

# 9 PM Current Affairs Weekly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination



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**Features :**

Arranged as per syllabus Topics  
Most complete coverage of major  
News Papers editorials

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## Warren Buffet's Philosophy on Wealth Redistribution

**Source:** The post Warren Buffet's Philosophy on Wealth Redistribution has been created, based on the article "The place of charity in an unequal society" published in "The Hindu" on 9th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Economy-Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

**Context:** The article discusses Warren Buffet's philanthropy and his belief in equalizing opportunities through wealth redistribution. It questions wealth concentration, highlights policy-driven inequality, critiques reliance on private charity, and advocates state-led solutions like taxation and fair wages to address inequality.

### What is Warren Buffet's Philosophy on Wealth?

- 1. Wealth for Equalizing Opportunities:** Buffet believes wealth should address inequalities and provide equal opportunities for the less fortunate.
- 2. Role of Luck:** He attributes his financial success to luck, like being born a white male in the U.S., which gave him opportunities denied to others.
- 3. Philanthropy in Practice:** He has donated \$52 billion to charitable causes, including \$870 million recently transferred to foundations managed by his children.
- 4. Avoiding Generational Wealth Accumulation:** Buffet criticizes the practice of passing wealth to descendants, calling it harmful to society.
- 5. Philosophical Context:** His ideas align with "luck egalitarianism," which argues inequality caused by bad luck should not persist.
- 6. Moral Responsibility:** He emphasizes using wealth to level the playing field rather than perpetuating privilege, advocating for fairness in opportunities.

### What Are the Criticisms of Private Charity?

- 1. Inequality in Wealth Creation:** Private wealth used for charity often originates from systems that create inequality. For example, deregulation and neoliberal policies since the 1980s have increased wealth concentration among a few individuals.
- 2. Economic Inequality Growth:** Wealth inequality surged during the Reagan-Thatcher era, benefiting the wealthy while wages stagnated for the majority.
- 3. Market Monopolies:** Billionaires like Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos gained wealth through monopolistic practices, not luck. Amazon workers faced stagnant wages and poor conditions while wealth accumulated for its owners.
- 4. Unfair Financial Systems:** Warren Buffet's wealth grew through financialization and policies that reduced union power and suppressed wage growth.
- 5. Policy Failures:** Differences in opportunities stem from failed policies, not just luck. Effective state intervention is necessary to address these disparities sustainably.

### What should be done?

- 1. Address the Root Causes of Inequality:** Focus on policies that prevent wealth concentration rather than relying solely on philanthropy. Wealth inequality is not just luck but a result of poor policy choices, as seen with monopolies like Microsoft and Amazon.

**2. Implement State-Led Redistribution:** Introduce progressive taxation to reduce inequality. Like, Thomas Piketty advocates for redistributive taxation rather than depending on charity.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss how Warren Buffet's philosophy on wealth aligns with criticisms of private charity and the need for state-led solutions to address inequality.

**S. Jaishankar's statement in Parliament on India-China relations**

**Source:** The post S. Jaishankar's statement in Parliament on India-China relations has been created, based on the article "**A good beginning but China negotiations must continue**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 9th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- International relations-India and its neighbourhood- relations.

**Context:** The article discusses S. Jaishankar's statement on India-China relations. It highlights the lack of clarity on disengagement details, the challenges in border management, and the need for transparency. It also calls for greater political unity in addressing India's concerns with China.

For detailed information on **India China Relations** [read this article here](#)

**What was the focus of the Minister's statement in Parliament on India-China relations?**

1. The Minister addressed developments in India-China relations, marking his first detailed statement since the 2020 Eastern Ladakh border tensions.
2. He highlighted China's troop amassment in 2020 and India's counter-deployment, which led to disengagement through negotiations.
3. He avoided using the term "buffer zones" but referred to "temporary and limited measures" in areas like Galwan Valley and Pangong Lake to prevent further friction.
4. Disengagement is declared complete, but issues like "de-escalation" and restoring patrolling rights in Depsang and Demchok remain unresolved.
5. The statement confirmed that borders remain abnormal with large-scale troop deployments for a fifth consecutive winter.

**What Issues Remain Unaddressed?**

- 1. Detailed Terms of Disengagement:** The specific arrangements for troop withdrawal and terms of disengagement at various friction points like Depsang and Demchok are not disclosed.
- 2. Access to Patrolling Points:** It's unclear whether Indian troops can resume patrolling at traditional areas, including five points beyond Y-Junction in Depsang Plains and the Charding Nala junction in Demchok.
- 3. New Patrolling Concepts:** The concept of "coordinated patrolling" is undefined, raising questions about the size and frequency of patrols and the extent of restrictions.
- 4. Status Quo Restoration:** Despite disengagement, the status quo along the border has not been restored to the pre-April 2020 conditions, with China reportedly changing it unilaterally.

**5. Concerns over Yangtze:** Reports suggest Chinese troops are allowed to patrol Yangtze in Arunachal Pradesh, despite earlier objections from India labeling their demands "unreasonable."

**What should be done?**

1. India should avoid permanent buffer zones and insist on restoring the April 2020 status quo.
2. **Ensure Transparency:** Share disengagement details publicly, as vague terms like "coordinated patrolling" raise questions.
3. **Engage Opposition:** Build bipartisan consensus, as seen in agreements on Confidence Building Measures (1996) and Political Parameters (2005).
4. **Highlight Economic Security Risks:** Avoid dependency on Chinese supply chains, given China's history of weaponizing economic ties.
5. **Maintain Consistent Messaging:** Align Army and Ministry statements to counter China's grey-zone tactics effectively.

**Question for practice:**

Evaluate the effectiveness of India's approach to addressing the challenges in its relations with China post-2020 border tensions.

**Improving Skills and Jobs with Gamified Simulation-Based Learning**

**Source:** The post Improving Skills and Jobs with Gamified Simulation-Based Learning has been created, based on the article "**Gamify India's skilling initiatives**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 9th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Economy-growth, development and employment.

**Context:** The article discusses India's unemployment problem and the need for better skilling programs. It highlights the gap between the skills of job seekers and industry needs. The article suggests using gamified and simulation-based training to improve skill development and employability.

For detailed information on **Potential of India's EdTech sector** [read this article here](#)

**What is India's skilling challenge?**

1. India needs 78.5 lakh new non-farm jobs annually until 2030 to meet workforce demands (Economic Survey 2023-24).
2. Only 21% of youth (15-29 years) received vocational/technical training (PLFS 2022-23).
3. Formal vocational training reached just 4.4% of youth in 2022-23.
4. Only 51% of graduates are employable (Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran).
5. Existing skilling programs lack quality, industry relevance, and reach.

**How is Industry 4.0 affecting skilling?**



**1. Introduction of Advanced Technologies:** Industry 4.0 (I4.0) integrates artificial intelligence, robotics, IoT, and big data into smart manufacturing.

**2. Adoption by Manufacturers:** Over two-thirds of Indian manufacturers are expected to adopt digital transformation by 2025.

**3. Government Initiative:** SAMARTH Udyog Bharat 4.0 supports digital transformation in industries.

#### How can gamified and simulation-based learning help?

**1. Improves Engagement:** Gamified learning uses points, badges, and leaderboards, making training interactive and enjoyable.

**2. Better Knowledge Retention:** Simulation-based learning offers hands-on practice in controlled environments, improving long-term learning.

**3. Addresses Skills Gap:** Only 1.5% of engineers and 40% of MSME workers have Industry 4.0 skills. Gamified methods can help bridge this gap.

**4. Global Examples:** Singapore and Germany have successfully integrated gamified and simulation-based training.

#### How can India implement these methods?

1. Platforms like [SWAYAM](#) and **Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH)** can host gamified and simulation modules.

2. **SWAYAM:** Over 40 million participants, 93.45% course completions in engineering and sciences.

3. **SIDH:** 7.63 lakh users enrolled in 752 courses, offering 7.37 lakh minutes of digital content.

4. Custom modules can simulate professional scenarios, track trainee progress, and connect students with industry projects.

For detailed information on **Skill India Digital (SID) Platform** [read this article here](#)

#### Question for practice:

Examine how gamified and simulation-based learning can address India's skilling challenges and enhance employability in the context of Industry 4.0.

### India's claim of decoupling economic growth from GHG emissions

**Source:** The post India's claim of decoupling economic growth from GHG emissions has been created, based on the article "**The issue of India's economic growth versus emissions**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 9th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Environment

**Context:** The article explains India's claim of decoupling economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions. It highlights that India has achieved relative decoupling, where emissions rise slower than GDP, but absolute decoupling, where emissions decline with growth, remains a distant goal.

For detailed information on **India's Strategy for Net Zero** [read this article here](#)

### What is the meaning of Decoupled Economic Growth from GHG Emissions?

1. **Definition:** Decoupling means breaking the link between economic growth and environmental degradation. It shows a nation's ability to grow economically without proportionally increasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

#### 2. Types of Decoupling:

- *Absolute Decoupling:* Economic growth occurs while emissions decrease. Example: GDP rises, but emissions fall.

- *Relative Decoupling:* Both GDP and emissions grow, but GDP grows faster. Example: India's GDP grew six-fold since 1990, while emissions tripled.

3. **Importance:** Decoupling balances growth, reduces emissions, and addresses energy poverty, ensuring sustainable development in developing nations like India.

### Has India Decoupled Economic Growth from GHG Emissions?

1. **Economic Survey's Claim:** Between 2005 and 2019, India's GDP grew at a CAGR of 7%, while GHG emissions rose at a slower CAGR of 4%, indicating relative decoupling but not absolute decoupling.

2. **National Data:** Since 1990, India's GDP has increased six-fold, but emissions have only tripled. This highlights that the economy has grown faster than emissions.

3. **Sector-Wise Analysis:** Agriculture and manufacturing, major emission contributors, need further evaluation to confirm decoupling at the sectoral level.

4. **Type of Decoupling:** India has not achieved **absolute decoupling** (where emissions decline with growth). Instead, emissions continue to rise, though at a slower rate.

5. **Challenges Ahead:** As a developing nation yet to peak its emissions, achieving absolute decoupling remains a long-term goal requiring sustainable policies, renewable energy adoption, and emission mitigation strategies.

#### What More Needs to Be Done?

1. Emissions are expected to rise as India's economy grows and emissions have not yet peaked.

2. Achieving absolute decoupling will require continued efforts in renewable energy, emission mitigation, and sustainable policies.

3. These steps are vital to meet India's long-term climate goals and ensure sustainable development.

#### Question for practice:

Discuss India's progress and challenges in decoupling economic growth from greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

### Improving Education for Children Living in Poverty

**Source:** The post Improving Education for Children Living in Poverty has been created, based on the article "Indian school education is in need of a radical reboot" published in "Live mint" on 9th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education.

**Context:** The article discusses the challenges of improving foundational literacy and numeracy in schools, especially for children living in poverty. It highlights the need for better teacher-student ratios, improved resources, better nutrition, social worker support, and a radical rethinking of curriculum and school structures.

For detailed information on **Challenges and Solutions of the Indian Education System** [read this article here](#)

### **What are the challenges faced by children in poverty?**

1. Children in poverty have less access to resources, care, and supervision.
2. They face poor nutrition, frequent illnesses, and higher absenteeism.
3. Stress and mental health issues caused by poverty impact learning.
4. These challenges are understood sociologically but not addressed adequately in curriculum or teaching methods.

### **How can schools improve educational outcomes for these children?**

**1. Implementing Basic Requirements:** Schools need more teachers, especially in rural and disadvantaged areas, to maintain reasonable pupil-teacher ratios (PTR). The article suggests that instead of a standard 30:1 ratio, a 15:1 ratio might be more effective for schools serving impoverished communities. Corruption in teacher education needs addressing, and a supportive and empowering culture for teachers is crucial.

**2. Enhancing Resources and Support:** Schools should be equipped with adequate classroom spaces, toilets with running water, and sufficient high-quality learning materials. Social workers should be employed to help manage children's individual needs and engage with their families.

**3. Improving Nutrition:** The nutritional content of school meals should be improved. The current budget for midday meals is very low, at ₹5.50 per meal, with some states providing additional funds for milk or eggs. A nutritious breakfast should also be provided to help children learn better.

### **What structural changes are needed in the school system?**

1. There is need to shift from age-based classes to grouping students by learning levels, which would allow for more personalized and effective teaching.
2. Teachers could focus on building students' knowledge based on their current learning levels.
3. Additionally, reducing the curriculum load, as recognized by the National Education Policy and the National Curriculum Framework 2023, to focus on essential learning and reduce unnecessary educational pressure.

### **Question for practice:**

Examine how structural and resource-related challenges in schools contribute to poor educational outcomes for children living in poverty.



## Food and Energy Security

**Source:** The post Food and Energy Security has been created, based on the article “**In energy-dependent world, the issue of food security**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 10th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Economy-growth, development and employment

**Context:** The article examines the critical link between food and energy security in an energy-dependent world. It highlights the intertwined crises of food insecurity and energy poverty, exacerbated by climate change, geopolitical tensions, and socio-economic inequalities, emphasizing the need for integrated solutions to address these global challenges.

### Why are food and energy insecurities considered intertwined global crises?

1. Food and energy insecurities are deeply interconnected as agriculture, a critical system for humanity, relies heavily on energy and is both a consumer and contributor to climate change.
2. Addressing one issue without tackling the other undermines global stability, as both systems face challenges like climate change, population growth, geopolitical tensions, and reliance on outdated infrastructure.

### How is agriculture dependent on carbon-intensive energy, and what are the impacts?

1. Agriculture uses nearly 70% of global freshwater and contributes over 20% of greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Its reliance on fossil fuels for irrigation, mechanization, fertilizer production, and transportation creates environmental degradation and vulnerability to energy price shocks.
3. Rising temperatures and erratic weather patterns further disrupt agricultural productivity, endangering the livelihoods of 2.5 billion people.

### How does energy price volatility affect agriculture?

1. Energy price fluctuations directly increase fertilizer costs, leading to higher food prices. For example, natural gas, vital for ammonia synthesis in fertilizers, significantly impacts agricultural costs.
2. Geopolitical actions like China’s phosphate fertilizer export ban in 2021 disrupted supply chains, delaying critical cropping seasons in countries like India.

### How does energy poverty exacerbate global inequities?

1. Low-income countries, which account for a small share of global energy demand, are disproportionately affected by supply disruptions.
2. In sub-Saharan Africa, low fertilizer usage and unreliable power grids hinder agricultural productivity, increasing food insecurity.
3. For instance, African countries spent \$1.9 billion on fertilizer imports in 2021, more than double the amount in 2016.

### How do extreme weather events impact energy and food systems?

1. Extreme weather events disrupt energy and food systems by damaging energy infrastructure and reducing agricultural productivity, leading to higher food prices, especially in rural areas.
2. Renewable energy, such as solar-powered irrigation and biomass energy, can transform agriculture by enhancing efficiency and sustainability, but its adoption is hindered by high costs and inadequate infrastructure, particularly in low-income nations.

### What are the financial implications of addressing food and energy insecurity?

1. Ensuring basic caloric needs for vulnerable populations requires \$90 billion annually until 2030. Tackling malnutrition needs an additional \$11 billion per year.
2. Transforming global food systems could cost \$300-\$400 billion annually, amounting to 0.5% of global GDP.
3. For low-income nations, these costs often exceed 95% of GDP.

**What are the risks of failing to address these twin crises?**

1. Inaction could lead to trillions in global economic losses from reduced productivity and adverse health outcomes.
2. Climate-induced energy disruptions may destabilize regions, driving social unrest and mass migration.
3. For example, Africa's mineral wealth, essential for renewable technologies, is often exploited without benefiting local economies.

**Why is inclusivity crucial in addressing these crises?**

1. Despite record investments in renewables, ongoing fossil fuel expansion and structural barriers to clean energy access risk excluding vulnerable communities. Solutions must ensure equitable benefits for all.
2. Agriculture must be reimagined as both a provider of sustenance and a cornerstone of sustainable development.
3. Collaborative and inclusive action is essential to prevent hunger and achieve global climate goals.

**Right to disconnect**

**Source:** The post **right to disconnect** has been created, based on the article "**Indians need the right to disconnect**" published in "The Hindu" on 10th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health,

**Context:** The article "Indians Need the Right to Disconnect" brings to light the increasing stress and mental health challenges faced by Indian employees due to prolonged working hours and the inability to disconnect from work after office hours.

**What do studies reveal about workplace stress in India?**

1. A report revealed that Indian women in professional jobs like IT, media, and auditing work more than **55 hours a week**.
2. Workers in marginalized and unorganized sectors face even worse working conditions.
3. A study found that **49% of Indian workers** experience workplace stress that negatively impacts their mental health.

**What is the right to disconnect?**

1. The right to disconnect is the ability of employees to disengage from work-related communication outside official working hours.
2. It aims to ensure mental well-being and a better work-life balance.

**How have other countries addressed the right to disconnect?**

1. **France:** The French Supreme Court ruled that employees are not required to work or respond to communication outside working hours. Not being reachable after hours cannot be classified as misconduct.
2. **Portugal:** It is illegal for employers to contact employees outside working hours except during emergencies.
3. **Spain:** Workers have the right to disconnect to protect their privacy and ensure their leave and holidays are respected.
4. **Australia:** The Fair Work Legislation Amendment established employees' right to disconnect outside working hours.
5. **Ireland:** Employees are entitled to disconnect from work for a healthier work-life balance.

#### Does India have laws for the right to disconnect?

1. India does not have specific laws recognizing the right to disconnect.
2. The Constitution and judicial pronouncements emphasize the need for a healthy and dignified work environment.

#### What constitutional provisions support workplace well-being?

1. **Article 38** mandates the State to promote public welfare.
2. **Article 39(e)** directs the State to protect workers' health and strength.

#### What judicial rulings reinforce workplace dignity?

1. In **Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan (1997)**, the Supreme Court recognized the right to dignity and provided guidelines to ensure workplace safety.
2. In **Ravindra Kumar Dhariwal v. Union of India (2021)**, the Court called for reasonable accommodations for workers with disabilities.
3. In **Praveen Pradhan v. State of Uttaranchal (2012)**, the High Court stated that workplace discipline should not involve humiliation or inhumane treatment.

#### Has there been any legislative action?

1. In 2018, MP Supriya Sule introduced a Private Member Bill in the Lok Sabha to establish the right to disconnect.
2. The bill proposed a **penalty of 1% of the total remuneration of employees** for companies that violated the provisions.

#### Why is the right to disconnect important for India?

1. Recognizing the right to disconnect will enhance productivity and support employee well-being.
2. It will foster healthier work environments and strengthen India's workforce.
3. By adopting such measures, India can better achieve its goal of becoming the **third-largest economy by 2030**.

### Reforms in Merchant Shipping

**Source:** The post Reforms in Merchant Shipping **has been created, based on the** article "On reforms in merchant shipping" **published** in "The Hindu" **on** 10th December 2024.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS-2 Governance

**Context:** The article provides an in-depth analysis of the proposed reforms in India's merchant shipping sector through the introduction of two significant bills—the Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024, and the Coastal Shipping Bill, 2024.

### Why is a new Merchant Shipping Bill needed?

1. These Acts are outdated and fail to address contemporary needs, especially for offshore vessels, which form 50% of Indian-flagged ships.
2. Regulatory gaps, restrictive provisions, and the lack of a framework for private maritime training necessitate modernisation.

### What are the shortcomings of the current laws?

1. Welfare provisions only apply to Indian-flagged ships, while 85% of Indian seafarers work on foreign-flagged vessels.
2. Lack of enabling provisions to implement international conventions.
3. Outdated, license-era provisions hinder modernisation and ease of doing business.

### How does the Bill address vessel registration?

1. Reduces Indian ownership threshold from 100% to 51%, allowing NRIs, OCIs, and foreign entities to register Indian vessels.
2. Allows Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) to own ships.
3. Introduces bareboat charter-cum-demise, enabling entrepreneurs to own vessels after charter periods.
4. Temporary registration for vessels destined for recycling, benefiting ship recycling hubs like Alang.

### How does the Bill expand vessel regulation?

1. Includes non-mechanised vessels and crafts such as submersibles, hydrofoils, amphibious crafts, Mobile Offshore Units (MOUs), and drones under its ambit.
2. Strengthens coastal security by empowering authorities to regulate all vessel types, addressing gaps exposed during the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

### How does the Bill tackle marine pollution?

1. Incorporates international conventions like MARPOL, the Bunker Convention, and the Civil Liability Convention.
2. Aligns with IMO standards, reducing sulphur content in marine fuel and banning single-use plastics.
3. Launches the 'Swachh Sagar' portal for proper ship-waste disposal.

### What are the new provisions for seafarers?

1. Extends welfare measures to Indian seafarers on foreign-flagged ships.
2. Aligns working conditions with the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), ensuring better safety, benefits, and support.

### How does the Bill address the gaps in maritime training regulation??

1. Over 160 private institutes operate without a legal framework, leading to unauthorised operations and fraudulent practices. Previously, training was government-controlled, with no need for regulation.

**2. The Bill** introduces legal provisions to regulate maritime training institutes. It also eliminates unauthorised institutes and ensures high-quality education nationwide.

#### What is the focus of the Coastal Shipping Bill?

1. Separates technical ship regulations from commercial coastal operations.
2. Covers licensing, coastal plans, and integration of inland and coastal shipping.
3. Supports the Sagarmala program by promoting coastal shipping infrastructure and hinterland connectivity.

#### What potential benefits do the new Bills offer?

1. Modernises India's maritime framework in line with global standards.
2. Enhances coastal security, maritime safety, and ease of business.
3. Strengthens infrastructure, promotes environmental sustainability, and boosts seafarer welfare.
4. Unlocks the growth potential of India's maritime sector, fostering bipartisan support.

### Investment in Palliative Care in India

Source: **The post** Investment in Palliative Care in India **has been created, based on the article** "Why India needs to invest in palliative care" **published in "Indian Express" on 10th December 2024**

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS-2 Governance

**Context:** The article underscores the urgent need for India to invest in palliative care as an integral part of its healthcare system. It highlights the multifaceted benefits of palliative care in alleviating health-related suffering, especially for patients with terminal illnesses or chronic conditions.

#### What is Palliative Care and Why is it Important?

1. Palliative care focuses on alleviating physical, psycho-social, spiritual, and financial suffering for patients and their caregivers.
2. It ensures individuals live with dignity and die peacefully, particularly in the face of terminal illnesses like cancer.

#### Why is Dying with Dignity a Global Concern?

1. In countries like the UK, debates around assisted dying have highlighted shortcomings in healthcare systems.
2. Data shows:
  - Two-thirds of requests for assisted dying come from terminal cancer patients.
  - Key reasons include loss of dignity, fear of becoming a burden, inadequate pain management, and financial constraints.

#### How Does Palliative Care Impact Patients and Caregivers?

1. Patients with suicidal thoughts, when provided adequate care, often live meaningful lives and die with dignity.
2. Palliative care addresses multifaceted issues: pain relief, emotional support, and financial planning.



### What is the Current State of Palliative Care in India?

1. Less than 4% of those in need have access to palliative care.
2. Most care is provided by underfunded NGOs facing challenges like procuring licenses for oral morphine, a key pain relief medication.

### What Are the Challenges in Expanding Palliative Care?

1. **Legislative Hurdles:**
  - Advance medical directives and living wills need clear enforcement.
  - Example: The Supreme Court disallowed parents from removing a feeding tube for a 30-year-old in a vegetative state, despite their inability to afford care.
2. **Funding Shortages:**
  - Even in the UK, hospices are shutting down due to reliance on charity.
  - Accessible palliative care requires significant government investment.

### How Does India's Socioeconomic Landscape Complicate Assisted Dying Laws?

1. India's stratified society makes vulnerable populations prone to exploitation under assisted dying laws.
2. Example: Canada's Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) law has led to concerns about its misuse and a decline in accessible healthcare services for vulnerable populations.

### What Steps Should India Take to Address Health-Related Suffering?

1. Integrate palliative care into the public healthcare system to make it universally available.
2. Increase investment in training healthcare workers and funding NGOs providing palliative care.
3. Address societal indifference to suffering by promoting awareness about the benefits of hospice and palliative care.

### What is the Call to Action?

1. With rising non-communicable diseases and an ageing population, India must act urgently to prioritize palliative care.
2. The focus should be on accessible, compassionate, and affordable care to prevent suffering and reduce calls for assisted dying laws, which could have disastrous implications for the country.

### What is at Stake if India Does Not Act?

1. Isolated pleas for assistance in dying may become widespread.
2. Vulnerable populations could be disproportionately affected by poorly implemented laws.
3. Neglecting palliative care will exacerbate suffering, leading to ethical, legal, and social crises.

## Vaikom Struggle

**Source:** The post the **Vaikom Struggle** has been created, based on the article "**Vaikom — two States, two leaders and a tale of reform**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 1- Indian History

**Context:** The article delves into the socio-political and historical significance of the Vaikom Struggle, which marks its centenary in 2024.

### What was the Vaikom Struggle, and why was it significant?

1. The Vaikom Struggle was a socio-political movement in the 1920s against the prohibition of backward caste Hindus from walking on streets near the Vaikom Mahadeva temple in Travancore princely state.
2. It marked a landmark moment for religious reform and social justice in India, setting the stage for future mass movements advocating equality.

### How did the struggle evolve into a mass movement?

1. Initially led by leaders of the Kerala State Congress Committee and social activists, the movement gained momentum when Periyar E.V. Ramasamy joined in 1924.
2. His involvement galvanized people across classes, ultimately leading to the removal of these restrictions in November 1925.

### What were the wider consequences of the Vaikom Struggle?

1. The movement inspired similar efforts nationwide, such as B.R. Ambedkar's temple entry protests at Ambadevi Temple and Kalaram Mandir.
2. In South India, legislative actions like the 1932 Bill for temple entry, Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation (1936), and the Madras Temple Entry Authorization Act (1947) progressively dismantled caste-based restrictions in temples.

### How did these reforms pave the way for modern legislation?

These movements and legislative acts created a precedent for incorporating religious reforms into the Constitution. B.R. Ambedkar's addition of the phrase "subject to public order, morality, and health" in Article 25 enabled the state to intervene in religious practices to ensure equality.

### Can the state regulate religion without compromising secularism?

1. Yes, state regulation of religion is aimed at ensuring equality and access in public spaces like temples.
2. Laws such as the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, 1959, and judicial rulings (e.g., Shirur Mutt case, 1954) have upheld the state's role in managing secular aspects of temples while respecting essential religious practices.

### How is the centenary of the Vaikom Struggle being commemorated?

1. On December 12, 2024, Tamil Nadu and Kerala governments are jointly celebrating the centenary to honor the movement's legacy.
2. This event highlights the collaboration between two states and commemorates the contributions of leaders like Periyar and B.R. Ambedkar in advancing social reform.

### What is the enduring significance of the Vaikom Struggle?

1. The struggle symbolizes the fight for social justice and equality, reaffirming the reformist trajectory in South India.
2. It serves as a reminder of the collective efforts required to challenge caste-based oppression and bring about meaningful change.

## The Assisted Dying Law in Britain

**Source:** The post the **Assisted Dying Law in Britain** has been created, based on the article “**The long and complex road to assisted dying**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper II: Governance - Issues relating to health, human rights, and the ethical governance of public policies.

**Context:** The article discusses the introduction and debates surrounding the **Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill 2024-25**, also known as the Assisted Dying Law, in the United Kingdom. It sheds light on the broader ethical, legal, and philosophical questions tied to the right to die, framed by recent developments in Britain and comparisons to global practices.

### What is the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill 2024-25?

1. The Bill, also known as the Assisted Dying Law, allows terminally ill adults in England and Wales with less than six months to live to seek assistance in ending their lives. The process requires approval from two doctors and a High Court judge.
2. The Bill aims to address such situations by allowing a dignified choice for terminally ill individuals.
3. The Bill has tight controls, including independent medical assessments, reflection periods, and judicial oversight, to ensure the process is not abused.

### Why is assisted dying such a complex issue?

The debate revolves around fundamental ethical, legal, and societal questions. It pits the right to personal autonomy and dignity against concerns about potential abuse and societal values around the sanctity of life.

### What are the primary arguments against assisted dying?

1. **Slippery Slope Argument:** Critics argue that once allowed, the scope of assisted dying could expand, leading to abuse, particularly against vulnerable groups like the elderly and disabled.
2. **Concerns from Canada:** Canada’s law, initially limited to foreseeable death, has expanded to include those with grievous medical conditions, diluting its original boundaries.
3. **Philosophical and Religious Objections:** Critics see the law as a threat to the sanctity of life and claim it is disguised as compassion but undermines the inviolability of life.

### How do proponents respond to the criticism?

1. **Carefully Drafted Legislation:** The Bill only permits assisted dying for competent adults with terminal illnesses, requiring assessments by two doctors, a 14-day reflection period, and High Court approval.
2. **Respect for Autonomy:** Proponents argue the law upholds personal liberty, allowing individuals to make decisions about their own lives and alleviate unbearable suffering.
3. **Ethical Justification:** Supporters contend that preventing terminally ill patients from seeking relief violates their dignity and autonomy.

### What universal lessons can be drawn from Britain’s debate?

1. The discussions underscore the importance of balancing ethical concerns with personal dignity.
2. The debates highlight the need for clear laws to prevent abuse while respecting individual autonomy and freedom.
3. Assisted dying laws must balance personal freedom with societal ethics.

### What is India's position on assisted dying?

1. India recognizes a limited right to die, allowing passive euthanasia and advance medical directives per the Supreme Court's Common Cause vs. Union of India (2018) judgment.
2. This right is grounded in liberty, privacy, and dignity but does not yet extend to active assisted dying.

### Why is the right to assisted dying important?

1. The ability to choose to end unbearable suffering respects human dignity and autonomy, core principles of a meaningful life.
2. While laws must include safeguards, they cannot ignore the fundamental right of individuals to decide on matters of life and death.

## Nehru's Economic Vision and Its Impact on India

**Source:** The post the **Nehru's Economic Vision and Its Impact on India** has been created, based on the article "**How Nehru's vision hobbled India's economy**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3- Indian Economy

**Context:** The article critically analyzes the economic policies of India under Jawaharlal Nehru. It argues that Nehru's vision of economic development, while well-intentioned, ultimately had a stifling effect on India's economic growth and development.

### How did Nehru's early political views influence his economic policies?

Nehru's early views were radical, incorporating aspects of communism such as nationalization and collective farming. However, he moderated his stance during the 1930s and 1940s due to resistance from colleagues like Sardar Patel.

### What were Nehru's primary objectives for India's economy?

Nehru aimed to eradicate poverty and achieve self-sufficiency through an emphasis on heavy industry and modern technology. Despite acknowledging the employment potential of small industries and agriculture, most capital was allocated to heavy industries.

### What were the key instruments of Nehru's economic policies?

These included:

1. Five-Year Plans (especially the Second Plan, which solidified his vision).
2. Expansion of the public sector.
3. Licensing of private industries.
4. Import restrictions and tariffs.
5. Price and distribution controls.
6. Emphasis on technical education over primary education.

### What was the role of the Planning Commission and industrialists?

The Planning Commission's Panel of Economists largely endorsed the Nehru-Mahalanobis approach. Initially, even industrialists supported facets of the plan but grew critical after hasty nationalization and economic crises.

### How did economists like B.R. Shenoy and Milton Friedman critique Nehru's policies?

- **B.R. Shenoy:** Warned that excessive development beyond available resources would lead to inflation and socio-economic instability.
- **Milton Friedman:** Criticized exchange controls, licensing systems, and subsidies as major obstacles to India's economic growth.

### What was the impact of India's import and export policies?

India's import regime was marked by inefficiencies, lack of foreign exchange allocation criteria, and a controlled investment system. Export policies stifled India's global trade presence, leading to a decline in market shares of key products like tea and jute.

### What were the economic outcomes of Nehru's strategies?

1. Per-capita GDP rose by only 2% between 1951-52 and 1963-64.
2. Heavy industries grew significantly, but agriculture and consumer goods industries stagnated.
3. India's share in global exports fell from 2.5% in 1947 to 0.9% in 1966.
4. Food production lagged behind demand, necessitating the Green Revolution.

### How did socialism influence subsequent decades?

Nehru's socialist policies entrenched a bureaucratic hesitation towards market-oriented reforms, delaying India's economic liberalization until 1991.

## Why Chief Justices Need Longer Tenures?

**Source:** The post the **Chief Justices Need Longer Tenures** has been created, based on the article "**Chief Justices need longer tenures**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS 2- Polity and governance

**Context:** The article discusses the persistent issue of short tenures for Chief Justices in Indian High Courts, a problem that undermines the institutional effectiveness and operational efficiency of the judiciary. It highlights recent examples, explores the critical role of a Chief Justice, and provides a historical comparison to emphasize the need for longer tenures.

### Why are short tenures of Chief Justices a concern?

Short tenures limit the ability of Chief Justices to effectively manage their responsibilities. They often retire before fully understanding the institution they lead, which impacts the overall efficiency and innovation within the judiciary.

### Why is a Chief Justice's role critical?

The Chief Justice oversees:

1. Administrative and financial health of the High Court.
2. Recommendations for judgeship appointments.
3. Formation of various committees.
4. Staff welfare and disciplinary actions.
5. Representation of the judiciary at seminars, symposia, and bar associations.
6. Legal education and engagement with advocate associations.
7. Judicial responsibilities as the State's top authority.



### Are the challenges similar across all High Courts?

1. No, the challenges vary significantly across High Courts depending on their location and specific requirements.
2. Understanding these unique needs demands time, which short tenures do not allow.

### What have experts and judges said about this issue?

1. Justice L. Nageswara Rao of the Supreme Court stated that judges elevated to the apex court need a minimum of **7-8 years**, if not 10, to settle into their roles.
2. Chief Justices with brief tenures have echoed similar concerns, lamenting their inability to initiate reforms or improvements due to limited time.

### Was this always the case?

No, during British rule, Chief Justices typically had longer tenures. For instance:

1. Between 1862 and 1947, the Madras High Court had only **11 Chief Justices**, averaging **8 years** per tenure.
2. In contrast, from 1947 to 2012, the Court had **24 Chief Justices** in 65 years, averaging only **2.75 years**. Excluding long-serving Chief Justices P.V. Rajamannar (13 years) and Veeraswami K. (7 years), the average drops to **just over 2 years**.

### Why does this issue need urgent attention?

Short tenures leave little room for innovation, reform, and systemic improvement. The increasing complexity of a Chief Justice's duties makes prolonged tenures essential for meaningful contributions.

### What can be done to address this problem?

1. The solution requires joint deliberation among stakeholders, including the Bar, to design measures ensuring longer and more effective tenures for Chief Justices.
2. This needs to be prioritized before it deeply impacts the judiciary's institutional health.

## Why Government Interventions in Monetary Policy Won't Spur Growth

**Source:** The post the **Why Government Interventions in Monetary Policy Won't Spur Growth** has been created, based on the article "**Pressuring the RBI to lower the interest rate isn't going to solve the problem**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS 3 Syllabus – Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

**Context:** The article addresses the ongoing debate about the role of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in steering economic growth amidst slowing growth rates and rising inflation. It critiques recent public statements made by India's Commerce and Finance Ministers that subtly pressurize the RBI to lower interest rates to spur economic activity.

### What recent developments have prompted a debate on RBI's autonomy?

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1. Recent statements by India's Commerce and Finance Ministers have indirectly suggested that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) should lower interest rates, indicating government concerns over slowing growth.
2. Quarterly growth rates have been declining since April 2024, even though the GDP growth rate in 2023-24 was a historic 8.2%.

### Why is this a significant issue?

The central question revolves around whether the government should interfere with the RBI's functioning and whether the RBI can significantly influence current economic growth.

### Is government interference in RBI's functioning appropriate?

1. No, it is inappropriate for the government to interfere.
2. The RBI operates independently under its board, which is appointed with government involvement.
3. Once appointed, the board should act autonomously, in line with the principle of separation of powers.

### What is the RBI's primary mandate since 2016?

1. The RBI's main mandate is to control inflation, with a target of 4%, as set by the government.
2. Publicly pressuring the RBI to act differently undermines its credibility as an independent institution.

### How has economic growth been recently?

1. Real GDP grew by 6% in the first half of 2024-25, compared to 8.2% in the first half of 2023-24.
2. Manufacturing growth dropped to 4.5% from 9.6% over the same period.

### Is the RBI capable of stimulating growth in this scenario?

1. No, the RBI's tools, such as interest rate adjustments, are unlikely to stimulate growth when the core issue lies in weak demand.
2. Lowering interest rates will not prompt firms to increase production if they do not anticipate higher sales.
3. Firms expand production based on rising demand, not lower borrowing costs.
4. A reduction in interest rates is a supply-side solution, but the current issue is a demand-side problem.

### What has been proposed regarding food inflation?

1. The Commerce Minister and Chief Economic Advisor suggested excluding food inflation from the official inflation index.
2. High food inflation (above 10% in October 2024) reduces consumer spending on non-food items, negatively impacting manufacturing.
3. Ignoring food inflation without addressing its causes is equivalent to abandoning inflation control.

## Urban Local Governance in India

**Source:** This post on **Urban local governance in India** is based on article "**The missing spotlight on urban local government polls**" published in **The Hindu on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024**.

**UPSC Syllabus topic:** GS 2- Polity - Devolution of Powers and Finances up to Local Levels and Challenges Therein.

**Context:** The article highlights the critical yet often overlooked issue of elections for Urban Local Governments (ULGs). It contextualizes the importance of these elections as a pillar of local self-governance under the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) of 1992.

### Why was the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) enacted?

1. The 74th CAA, introduced in 1992, was meant to codify the role of ULGs in local governance. However, even after three decades, its objectives remain unmet.
2. ULGs are decentralised local self-governance institutions responsible for providing civic services and ensuring citizens' quality of life.
3. They serve as the first point of contact for urban residents.

### Has the ONOE discourse addressed ULG elections?

1. No, ONOE discussions have mostly excluded ULG elections.
2. Reports like the 79th Standing Committee report (2015) and NITI Aayog's discussion paper (2017) omitted ULG elections, citing their status as State subjects and logistical challenges due to the large number of such bodies.

### What does the High-Level Committee (HLC) suggest?

In a departure, the HLC recommended synchronising ULG elections within 100 days of Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections. The government accepted this recommendation in 2024, marking an important step.

### How significant are ULGs in India's governance and economy?

ULGs govern 4,800+ cities, serving nearly 40% of the population, a figure projected to exceed 50% by 2050. Cities contribute over 60% to India's GDP, underscoring their importance in driving economic growth and social well-being.

### Why is it vital to ensure regular ULG elections?

Regular elections ensure democratically elected governments that can address local needs effectively, strengthen accountability, and uphold the constitutional principle of decentralisation.

### What Challenges Exist in Conducting Timely ULG Elections?

1. A 2024 CAG report found that over 60% of ULGs experienced delays in elections, sometimes spanning several years. These delays lead to State governments taking direct control, which undermines local democracy.
2. Delayed elections weaken citizen representation, reduce accountability, and leave ULGs under administrative control, bypassing the electorate's mandate.
3. Delays persist even after elections. For example, in Karnataka, councils took an average of 11 months to form after election results, effectively disempowering elected representatives.
4. Delays are often linked to ward delimitation, court cases over reservations, and the involvement of State governments in politically sensitive areas.

### What role do SECs play, and why are they disempowered?

SECs, responsible for conducting ULG elections, often lack authority over key processes like ward delimitation. Only 4 of 15 States assessed by the CAG empowered their SECs in this regard.

### Why is empowering SECs necessary?

Empowering SECs ensures independence in managing elections and avoids delays caused by administrative and political interference.

### What has been proposed to improve ULG elections?

1. The HLC recommended synchronising ULG polls with other elections and empowering SECs to handle delimitation and reservations.
2. The government plans to form an implementation group to act on HLC recommendations and conduct nationwide consultations to refine ULG election processes.
3. With cities becoming critical to India's growth, ensuring robust, timely, and accountable local governance is crucial for sustainable development.

### Beijing's War Against Air Pollution: Lessons for Delhi

**Source:** The article on **Beijing's War Against Air Pollution: Lessons for Delhi** has been based on article "Beijing's war against air pollution" published in **The Hindu** on **13th December 2024**.

**UPSC Syllabus topics:** GS Paper-3- Environment - Environmental Pollution and Degradation

**Context:** The article discusses Beijing's significant reduction in air pollution between 2013 and 2017 and draws parallels with Delhi's current air quality challenges.

### What was the pollution scenario in Beijing, and how does it compare to Delhi today?

1. Beijing, in 2015, had a yearly average Air Quality Index (AQI) of 144, which is similar to Delhi's current AQI of 155 in 2024.
2. Over the years, Beijing successfully reduced its pollution levels by one-third, particularly between 2013 and 2017.
3. Since both cities are capitals of emerging economies, Beijing's achievements provide a valuable framework that Delhi could emulate to address its own pollution crisis.

### What are the primary sources of pollution in Beijing and Delhi?

1. The sources of pollution in Beijing in 2013 were broadly categorized into three main areas:
  - **Energy and coal combustion**, which contributed 22% of PM2.5 emissions.
  - **Transportation**, which accounted for 31% of emissions.
  - **Industrial and construction activities**, which added 33% of emissions.
2. In Delhi, data from the winter months highlights similar trends but with significant regional contributions from neighboring areas in the National Capital Region (NCR).
3. Controlling pollution in Delhi will require not only local actions but also collective efforts across the NCR.

### What strategies did Beijing implement to reduce pollution?

1. **Phased Anti-Pollution Programme:** Beijing's anti-pollution efforts were implemented in three phases: 1998-2008, 2009-2012, and 2013-2017. The approach focused on careful planning and gradually building public participation, with the local government autonomously leading these efforts.
2. **Energy and Coal Combustion Control:** Beijing reduced emissions from coal consumption through several measures:
  - a. Transitioning power plants to ultra-low emission and clean energy alternatives.
  - b. Renovating coal-fired boilers to improve efficiency and lower emissions.
  - c. Eliminating the use of residential bulk coal for heating.
3. **Transportation Reforms:** The city addressed vehicle emissions by:
  - a. Retrofitting cars and public service vehicles with diesel particulate filters (DPFs).
  - b. Offering subsidies to scrap high-pollution vehicles, rather than simply banning them.
  - c. Expanding subway and bus networks to provide more sustainable public transportation.

- d. Optimizing urban layouts to reduce the need for long-distance travel.
4. **Industrial and Construction Pollution Control:** Beijing tightened environmental standards for industries and construction activities by:
  - a. Implementing end-of-pipe (EOP) treatments to minimize emissions.
  - b. Eliminating outdated industrial practices and encouraging green construction models.
  - c. Using video monitoring to enforce compliance and penalize violations.
5. **Regional Cooperation:** Beijing coordinated with five neighboring provinces to create a regional pollution control plan. This collaboration significantly contributed to the reduction in pollution levels.

#### What were Beijing's results from these efforts?

1. Between 2013 and 2017, Beijing achieved remarkable reductions in major pollutants:
  - Sulphur dioxide emissions dropped by 83%.
  - Nitrogen oxide emissions fell by 43%.
  - Volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions were reduced by 42%.
  - PM2.5 concentrations decreased by 59%.
2. These achievements were supported by a six-fold increase in government investment over four years. This financial commitment was crucial to implementing the extensive measures required to combat pollution.

#### What are the barriers preventing Delhi from addressing its pollution crisis?

- The primary barrier to tackling Delhi's pollution crisis is the lack of political will. The Central and State governments often blame each other instead of working together to solve the problem.
- This blame game has continued for over a decade, while no substantial progress has been made.
- Private measures such as air purifiers, though effective for individuals, exclude disadvantaged communities and fail to address the broader public issue of pollution.

#### What can Delhi learn from Beijing's success?

Delhi can adopt several key strategies from Beijing's experience:

##### 1. Upgrade Transportation:

Delhi should develop an integrated bus and metro network, replace outdated buses via subsidies, and improve last-mile connectivity. Dedicated cycling and walking lanes, congestion charges, higher parking fees, and differentiated fuel costs can discourage private vehicle use.

##### 2. Shift to Clean Energy:

Phasing out coal-fired power plants, promoting rooftop solar with subsidies, and linking them to the grid with bill discounts can accelerate the transition to renewable energy.

##### 3. Regional Collaboration:

Like Beijing, Delhi must coordinate with NCR states to address shared pollution sources effectively.

##### 4. Boost Public Awareness:

Citizens must demand clean air as a right and reject the normalization of poor AQI, fostering accountability and sustainable change.



## Sluggish Salaries and Economic Slowdown in India

**Source:** The article on **Sluggish Salaries and Economic Slowdown in India** is based on article “**What sluggish salaries and slowdown in Indian economy might mean**” published in India Express on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**UPSC Syllabus topic: GS Paper 3- Indian Economy**

**Context:** The article addresses the challenges faced by the Indian economy, emphasizing sluggish salary growth and a broader economic slowdown.

**What does the slowdown in the Indian economy and sluggish salaries indicate?**

1. The Indian economy is facing a significant slowdown, which is reflected in sluggish salary growth and weak employment generation.
2. The government and economists have raised concerns over subdued household consumption driven by low wage growth and inflation.

**What are the government's observations regarding the economic slowdown?**

1. The finance ministry flagged challenges like a slowdown in urban demand in its monthly reviews for August and September.
2. The second quarter GDP data revealed a deeper slowdown than expected.
3. The government has questioned the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) optimistic growth projections and its assessment of inflation and monetary policy.

**What are the findings on wage growth across key sectors?**

1. A study by FICCI and Quesada Corp Ltd highlights low single-digit wage growth in six sectors: IT, Retail, Logistics, FMCG, Banking and Financial Services and Engineering, Manufacturing, and Infrastructure
2. After adjusting for inflation, real wage growth has been negligible or negative.
3. Rural real wages declined by -0.4% in the five years ending 2023-24, and agricultural wages grew marginally by 0.2%.
4. In the first five months of 2024, rural real wage growth was 0.5%, and agricultural wages grew by 0.7%.

**What impact do these trends have on household consumption?**

1. Weak income growth, inflation, and inadequate job creation have suppressed household consumption.
2. Concerns have been raised over the declining share of national income accruing to labor, particularly to less-skilled workers.

**How does the employment generation relate to the economic slowdown?**

1. Despite decades of steady growth, the economy has failed to generate sufficient productive and remunerative jobs for the growing labor force.
2. In 2023-24:
  - a. 46% of workers were employed in agriculture.
  - b. 79% of non-farm workers were in informal sector enterprises.
3. Labor force participation (ages 15 and above) increased from 49.8% in 2017-18 to 60.1% in 2023-24, but job quality remains a concern.

### What role does capital intensity play in employment challenges?

The growing capital intensity of production has limited the creation of labor-intensive jobs, further exacerbating unemployment and underemployment.

### Can interest rate cuts alone address the slowdown?

1. No. While monetary policy adjustments, such as interest rate cuts, can provide short-term relief, they are not sufficient to address structural issues.
2. Tackling the long-standing economic challenges requires comprehensive reforms and sustainable solutions.

### What is the way forward for the Indian economy?

1. The focus should shift to creating productive, high-paying jobs.
2. Policymakers need to address inflation, improve labor income distribution, and boost consumption.
3. Reforms targeting informal employment and labor-intensive sectors are essential for long-term economic stability.

## Decolonizing the Obsession with Foreign Degrees

**Source:** This post **Decolonizing the Obsession with Foreign Degrees** based on article “**US reduces student visas: You don’t need to be obsessed with foreign degrees**” published in Indian express on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**UPSC Syllabus topic:** GS Paper 2 - Issues relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

**Context:** The article shows the dependence of Indian students on Euro-American universities, considering it a reflection of diminished self-confidence in Indian academic institutions. Over 1.33 million Indian students study abroad, compared to only 46,878 foreign students in Indian universities, highlighting this one-sided exchange.

### What does the reliance on foreign institutions show?

1. The obsession with foreign universities damages the self-worth of Indian academic institutions.
2. It reflects a colonized mindset, with many aspiring to foreign degrees instead of strengthening local academic infrastructure.

### What are the issues with Indian universities that contribute to this trend?

1. **Degradation of Institutions:** Institutions like Rabindranath Tagore’s Santiniketan and Jawaharlal Nehru University have faced setbacks due to local politics, poor administration, and lack of funding.
2. **Lack of Academic Freedom:** Insufficient funds, lack of academic freedom, and poor pedagogic environments deter quality education and research.

### How does the hierarchy of civilizations affect Indian academia?

1. Colonial-era hierarchies perpetuated by thinkers like Thomas Babington Macaulay continue to dominate Indian academia.

2. Many subaltern scholars who advocate for marginalized communities settle abroad in elite academic institutions, further deepening the asymmetry.

#### What examples highlight academic inequality between Indian and Western institutions?

1. Leading professors from Western universities like Harvard or Cambridge rarely engage with Indian institutions.
2. Indian academics and students primarily aim to enhance their CVs by studying or publishing abroad, reinforcing inequalities.
3. Preference for PhDs from foreign universities in Indian faculty recruitment demoralizes those working locally.

#### What changes can be made to address this imbalance?

1. **Symmetrical Dialogue:** Encourage mutual exchange of ideas between Indian and Western institutions.
2. **Strengthen Local Academia:** Create high-quality Indian journals, provide better funding for education, and improve academic culture.
3. **Promote Confidence:** Indian students and professors should take pride in pursuing and contributing to local institutions like Delhi School of Economics or Jadavpur University.

#### What is a cosmopolitan academic culture?

1. A genuinely educated individual embraces global perspectives while maintaining local roots.
2. For example, Indian students should study both Ashis Nandy and Zygmunt Bauman, Kalidas and Shakespeare, with equal appreciation.

### How Protectionism Threatens Global Knowledge Exchange and Higher Education

**Source:** The article **How Protectionism Threatens Global Knowledge Exchange and Higher Education** is based on article **“Ideas need to travel: Without international students, American universities lose out”** in The Indian Express on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**UPSC Syllabus topic:** GS Paper 2-International relations- Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.

**Context:** This article addresses the interconnectedness of global education systems, the implications of restrictive visa policies in the United States, and the challenges faced by the Indian higher education sector. It focuses on the evolving dynamics of international education, particularly under the Trump administration's protectionist policies, and how they impact not only Indian students but also the global standing of American universities.

#### What is the immediate concern regarding Indian students and US visas?

1. The US is restricting visa access for Indian students.
2. This has created anxiety, particularly with Trump's protectionist policies targeting immigration, naturalization, and student visas.
3. Trump's administration is seen as protectionist and unwelcoming to foreigners. His focus on restricting immigration and expelling undocumented residents raises concerns about the future of international student intake in the US.

### How does restricting foreign students affect American universities?

1. American universities have been significantly enriched by international students, especially those in STEM fields.
2. Limiting this access could:
  - Reduce the diversity and intellectual rigor of these institutions.
  - Impact the US's status in the knowledge economy, as producing knowledge gives a competitive edge.

### Why do Indian students prefer foreign universities over Indian ones?

1. Indian universities fail to match the quality of education offered abroad.
2. Factors include:
  - A chaotic higher education system, worsened by NEP (National Education Policy).
  - Students' belief in better opportunities and outcomes from foreign degrees, often linked to the NRI lifestyle.
  - The projected expenditure for Indians studying overseas is expected to reach \$70 billion by 2025.

### What are the risks for both the US and India with current trends?

1. **For the US:**
  - Reduced quality in universities over time.
  - Loss of brilliant international faculty and students.
2. **For India:**
  - Retaining top talent but lacking the infrastructure to support their excellence.
  - Decline in the global value of India-educated individuals due to NEP's dilution of educational standards.

### What is the broader impact of protectionist policies on global education?

1. Protectionist policies, like restricting student visas, signify a step back from the equitable international ecosystem envisioned in the 21st century.
2. These policies could create a zero-sum game in knowledge expansion, stifling innovation and progress for all.

### How can both nations adapt to ensure mutual benefit?

1. The US must recognize the long-term benefits of international students in maintaining its universities' global edge.
2. India must invest in higher education reforms to retain and develop talent locally, creating a self-sufficient ecosystem of excellence.

## Concern over a speech by Justice S.K. Yadav of the Allahabad High Court

**Source:** The post concern over a speech by Justice S.K. Yadav of the Allahabad High Court has been created, based on the article “**Wounding the spirit of the Constitution of India**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 14th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

**Context:** The article criticizes Justice S.K. Yadav's speech for promoting bigotry and incitement to violence, violating constitutional values. It demands accountability, calls for collective resistance through civil disobedience, and urges reaffirmation of India's pluralistic, non-denominational constitutional spirit.

For detailed information on **Constitutional morality** [read this article here](#)

### What did Justice S.K. Yadav do?

1. Justice S.K. Yadav of the Allahabad High Court delivered a controversial speech, which violated constitutional values.
2. His remarks were widely perceived as incendiary, bigoted, and promoting mob violence.
3. The speech was reported as “genocidal street-talk” that targeted minorities and encouraged divisive rhetoric.

### What Actions Have Been Taken?

1. **Impeachment Motion:** Opposition Members of Parliament initiated an impeachment motion against Justice S.K. Yadav for his controversial speech.
2. **Supreme Court's Intervention:** The Supreme Court of India sought a report on the incident after citizens and activists raised concerns.
3. **Citizen Activism:** Concerned citizens wrote to the Chief Justice of India, demanding accountability for Justice Yadav's remarks.
4. **Public Outrage:** Protests and petitions highlighted the slow response to the judge's speech.

### Why is this Incident Significant?

1. The incident highlights the erosion of judicial propriety.
2. It also raises concerns about the judiciary being influenced by political ideologies.
3. Public humiliation and divisive rhetoric from judicial figures harm the Constitution's values of justice, liberty, and equality.

### What Should Be Done?

1. Citizens, judiciary, and lawmakers must work together to protect constitutional values.
2. Resistance to hate speech and divisive rhetoric is essential.
3. The focus should be on reaffirming India's pluralistic identity as outlined in the Preamble: "We, the people of India."

### Question for practice:

Examine how the controversial speech by Justice S.K. Yadav and its aftermath reflect the challenges to constitutional values and judicial accountability in India.

## Donald Trump's return as U.S. President and its impact on South Asia

**Source:** The post Donald Trump's return as U.S. President and its impact on South Asia has been created, based on the article “**Trump's return and the South Asia outlook**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 14th December 2024



**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- International Relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**Context:** The article discusses Donald Trump's return as U.S. President and its impact on South Asia. It highlights increased U.S.-India cooperation, reduced focus on democracy, continued opposition to China, and challenges for South Asian countries in balancing major powers.

For detailed information on **Trump's Re-election and India US Relations** [read this article here](#)

### What is the Impact of Trump's Return on U.S.-India Relations?

**1. Strengthened Cooperation Against China:** Trump's foreign policy prioritizes countering China, aligning with India's regional objectives. His focus on pushing back China supports India's leadership in South Asia.

**2. Less focus Over Democracy and Human Rights:** Unlike Biden, Trump is likely to focus less on democracy and human rights. This will help avoid friction over India's pragmatic support for regimes like Bangladesh's Sheikh Hasina government and Myanmar's junta.

**3. Support for Regional Leadership:** Trump's burden-sharing approach emphasizes India's leadership while the U.S. supplements it. This will deepen Indo-Pacific collaboration, including areas like defense and development.

**4. Economic and Strategic Cooperation:** Projects like the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in Nepal and economic assistance in Sri Lanka could continue, boosting India-U.S. ties.

**5. Alignment on Afghanistan and Pakistan:** With reduced U.S. interest in Pakistan post-Afghanistan withdrawal, irritants in bilateral relations may diminish further.

### What Could Be the Challenges for South Asia Under Trump's Administration?

1. Under Trump, South Asia may face challenges due to his confrontational stance towards China. 2. This could pressurize countries in the region to choose sides more definitively.

3. Additionally, Trump's unpredictable policy decisions might limit the regional countries' flexibility in international relations.

### How Might Trump's Foreign Policy Approach Impact Global Issues?

1. Trump's promises to tackle global issues like the conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia could, if successful, alleviate economic pressures in South Asia from food and fuel inflation.

2. However, his focus on American interests and reduced emphasis on nation-building could lead to varied impacts across different countries in the region.

### Conclusion

Trump's return as U.S. President may strengthen U.S.-India ties, focusing on countering China while reducing emphasis on democracy and human rights. His policies could benefit India's regional leadership and South Asian countries like Sri Lanka, but pressure on others like Bangladesh may rise. His focus on peace efforts may help South Asia tackle economic challenges.

### Question for practice:

Evaluate the impact of Donald Trump's potential return as U.S. President on U.S.-India relations and South Asia's geopolitical dynamics.

### India's need to triple climate investments to meet its targets

**Source:** The post India's need to triple climate investments to meet its targets has been created, based on the article "**India needs to triple green investments for meeting climate targets: Report**" published in "**Down to Earth**" on 14th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3-Environment

**Context:** The article discusses India's need to triple climate investments to meet its targets. It highlights green finance progress, gaps in funding, and sector-wise trends. Most mitigation funds are private, while adaptation funds rely on public sources, especially government budgets.

#### What is India's Climate Investment Need?

1. India requires **Rs 16,250,000 crore (\$2.5 trillion)** by 2030 to achieve its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This means **Rs 1,100,000 crore (\$170 billion)** annually is needed.
2. Adaptation alone demands **Rs 8,560,000 crore (\$1 trillion)**, or **Rs 5,733,000 crore (\$67 billion)** annually from 2015 to 2030.

#### What is the Current Green Finance Status?

1. India invested **Rs 425,300 crore** in green finance during 2021-22.
2. Mitigation efforts received **Rs 371,200 crore (\$50 billion)**, a 20% increase from 2019-20.
3. Adaptation sectors received **Rs 1,09,200 crore (\$15 billion)**, a three-fold increase from 2019-20.
4. The **CPI report, titled *The Landscape of Green Finance in India***, analyzed both public and private sources of green finance. **83% of mitigation finance** was domestic, with the private sector contributing **66%**.
5. International mitigation finance rose to **17%**, with **66% from private sources**, up from **40% in 2019-20**.
6. Clean energy attracted **47%** of mitigation funding, energy efficiency **35%**, and clean transportation **18%**.
7. Adaptation funds were **98% public**, primarily from government budgets.

#### How is Adaptation Finance Sourced?

1. **98% of adaptation finance** is from public domestic sources, primarily government budgets.
2. Farm adaptation activities saw negligible private funding, with less than **1% from private equity and venture capital**.
3. International adaptation finance grew by **19%** in 2021-22, with **92% from public sources**.

#### Which Adaptation Sectors Received the Most Funds?

1. **Disaster risk management: 42%** of adaptation funds, with a ten-fold increase since 2019-20.

2. **Flood and cyclone mitigation:** 32% of funds.

3. **Agricultural adaptation activities:** 24%, with crop insurance taking 58%, mostly funded by public sources.

#### Question for practice:

Discuss the trends and sources of funding for climate adaptation and mitigation efforts in India.

### Zika virus transmission in Africa is low due to differences in mosquito species

**Source:** The post Zika virus transmission in Africa is low due to differences in mosquito species has been created, based on the article "**Genomic variation in mosquitoes responsible for low rates of Zika transmission in Africa: Study**" published in "**Down to Earth**" on 14th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3-Science and technology-Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

**Context:** The article explains that Zika virus transmission in Africa is low due to differences in mosquito species. The native mosquito, *Aedes aegypti formosus*, is less effective at spreading the virus. Temperature and mosquito genetics influence Zika spread, though urbanization and climate change may increase future risks.

For detailed information on **Zika virus** [read this article here](#)

#### Why is Zika Virus Transmission Low in Africa?

The Zika virus spreads less in Africa due to differences in mosquito species. The native mosquito, ***Aedes aegypti formosus (Aaf)***, is less effective at transmitting the virus than its globally invasive counterpart, ***Aedes aegypti aegypti (Aaa)***. Aaf feeds on both humans and animals, lowering human infection risks, while Aaa primarily feeds on humans, making it more efficient at spreading the virus.

#### How Do Mosquito Variations Affect Transmission?

*Aedes aegypti* exists in two forms:

1. ***Aedes aegypti aegypti (Aaa)***: Found outside Africa, it breeds in artificial containers, lives in human habitats, and feeds mainly on humans.
2. ***Aedes aegypti formosus (Aaf)***: Native to Africa, it breeds in natural habitats, like tree holes, and feeds on both humans and animals.

The mixed feeding behavior of Aaf acts as a natural barrier, reducing Zika virus transmission in Africa.

#### How Do Genetics and Temperature Influence the Spread?

1. **Genetics:** Zika burden closely matches the proportion of Aaa mosquitoes in African regions. Aaf mosquitoes are genetically less capable of transmitting the virus.
2. **Temperature:** Sub-Saharan Africa has ideal conditions for Zika transmission in some regions. However, areas with extreme temperatures (too hot or cold) limit mosquito survival and virus spread.

#### What Did the Study Find About Urban Risks?

1. Researchers analyzed 59 African cities with populations over 1 million.

2. They found: 23 cities (39%) are already suitable for Zika outbreaks due to their climate and mosquito populations.

3. Rapid urbanization and climate change could increase vulnerability to Zika in African cities.

### Conclusion

The low Zika burden in Africa is due to mosquito genetics and feeding preferences. However, urbanization and climate change could make African cities more prone to outbreaks in the future.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how mosquito species, genetics, and environmental factors influence the transmission of the Zika virus in Africa.

## How caste system affects India's social capital

**Source:** The post how caste system affects India's social capital has been created, based on the article “**Caste salience in Indian society must fall for social capital to rise**” published in “**Live mint**” on 16th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper1- Society

**Context:** The article discusses India's lack of social capital, linking it to the caste system, which creates divisions and distrust. It suggests promoting inter-dining, protecting inter-caste marriages, universal public schooling, and early childhood exposure to diversity as solutions.

For detailed information on **Caste based Inequalities in India** [read this article here](#)

### Why Does India Lack Social Capital?

- 1. Caste System:** India's caste system divides people into thousands of communities (jatis), preventing inter-marriage and inter-dining. As David Reich notes, India is “an extremely large number of small populations.” This creates trust within communities but distrust across them.
- 2. Fragmented Society:** M.N. Srinivas observed that caste divisions strengthened through democratic politics, making social unity difficult. B.R. Ambedkar called castes “anti-national” and a barrier to nation-building.
- 3. Public Interest vs. Private Gains:** Lack of shared community causes neglect of public spaces. Cities face problems like traffic congestion, leading to frustration and distrust.
- 4. Economic Barriers:** Caste limits access to credit, keeping small businesses small.

### What are the solutions?

- 1. Promote Inter-Dining:** Establish common canteens in educational institutions and workplaces to encourage different communities to share meals. Introduce public food courts and communal feasts on national holidays to foster a sense of unity.
- 2. Support Inter-Caste Marriages:** Protect inter-caste couples from societal coercion, emphasizing the state's role in ensuring their safety.

3. **Leverage Technology:** Use digital payment systems and platforms like the Open Credit Enablement Network (OCEN) to provide fair financial opportunities, reducing economic disparities linked to caste.

4. **Universal Public Schooling:** Implement inclusive education from the kindergarten level to promote early exposure to diversity, aiming to instill egalitarian values in children.

5. **Influence Parenting and Early Childhood Experiences:** Encourage diverse, multicultural environments for raising children to develop comfort with various racial and ethnic backgrounds, reducing bias and fostering inclusivity from a young age.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss how India's caste system impacts social capital and suggest solutions to overcome these challenges.

**India's Digital Growth and Women's Safety Challenges**

**Source:** The post India's Digital Growth and Women's Safety Challenges has been created, based on the article "The digital frontier of inequality" published in "The Hindu" on 16th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper1- Society-Social empowerment

**Context:** The article discusses India's progress in digital transformation and its challenges. It highlights tech-facilitated gender-based violence, government initiatives to combat it, and the need for stricter laws, digital literacy, tech industry collaboration, and survivor support systems for safer online spaces.

For detailed information on **The stage has been set for gender equity in Digital India** [read this article here](#)

**What is the context of India's digital revolution?**

1. India is undergoing a digital revolution, recognized globally for its digital public infrastructure.
2. It has 1.18 billion mobile connections, 700 million Internet users, and 600 million smartphones.
3. Women hold 55.6% of Jan Dhan accounts, benefiting from digital services.
4. Rural India boasts 20% more Internet users than in urban areas (2021 Nielsen report)

**What are the risks of digital transformation for women?**

1. Digital transformation exposes women to tech-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV).
2. Urban women in public roles face harassment like cyberstalking and trolling.
3. Many rural women lack digital literacy and awareness of their rights, making them more vulnerable.
4. TFGBV includes cyberstalking, trolling, sharing intimate images without consent, and impersonation.

**What steps has India taken to combat TFGBV?**

1. **Legal frameworks:** The IT Act, 2000, and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2024.
2. **Reporting:** National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal enables anonymous complaints.
3. **Awareness:** Programmes like Digital Shakti educate women on online safety.



4. **Support Systems:** Helplines like TechSakhi provide information and assistance to survivors.
5. **Campaigns:** Launched "Ab Koi Bahana Nahi" to address gender-based violence.
6. **International commitment:** India signed agreements like the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women to promote safe ICT environments.

#### What are the solutions to ensure safer online spaces?

1. **Stricter laws and accountability:** Enforce stronger penalties for online violence and hold social media platforms accountable.
2. **Expand digital literacy:** Educate rural women and integrate safe practices into school curriculums.
3. **Community involvement:** Conduct workshops to involve men and boys as allies.
4. **Tech collaboration:** Work with tech companies to enhance safety features and use AI for detecting abuse.
5. **Support systems:** Strengthen helplines like TechSakhi and offer counselling and legal aid for survivors.

#### Question for practice:

Examine the challenges posed by India's digital transformation for women and the measures taken to address tech-facilitated gender-based violence.

### How Carbon Markets Work and Their Challenges

**Source:** The post How Carbon Markets Work and Their Challenges has been created, based on the article "How would a carbon market function?" published in "The Hindu" on 16th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Environment

**Context:** The article explains carbon markets, where businesses buy and sell the right to emit carbon. It highlights how these markets help reduce pollution by making companies pay for emissions. It also discusses potential problems, like governments increasing credits or firms cheating emissions.

For detailed information on **Carbon Markets: Benefits and Challenges** [read this article here](#)

#### What is a Carbon Market?

Carbon markets allow businesses to buy and sell permissions to emit carbon dioxide. Each permission, called a carbon credit, equals 1,000 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub>. By controlling the number of credits, governments can manage how much carbon is released into the air. This system started in the U.S. in the 1990s to control sulfur dioxide emissions.

For detailed information on **Carbon markets and its significance** [read this article here](#)

#### Why are Carbon Markets Useful?

1. **Regulation of Emissions:** They regulate carbon emissions by issuing carbon credits, with one credit allowing the emission of 1,000 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub>. This mechanism helps governments control overall emissions effectively.

- 2. Economic Incentive:** Companies have to buy carbon credits to emit, which economically incentivizes them to reduce their carbon footprint.
- 3. Market Efficiency:** Trading carbon credits in a market allows companies that need more credits to buy from those who need less, promoting efficient distribution of emissions allowances.
- 4. Encourages Technological Advancements:** As companies seek to minimize carbon costs, there's an incentive for innovation in carbon tracking and reduction technologies.
- 5. Large Company Support:** Major corporations, such as ExxonMobil and General Motors, advocate for carbon markets as they provide flexibility and market-based solutions for managing emissions, unlike direct regulatory interventions.

#### What Challenges Do Carbon Markets Face?

- 1. Oversupply of Carbon Credits:** Governments that are not serious about reducing emissions may issue too many carbon credits. This can lower the price of credits, making it ineffective in reducing emissions.
- 2. Cheating and Illegal Emissions:** Some governments may allow firms to cheat by illegally emitting more carbon than their credits permit, reducing the credibility of the system.
- 3. Voluntary Reporting Preferred by Corporations:** Large firms like ExxonMobil and General Motors prefer voluntary emission reporting, such as the Carbon Disclosure Project. They oppose strict government-imposed limits, arguing it may lead to higher costs and production restrictions.
- 4. Economic Growth Concerns:** Critics worry that strict caps on carbon credits could unnecessarily slow economic growth. Politicians might impose restrictions without bearing personal economic consequences.
- 5. Effectiveness of Carbon Offsets:** Firms often purchase carbon offsets for public relations rather than ensuring genuine emission reductions. This raises doubts about the actual environmental impact of offsets.
- 6. Challenges for Small Businesses:** Small businesses, particularly in developing countries, face difficulties in monitoring and reporting emissions. Limited access to advanced tracking tools, like real-time energy sector data, hampers their participation.

#### Question for practice:

Examine the usefulness and challenges of carbon markets in regulating emissions and promoting environmental sustainability.

### India's mineral diplomacy

**Source:** The post India's mineral diplomacy has been created, based on the article "India's firmer attempts at mineral diplomacy" published in "The Hindu" on 16th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS paper2-international relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

**Context:** The article discusses India's efforts to secure critical minerals for its manufacturing and technology sectors. It highlights India's partnerships with other countries, government initiatives like KABIL, and the need for stronger private sector involvement, diplomatic capacity, and sustainable partnerships to improve mineral security.

For detailed information on **Critical Mineral Mission of India** [read this article here](#)

### Why are critical minerals important for India?

Critical minerals like lithium and cobalt are essential for manufacturing and technology sectors, especially for renewable energy and batteries. India imports most of its critical minerals, making it dependent on countries like China. This dependence raises strategic concerns.

### What is India's strategy for mineral security?

India is adopting **mineral diplomacy** with two key pillars:

- 1. Bilateral engagement with resource-rich countries:** Building partnerships with countries like Australia, Argentina, Kazakhstan, and the U.S. India formed Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) in 2019 to secure mineral supplies.
- 2. Global cooperative engagements:** Collaborating with multilateral groups like the Quad, G-7, and the Mineral Security Partnership (MSP). Aligning with global best practices for critical mineral supply chains.

### What are India's achievements in mineral diplomacy?

- 1. Australia Partnership:** Signed a critical mineral investment partnership in 2022, identifying two lithium and three cobalt projects.
- 2. Latin America Engagement:** In 2024, signed a \$24 million lithium exploration agreement with Argentina for five lithium brine blocks; exploring assets in Bolivia and Chile.
- 3. Kazakhstan Collaboration:** Formed **IREUK Titanium Limited**, a joint venture to produce titanium slag, marking the first collaboration with Central Asia.
- 4. Private Sector Involvement:** Altmin Private Limited partnered with Bolivia's YLB to secure lithium-ion battery materials.
- 5. Global Engagement:** Signed an MoU with the International Energy Agency to align policies with global standards.

### What are the challenges in India's mineral diplomacy?

- 1. Limited private sector involvement:** No clear roadmap for private companies to participate in the critical mineral supply chain.
- 2. Weak diplomatic capacity:** Lack of a dedicated division for mineral diplomacy in the Ministry of External Affairs.
- 3. Lack of sustainable partnerships:** India's partnerships with EU, South Korea, and Quad nations need strengthening to leverage technological and diplomatic support.

### What steps can strengthen India's mineral security?

- 1. Involve private sector:** Develop a critical mineral supply chain strategy that includes private companies.
- 2. Enhance diplomatic capacity:** Create a dedicated mineral diplomacy division within the Ministry of External Affairs.

3. **Forge trusted partnerships:** Collaborate more with technologically advanced countries like South Korea and the EU.

**Question for practice:**

Examine the challenges faced by India in ensuring mineral security and the steps needed to overcome them.

