National Red List Roadmap and Vision 2025-2030 at IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, Abu Dhabi on October 8, 2025



Key Highlights:

- Launched by Union MoS Environment, Forest & Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh
- First-of-its-kind comprehensive national initiative for species assessment and conservation
- Aims to assess extinction risk of 11,000 species (7,000 flora + 4,000 fauna) by 2030
- Aligned with IUCN global standards to fulfill CBD and **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework commitments**
- **Nodal agencies:** Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and Botanical Survey of India (BSI) under MoEFCC
- **Goal:** Publish National Red Data Books for flora and fauna by 2030
- Will create nationally coordinated, participatory red-listing system for accurate conservation status assessment
- Plans to train 300 qualified Red List assessors and certify 5 national-level trainers
- Will establish National Species Specialist Groups for assessment oversight
- India hosts 8% of global plant species and 7.5% of animal species despite 2.4% land area
- India is one of 17 megadiverse countries with 4 global biodiversity hotspots

- Initiative supports evidence-based conservation planning and informed policy development

Arctic seals, birds in new 'red list' of endangered species: IUCN

Why in News?

IUCN updated its Red List — Arctic seals & several bird species newly classified as endangered/near-threatened.

♦ IUCN RED LIST — OVERVIEW

- Released by → **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**
- Total species assessed → **1,72,620**
- Total threatened with extinction → 48,646 species (**≈28%**)
- Categories** → EX, EW, CR, EN, VU, NT, LC, DD (Extinct → Least Concern)
- Function** → Global inventory of conservation status of biological species

❄️ ARCTIC SEALS — STATUS UPDATE



- Hooded Seal** → Status changed from Vulnerable → Endangered
- Bearded & Harp Seals** → Near Threatened
- Causes** →
 - Global warming** (Arctic warming 4× faster than global avg)
 - Loss of sea ice habitat** (↓ duration & extent of ice cover)
 - Maritime traffic, oil extraction, mining, industrial fishing, hunting**
- Ecological role** → Keystone species → regulate prey populations & recycle nutrients
- Region most affected** → Svalbard Archipelago (Norway–North Pole) → once had 5 months ice cover, now winter ice-free

🐢 POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT — GREEN TURTLE



- Status → **No longer endangered**
- Recovery** → ↑ 28% population growth since 1970s
- Reason** → Sustained conservation efforts (nest protection, anti-poaching, marine sanctuaries)
- Significance** → Example of effective long-term conservation

SC allows sale of green fireworks in Delhi

Why in News?

SC permits limited sale & use of NEERI–PESO certified green fireworks in Delhi-NCR during Deepavali as a temporary relaxation of blanket ban.

What are Green Crackers?

- Developed by → **NEERI–CSIR (2018)**
- Purpose** → ↓ harmful emissions while retaining festive use
- Certified by** → NEERI & licensed via PESO

Composition & Technology

- No use of** → Barium nitrate, arsenic, lithium, lead, mercury
- Substituted with** → Potassium nitrate, zeolite, modified aluminum compounds
- Designs** → Safe Water Releaser (SWAS), Safe Minimal Aluminium (SAFAL), Safe Thermite Cracker (STAR)
- QR code** → Verification & traceability for authenticity

Emission & Noise Profile

- Emission reduction** → **30–40%** ↓ PM, SO₂, NO₂ vs. conventional crackers
- Noise level** → ≤ **125 dB** (as per CPCB norms)
- No ash/metal particulate release** → ↓ respiratory impact

WHAT ARE 'GREEN CRACKERS'?

Expected to hit the market in **4-5 years**

Firecrackers that have "less dangerous" and "less harmful" chemicals than conventional ones

GREEN BECAUSE...

- they have a chemical formulation that produces water molecules
- this substantially reduces emission levels and absorbs dust
- is basically a light and sound show that produces lower emissions
- promise **30-35% reduction** in particulate matter, nitrous oxide and sulphur oxide

OTHER INITIATIVES

- Crackers with lower aluminium to reduce emissions substantially
- 'Anar' or flower pots made using "eco-friendly material" that can reduce particulate matter by 40%
- Bijli crackers that eliminate use of ash as desiccants
- Firecrackers without antimony, lithium, mercury, arsenic and lead as directed by PESO last year

ALSO IN THE WORKS... E-CRACKERS BEING DEVELOPED BY CSIR'S CENTRAL ELECTRONICS ENGINEERING RESEARCH INSTITUTE

CSIR - Council of Scientific and Industrial Research

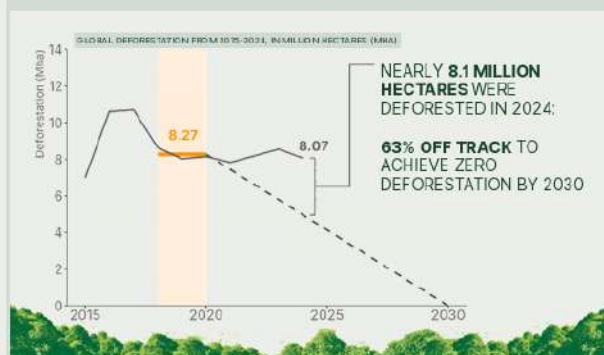
Forest Declaration Assessment 2025 Report

Why in News?

Forest Declaration Assessment 2025 report warns → world far from COP26 (Glasgow) pledge to halt deforestation by 2030

Report is an independent, multi-stakeholder initiative tracking COP26 / NYDF goals on forest protection and restoration.

THE WORLD REMAINS OFF TRACK TO ELIMINATE DEFORESTATION BY 2030.



Key Findings – Global Deforestation

- Global forest loss (2024): 8.1 million ha (~area of Austria)
- Tropical forests worst hit → 6.73 million ha lost (2024)
- Permanent agriculture = ~86% of global deforestation (past decade)
- Progress towards “zero deforestation by 2030” → 63% off-track

Restoration Targets

- COP26 pledge: Restore 30% degraded ecosystems
- Actual: 10.6 million ha under active restoration
 - Only 5.4% of reforestation potential
 - 0.3% of total biophysical forest restoration potential

FOREST RESTORATION EFFORTS PROGRESS, BUT MONITORING REMAINS A CHALLENGE

An estimated 10.6 million hectares of global restoration activities (as of Sept. 2025) represents a small fraction of the global restoration potential. Fragmented data hinders complete estimates.

AREA COVERED BY RESTORATION PROJECTS TARGETING DEFORESTED LAND & DEGRADED FORESTS, VIA RESTOR & BRIO



Finance Imbalance

- Intl. public finance for forests ↑ → \$1.7 bn (2018-20) → \$5.7 bn (2022-24)
- Agricultural subsidies = \$409 bn/year (→ main deforestation driver)

- 💰 **Needed to meet 2030 goal** → \$117–299 bn
- 🏠 **Only 40% of financial institutions exposed** to forest-risk → have policies to address it

🏛️ Governance & Rights Issues

- 🏰 **Weak enforcement + insecure land rights** → poor conservation outcomes
- 👤 **Limited participation of Indigenous Peoples, women, civil societies**
- 🏭 **Industry dominance > political will** → favors deforestation

IN India context: Finalised rules under amended Forest (Conservation) Act, 2023 → reduced protection for several forest areas → undermined forest-dependent communities' rights

National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) releases ₹18.3 lakh to Biodiversity Management Committees in UP & Sikkim

Why in News? →

National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) disbursed ₹18.3 lakh as **Access & Benefit Sharing (ABS) funds** to local BMCs in Uttar Pradesh & Sikkim under Biological Diversity Act 2002.

🌿 Key Facts & Context

- **Recipients:** Narrau Village BMC (Aligarh, UP) & Lampokhari Lake BMC (Aritar, Sikkim).
- **Funds** = benefit-sharing by companies accessing biological resources:
 - **Narrau** → used crop biomass for bio-compound R&D.
 - **Lampokhari** → used local microorganisms from soil/water for research.
- **Released via respective State Biodiversity Boards** → direct credit to BMC accounts.
- **Amount marks real transfer of ABS benefits** to local custodians of biodiversity.

About National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)

- **Statutory body under Biological Diversity Act, 2002** → set up in 2003, HQ: Chennai, under MoEFCC.
- **Regulates access to biological resources & associated traditional knowledge** → ensures fair & equitable benefit sharing (ABS).
- **Grants approvals to foreigners/companies** for bio-resource use & oversees transfer of research results abroad.

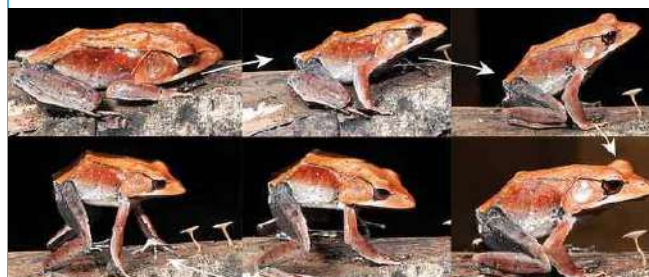
- **Supervises State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) & Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)** → implements 3-tier biodiversity governance.
- **Advises GoI** on biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, & policy; maintains National Biodiversity Register.
- **Nodal body for implementing Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) & Nagoya Protocol** (2010) in India.

Current focus → strengthen ABS compliance, expand Biodiversity Heritage Sites, & digitize PBRs under Mission LiFE.

Study reveals rare defence traits in Indian frogs

Why in News?

Delhi Univ. scientists document 1st-time rare anti-predator behaviours in 2 Indian frog species.



A sequence of images displaying the body-raising behaviour of the bicoloured frog from Kerala.

Unique Defence Behaviours

- **Apatani horned toad (Xenophrys apatani)** → Arunachal; nocturnal; cryptic leaf-litter colouration → inflates body + emits distress shriek + bites intruder.
- **Bicoloured frog (Clinotarsus curtipes)** → Kerala; diurnal; forest floor dweller → arches body by vertical limb stretch → appears larger/intimidating.

Scientific Context

- **Study by Delhi Univ. Systematics Lab (S.D. Biju)** → published in Herpetological Notes.
- **1st record of biting & body-raising defence** among India's 419 frog spp.
- **Globally:** ~7,876 spp., ~650 show such defence → India's data scarce.

Highlights need for ↑ field-based natural history studies on Indian amphibians.

Internal Security

October 2025

News / Explained / Explained Politics / A red sunset? Why Maoist movement is on the decline

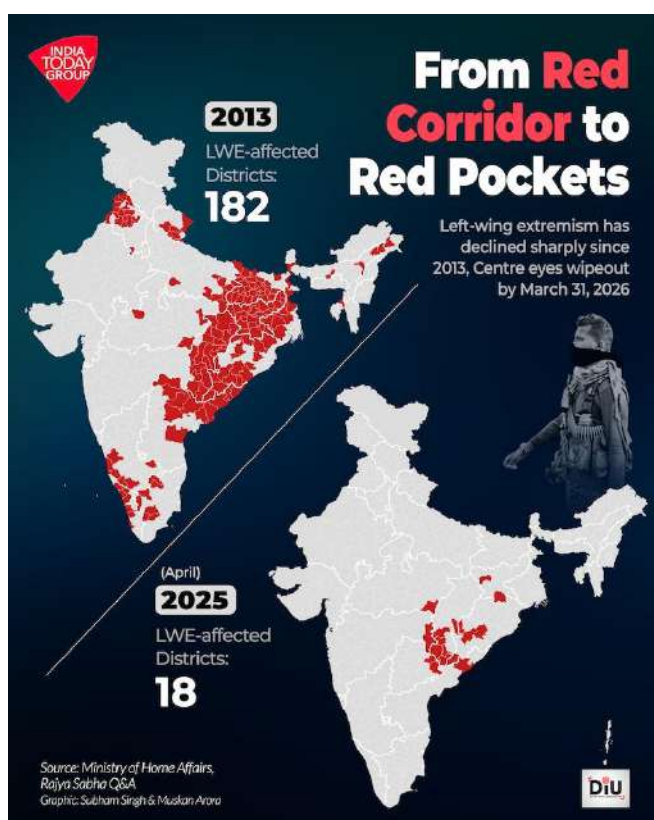
A red sunset? Why Maoist movement is on the decline

In 2025 alone, 270 Naxalites have been killed and 680 arrested, with another 1,225 having surrendered to authorities, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday

IE Explained; By Sreenivas Janyala;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Security [Link](#)

Why in News?

Govt claims Maoist insurgency nearing its end — 270 killed, 680 arrested, 1,225 surrendered in 2025; internal split widens as top leader calls for end to armed struggle.



Present Crisis in Maoist Movement

- **Heavy losses (2025)** → Top leaders killed (Basvaraj, Gajarla Ravi, Chalpathi, etc.); 270 killed, 680 arrested, 1,225 surrendered.
- **Leadership divide** → Ideologue Mallojula Venugopal Rao urges end to armed struggle → Opposed by cadres like Jagan (Telangana).

- **Declining cadre strength** → Recruitment ↓ esp. among tribals; youth prefer education, welfare benefits, digital life > jungle life.
- **Operational squeeze** → Security forces dominate Bastar–Dandakaranya belt; arms routes cut; ammo seizures ↑.
- **Aging, ailing leadership** → Many old, ill; govt surrender packages → attractive.

Government Strategy

- **Integrated approach** → “Security + Development + Community connect.”
- **Security ops** → Elite units & central forces conduct sustained offensives in core zones.
- **Development thrust** → Roads, schools, welfare schemes, mobile access → weaken ideological hold.
- **Result metrics** → LWE-affected districts ↓ from 180 (2009) → 38 (2024); “districts of concern” = 6.
- **Policy stance** → “Surrender welcomed, violence met with violence” (Amit Shah).

Internal Dilemmas & State Skepticism

- **Letters for peace** → Rao’s 2 letters seek cessation of armed struggle “to save the party.”
- **Trust deficit** → Centre cautious; recalls failed 2004 peace talks (YSR govt–Maoists).
- **Security view** → Ceasefire offers = tactical pause to regroup; possible survival strategy for ideology.

Historical Arc (1967–2025)

- **Origins** → Naxalbari uprising, WB (1967) led by Charu Mazumdar → CPI(ML) (1969).
- **Ideology** → Anti-bourgeois, pro-Maoist “protracted people’s war” model.
- **Spread** → Andhra (Srikakulam 1969) → Central India (Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar).
- **Organisational evolution** → CPI(ML) PWG (1980) → CPI(Maoist) (2004) after mergers.
- **Peak phase** → 2000–2010: PLGA formed (2000); 180 districts affected; 92,000 sq km “Red Corridor.”

- **Decline phase** → Post-2010 crackdown + welfare expansion → insurgency shrinks sharply.

Present Status & Outlook

- **Strongholds left** → Bastar, Dandakaranya, Chhattisgarh–Telangana border pockets.
- **Manpower & arms** ↓ → Seizures ↑; supply lines cut.
- **Ideological erosion** → Tribal empowerment + digital connectivity → ↓ revolutionary appeal.
- **Future trajectory** → Likely localized residual insurgency; ideological survival over armed struggle.
- **Govt goal** → “End Naxalism by March 2026.”

Conclusion: Maoist insurgency that once engulfed 180 districts now faces existential decline — due to coordinated state action, welfare penetration, loss of cadre base, and internal disunity — marking perhaps the final ebb of India’s six-decade-old “Red Revolution.”

Test Your Knowledge 05

Q. With reference to the contemporary decline of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) in India, which of the following factors have most directly contributed to weakening the Maoist recruitment base?

- 1) Expansion of welfare and tribal development programmes in core LWE areas
- 2) Penetration of digital connectivity and mobile networks in remote districts
- 3) Reduction in forest cover leading to displacement of tribal communities
- 4) Better coordination between central and state intelligence agencies

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

Hint: 1 & 2 → erode ideological appeal; 4 → strengthens counterinsurgency. (3) displacement often fuels, not reduces, recruitment.

NEWS IN SHORT: INTERNAL SECURITY

Indian Coast Guard NATPOLREX-X Exercise

Why in News?

Indian Coast Guard conducted the 10th National Level Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREX-X) on October 5-6, 2025, off Chennai coast, featuring India's first-ever shoreline cleanup drill at Marina Beach.



Exercise Overview:

- Biennial flagship exercise to test India's marine oil spill response capabilities
- Conducted alongside 27th National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOSDCP) meeting
- Overseen by DG Paramesh Sivamani, Chairperson NOSDCP and DG Indian Coast Guard

Participation:

- 40 foreign observers from 32 countries
- Over 105 national delegates from ministries, coastal states, ports, and maritime organizations

Key Highlights:

- First-ever shoreline cleanup drill conducted at Marina Beach by Greater Chennai Corporation and Tamil Nadu agencies
- Deployed Pollution Control Vessels, Offshore Patrol Vessels, Fast Patrol Vessels, and aircraft
- Simulated large-scale oil spill scenario with integrated multi-agency response

Indian Army Contingent Departs for Exercise AUSTRALIND 2025

Why in News? → Indian Army sent 120 personnel to Australia to take part in the 4th India-Australia joint military exercise AUSTRALIND (Oct 13–26)



Key Facts about Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2025

Overview & Purpose

- 4th edition of India-Australia joint army exercise
- Aim: enhance military cooperation, improve interoperability, exchange tactics, techniques & procedures (TTPs)
- Focus domains: sub-conventional warfare in urban / semi-urban terrain

Deployment Details

- Contingent size: 120 personnel
- Lead unit: a battalion of Gorkha Rifles, supported by troops from other arms & services
- Venue: Irwin Barracks, Perth, Australia

Strategic & Diplomatic Significance

- Reinforces deeper defence cooperation & trust between India and Australia
- Aligns with broader India-Australia strategic engagement amid Indo-Pacific security dynamics

President of India takes a sortie in a Rafale Aircraft at Ambala

Why in News?

Draupadi Murmu, President of India, took a sortie in a Dassault Rafale fighter jet at Ambala Air Force Station, Haryana on October 29 2025.



Key Details

- **Flight at Ambala AFS, Haryana** — President Murmu flew in a Rafale sortie.
- Becomes **first Indian President to fly in two different IAF fighter aircraft** (previously flew in a Sukhoi-30 MKI in April 2023).
- **Sortie** described as “unforgettable experience” by the President.
- **Significance:** symbolises commitment to India's maritime/air defence capabilities and strengthens the visibility of air force assets.
- Also notable: during this event, the President met **Shivangi Singh**, India's only woman Rafale pilot.

About Rafale Fighter Jets

- **4.5-gen multirole fighter** → made by **Dassault Aviation (France)**
- **Twin-engine, canard-delta wing** → high agility & maneuverability
- **Role versatility** → air superiority, ground attack, reconnaissance, nuclear delivery
- **Avionics** → AESA radar, Spectra EW suite, advanced sensor fusion
- **Weapons** → Meteor (BVRAAM), SCALP, MICA, Hammer, precision bombs
- **India** → **36 jets** (2016 deal, ₹59,000 cr) → operated by No. 17 “Golden Arrows” & No. 101 “Falcons” Squadrons



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Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude

October 2025

Gandhi led by example — his life is full of moments of quiet courage

For him, it was about discipline, self-mastery, and willingness to put his own life, comfort, and family on the line for principles he believed were higher than fear or personal well-being.

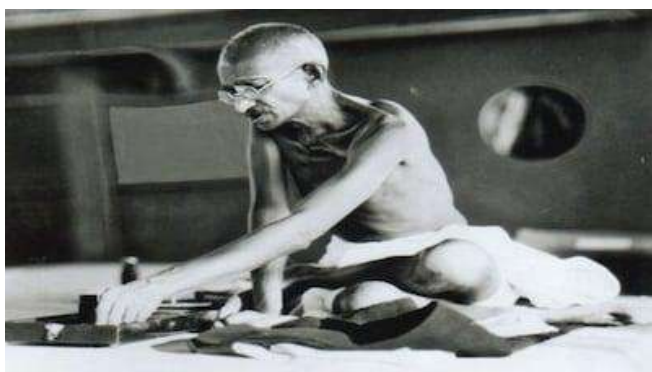
IE Opinion; By Dinesh Singh, Krishangi Sinha;
 Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Ethics, History [Link](#)

Why in News?

Gandhi Jayanti (Oct 2) → highlighting lesser-known moments of Gandhi's *quiet courage & moral strength*

Gandhi's Courage in Action

- **Johannesburg Plague, 1904** → Volunteered to nurse abandoned plague patients → risked own life despite family dependence → English nurse colleague died
- **Kasturba's Illness** → Doctor advised meat broth → Kasturba refused on faith grounds → Gandhi supported her choice over medical advice → nursed with nature cure → she survived
- **Ahmedabad Ashram, 1915** → Admitted "untouchable" family → sponsors withdrew support → ashram near closure → saved by Ambalal Sarabhai's aid



Discipline & Principles

- **Family Discipline** → Son Manilal helped Harilal secretly → Gandhi punished by banishment to Madras for 1 year → stressed rule over personal bond
- **Untouchability Opposition** → Defied orthodox society despite financial crisis → moral stand > survival

Facing Violence & Death

- **Assassination Attempts** → 5+ attempts (bombs, knives) → refused police security → even invited Godse to ashram (Godse declined)
- **Noakhali Riots, 1946** → Walked barefoot through riot-hit villages → no security → spread peace, restored harmony
- **Snake Incident, Wardha** → Snake crawled on lap during prayer → Gandhi stayed calm, forbade killing → embodied fearlessness

Essence of His Courage

→ **Not reckless defiance** ♦ **Instead:** discipline + self-mastery + moral conviction
 → **Prioritised principles > life**, comfort, family
 → **Courage as lived philosophy**, not performance

Test Your Knowledge

Q. If Gandhi's decision to admit an "untouchable" family in Ahmedabad Ashram were viewed through today's governance lens, it best reflects:

- (a) Social justice outweighing immediate institutional survival
- (b) Political populism over principled leadership
- (c) Pragmatism in financial management of NGOs
- (d) Strategic compromise for community support

Hint: Gandhi risked losing funds but upheld equality → values > survival → social justice first.

The Mahatma vs memes: Reading Gandhi in the age of algorithm

To engage with his ideas about self-mastery and truth-seeking is to resist an attention economy built on outrage and binaries

IE Opinion; By Pankaj Phanase;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Ethics, History [Link](#)

Why in News?

Gandhi's philosophy re-read in an era dominated by algorithmic simplifications and meme culture — a timely critique.

The vows of Gandhi

India's independence leader Mahatma Gandhi espoused virtues of non-violence, truth, peace and simplicity



Gandhi vs Algorithmic World

- **Digital reduction:** Big historical figures reduced to memes, infographics, binary labels (hero/villain)
- **Structural threat:** algorithms reward conflict, not depth
- **Contradictory values:** patience, nuance, self-reflection resisted by machines built on speed, outrage & extremes

Understanding Gandhi Beyond Soundbites

- **Immersion > skimming:** Gandhi's texts (e.g. *Hind Swaraj*) demand sustained reflection
- **Swaraj as inner sovereignty:** Gandhi saw self-rule as mastering one's impulses, not just ousting colonial power

- **Online activism's shallow frame:** focuses on external enemies, lacks deliberate self-critique
- **Beyond power:** unlike Marx, Gandhi asked "what next?" — how to sustain justice after regime change
- **Inclusive politics:** promoted consensus, middle path, respect for diversity

Analogue Soul in a Digital World

- **Algorithms & outrage:** emotionally charged posts get more clicks, shares, boosting engagement metrics
- **Gandhi's methods:** fasting, silence, walking — withdrawal of energy to provoke moral pause
- **Ahimsa as force:** nonviolence not passivity but disciplined resistance, preserving humanity in opponent
- **Digital dehumanisation:** trolling, doxxing, public shaming are methods of psychological violence
- **Satya (Truth):** Gandhi's life = "experiment in truth", open to being wrong; today "my truth" dominates, pluralism shrinks
- **Algorithmic echo chambers & filter bubbles** isolate dissenting voices

Gandhi: Too Human for Today

- **Politics = branding now;** Gandhi evolved publicly, admitted errors
- **His autobiography records mistakes, corrections** — brave vulnerability
- **Current logic:** admitting error = weakness; online mob rushes in
- **Algorithms discourage nuance and evolution;** they reward rigid certainty

Contemporary Relevance

- **A paradigm of coexistence:** Gandhi offers politics beyond zero/one binaries
- **Digital invisibility:** his complexity gets flattened or erased by design
- **Quiet resistance:** reading and engaging his ideas with nuance is itself a counter-gesture
- **Between 0 & 1 lies an ocean of complexity** — we must recover that space

Test Your Knowledge 02

Q. According to Gandhi, true Swaraj primarily meant:

- (a) Complete political independence from colonial rule
- (b) Decentralisation of economy and village autonomy
- (c) Inner self-mastery and control over impulses
- (d) Establishment of a socialist state

Hint: Hind Swaraj emphasizes inner discipline > mere political freedom

News / Explained / Explained Global / Nobel Peace Prize 2025 winner: Maria Corina Machado, 'Iron Lady' of Venezuela

Nobel Peace Prize 2025 winner: Maria Corina Machado, 'Iron Lady' of Venezuela

Maria Corina Machado, Nobel Peace Prize 2025: Machado has long been one of the strongest advocates for democracy in the country that has long been under a repressive dictatorship.

IE Opinion; By Arjun Sengupta;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Miscellaneous [Link](#)

Why in News?

♦ Maria Corina Machado (Venezuela) awarded **Nobel Peace Prize 2025** → for decades-long peaceful struggle for democracy & civil liberties under authoritarian rule.

**VE Venezuela's Democratic Decline**

- **1990s** → Longest Latin American democracy → now entrenched dictatorship.
- **1999** → Chávez rewrote Constitution w/o legislative approval → start of erosion.
- **2002** → Failed US-backed coup & oil strike → justified purge by Chávez.
- **2006–2025** → Progressive institutional capture under Chávez → Maduro.
- **2024 elections** → rigged (Maduro “victory”), opposition repressed, Machado disqualified.
- **Result** → Economic collapse, sanctions, ↑ inequality despite world’s largest oil reserves.

♦ Maria Corina Machado: “Ballots over Bullets”

- **Born 1967, Caracas** → elite family; Engg. & Finance degrees.
- **1992** → Founded Atenea Foundation → street children aid.
- **2002** → Founded **Súmate** → civic volunteer org. for free elections.
- **2004** → Led recall referendum vs Chávez → alleged fraud → branded “US agent”.
- **Faced treason charges (Art.132 Penal Code)** → global solidarity & domestic polarization.
- **Emphasized peaceful civic activism** → “Count votes, not bullets.”

📁 From Watchdog → Opposition Leader

- **Early 2000s** → Supported by US-based NED (democracy promotion).
- **Reframed role:** defend citizens’ rights, not ideology.
- **2010–12** → Rose in opposition coalition (MUD); lost primary to Capriles.
- **2013 onward** → Led anti-Maduro protests → faced arrests, intimidation.
- **Stayed in Venezuela** unlike many exiled leaders (e.g. Juan Guaidó).

🔗 “Iron Lady” of Venezuela

- **Symbol of resistance** → slogan “Hasta el final” (Till the end).
- **2024 elections** → barred but led unity campaign backing Edmundo González.
- **Opposition mobilized mass participation**, documented real tallies → regime suppression.
- **Despite loss** → revived civic confidence, opposition cohesion.
- **Nobel citation** → praised “civilian courage” & “innovative, peaceful resistance.”

Nobel Peace Prize 2025 Significance

- Recognizes **non-violent democratic struggle** under authoritarian repression.
- Highlights global solidarity for Venezuela's right to free & fair elections.
- Reinforces faith in **civic-led change** over militarized revolts → "Ballots over bullets."
- Symbolic boost for democratic movements across Latin America & beyond.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. The Nobel Peace Prize differs from other Nobel categories because:

- (a) It is funded by a separate foundation
- (b) It is awarded by the Norwegian Nobel Committee
- (c) It alternates annually between institutions and individuals
- (d) It recognizes only posthumous work

Hint:

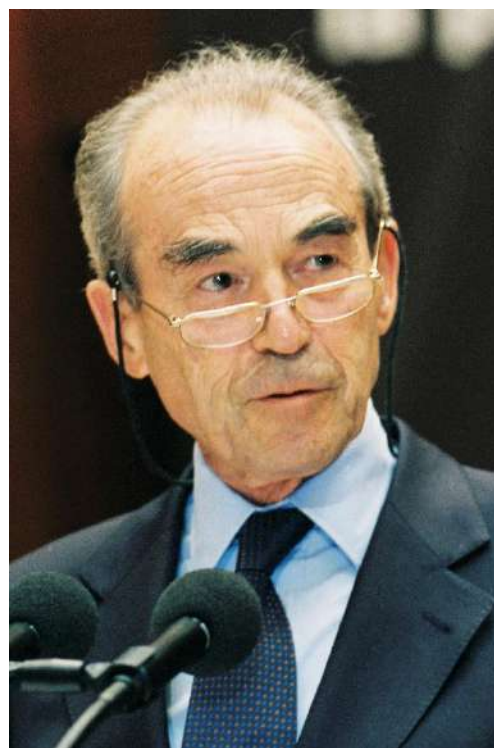
Only Nobel Prize awarded by Norway, not Sweden.

Q. The "Pink Tide" in Latin America refers to:

- (a) Rise of moderate leftist governments via electoral means
- (b) Return of military juntas across South America
- (c) Feminist movements demanding equal political representation
- (d) Economic alliances led by non-aligned states

Hint:

Wave of left-leaning electoral victories in Latin America (2000s)



Robert Badinter: Life & Legacy

- Jurist, philosopher, statesman → Justice Minister under François Mitterrand (1981–86)
- Architect of France's **abolition of death penalty (1981)** → landmark moral shift
- Later → President, Constitutional Council (1986)
- Advocate of **human rights, liberty, equality, fraternity** → core of French republican ethos
- Partner & intellectual ally → Elizabeth Badinter, noted philosopher

Humanism & Opposition to Death Penalty

- Viewed capital punishment → "**ultimate affront to human dignity**" ♦ negates essence of justice
- Believed death penalty ♦ **failed deterrent** (no ↓ in crime rates globally) ♦ **irreversible injustice** (risk of wrongful conviction) ♦ **dehumanising & morally regressive**
- Championed abolition (1981) → landmark law under Mitterrand govt → France joins 35th abolitionist nation
- Compared with **Enlightenment ideals** → **Voltaire, Condorcet, Zola, Hugo** → justice rooted in reason, not revenge
- **Advocated universal abolition** → led France's campaign at UN (1986) → influenced Europe-wide ban (Protocol 6, ECHR)

Robert Badinter's humanism, opposition to death penalty, will inspire generations to come

Honor of a cenotaph for him in the Pantheon in Paris is a befitting homage to an exceptional humanist for his relentless crusade against capital punishment

IE Opinion; By Ashwani Kumar;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Ethics [Link](#)

Why in News?

→ Pantheonisation ceremony (Oct 9, Paris) honours Robert Badinter — France's anti-death penalty crusader & humanist — with a cenotaph in the Pantheon.

- **Vocal against executions in USA, China, Iran** → urged moral leadership of democracies
- Example → **dialogues with Indian jurists** (Ashwani Kumar, others) → challenged retention of death penalty amid terrorism debate

Symbolism of Pantheonisation

- **Pantheon** = shrine of France's moral conscience → resting place of national icons
- **Macron's tribute** → Badinter embodies "fulfilled promise of Revolution 1789"
- **Ceremony** → literary readings, music, bipartisan participation ♦ national unity over ideology
- Message → reaffirmation of **rule of law, human dignity, anti-antisemitism, tolerance**

Contemporary Relevance

- Liberal democracy under strain → ↑ majoritarianism, ↓ human rights sensitivity
 - Badinter's ideals → reminder to uphold **justice over vengeance, moral conviction over populism**
 - His torch → inspires new generations to defend **freedom, equality, compassion**
-



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CURRENT *EDGE*

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Sessions || TESTS || WORKBOOKS || k-Snippet 365+
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- ★ Phase 2: 12 sessions (Subject-wise CA)
- ★ Phase 3: 9 sessions (Snippets + Rapid Revision)



Materials: 22 Weekly Materials + CA Snippet

- ★ Phase 1: 10 Workbooks (≈ 50 pages each)
- ★ Phase 2: 12 Subject-wise Compilations
- ★ Phase 3: 1 Snippet Booklet (≈ 200 pages)



Tests: 10 Tests (8 HLTs & 2 FLTs) | 600 MCQs

- ★ Phase 1: 3 Tests (150 MCQs)
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- ★ Phase 3: 2 Full-Length Tests (200 MCQs)

Delhi Center: 57/13, Bada Bazaar Road, Old Rajinder Nagar

🏠 **Jaipur Center:** Ridhi Sidhi Chauraha, Gopalpura Bypass

🏠 **Sikar Centre:** Nawalgarh Road, Sikar, Rajasthan



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CURRENT EDGE SCHEDULE

Phase-I: Month-by-Month Mastery

Session	Date	Coverage	Material	Test (Q)
SESSION 1	1 Nov (Sat)	Jan + Feb 2025	Workbook 1	–
SESSION 2	8 Nov (Sat)	Mar + Apr 2025	Workbook 2	–
SESSION 3	15 Nov (Sat)	May 2025	Workbook 3	–
SESSION 4	22 Nov (Sat)	June 2025	Workbook 4	23 Nov (Sun) – Test 1 (50 MCQs)
SESSION 5	29 Nov (Sat)	July 2025	Workbook 5	–
SESSION 6	6 Dec (Sat)	Aug 2025	Workbook 6	–
SESSION 7	13 Dec (Sat)	Sep 2025	Workbook 7	14 Dec (Sun) – Test 2 (50 MCQs)
SESSION 8	20 Dec (Sat)	Oct 2025	Workbook 8	–
SESSION 9	27 Dec (Sat)	Nov 2025	Workbook 9	–
SESSION 10	3 Jan (Sat)	Dec 2025	Workbook 10	4 Jan (Sun) – Test 3 (50 MCQs)

Phase-II: Subject-wise CA Modules

Week	Date	Coverage	Material	Test (Q)
01	5–10 Jan	Polity – Part 1	Polity CA Part 1	–
02	12–17 Jan	Polity – Part 2	Polity CA Part 2	18 Jan (Sun) – Test 4 (50 MCQs)
03	19–24 Jan	Geo. & Env. Part 1	Geo-Env CA Part 1	–
04	27–31 Jan	Geo. & Env. Part 2	Geo-Env CA Part 2	1 Feb (Sun) – Test 5 (50 MCQs)
05	2–7 Feb	Eco. & Agr. Part-1	Eco-Agri CA Part 1	–
06	9–14 Feb	Eco. & Agr. Part-2	Eco-Agri CA Part 2	15 Feb (Sun) – Test 6 (50 MCQs)
07	16–21 Feb	Science & Tech	Sci-Tech CA	–
08	23–28 Feb	International Relations	IR CA	1 Mar (Sun) – Test 7 (50 MCQs)
09	2–7 Mar	History & Art–Culture	History CA	–
10	9–14 Mar	Government Schemes	Schemes CA	–
11	16–21 Mar	Society & Social Issues	Society-Social Issues CA	–
12	23–28 Mar	Updation	CA Update	29 Mar (Sun) – Test 8 (50 MCQs)

Note: Session Date will be notify

Phase-III: CA Snippet Sessions

Date	Snippet Focus	Test (Q)
6 Apr (Mon)	Polity	–
8 Apr (Wed)	Geography	–
10 Apr (Fri)	Environment	12 Apr (Sun) – CA FLT 1 (100 MCQs)
13 Apr (Mon)	Economy	–
15 Apr (Wed)	Science & Tech	–
17 Apr (Fri)	International Relations	19 Apr (Sun) – CA FLT 2 (100 MCQs)
20 Apr (Mon)	History & Art–Culture	–
22 Apr (Wed)	Government Schemes	–
24 Apr (Fri)	Society & Social Issues	–

Complete CA Snippet File Launch Release in 1st Week of April 2026

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CURRENT *EDGE*

One-Stop Current Affairs Prelims 2026

Other Details

- Start: **1st Nov, 2025**
- Test Time: **10:00 AM**
- Class Time: **05:00 PM**
- Mode: **Online | Offline**
- Medium: **English**

FEE
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