

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

INDEX

Terrorism and its evolving tactics	2
India increases funding for research and development	3
India's role in the AI Action Summit in Paris	4
Mass layoffs are returning in Big Tech 2025.....	6
Trump's Gaza Plan and West Asia's Challenges	7
India strengthens Global South ties and leadership	9
Uttarakhand UCC restricts live-in relationships legally	10
EFTA India partnership boosts trade and innovation	12
COP29 is called the Climate Finance COP	13
Bail Conditions Forcing Marriage Harm Survivors' Dignity	14
Impact of Trump freezing USAID foreign aid	16
India Announces Major Tax Cuts for Growth	17
India's plan to amend nuclear liability laws	18
Union Budget 2025-26 supports women's economic growth	19
How Does the Budget 2025-26 Support Women's Development?	20
Supreme Court petition seeks lifetime ban for convicts	21
India should not exit the WTO despite farmer demands.....	23
China's dam project raises concerns for India	24
Doctor shortage and students studying abroad	25
Supreme Court approves ad-hoc judges for backlog	26
India faces rising heatwave threats and challenges.....	28
China's restrictions threaten India's manufacturing and growth	29
Rebuilding Teesta-3 Dam poses risks and challenges.....	31
India's Growing Influence in the Indian Ocean	33
Modi's visit to Washington impacted India-US relations.....	34

Terrorism and its evolving tactics

Source: The post terrorism and its evolving tactics has been created, based on the article “**Keeping a watch on the growing arc of violence**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 10th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Security - Terrorism

Context: The article discusses global instability, ongoing wars, and the failure of international bodies to prevent conflicts. It highlights the resurgence of Islamist terrorism, the growing digital radicalization, and recent terror attacks. It warns of a potential new wave of terrorism using advanced technology.

For detailed information on **Counter terrorism policies** [read this article here](#)

What Is the Current Global Situation?

1. **Wars and Conflicts:** Violence continues in Europe and West Asia. The Ukraine war is prolonged, and Gaza faces heavy attacks by Israel.
2. **Failing Global Institutions:** The UN Security Council and the International Court of Justice are ineffective.
3. **Rise of Terrorism:** Islamist terrorism is evolving with digital tools. Al-Qaeda has resumed training in Afghanistan.
4. **Future Threats:** Terror groups use Artificial Intelligence to recruit and spread extremist ideologies.

What Are the Recent Terror Incidents in the U.S.?

1. In January, an explosion occurred in a Tesla cyber truck outside a hotel where Donald Trump was staying.
2. On New Year's Day, a man drove a truck into a crowd in New Orleans, killing 14 people. He had an IS flag on his vehicle.
3. U.S. intelligence has also foiled a terror plot in Virginia.

What is the status of Islamist Terrorism?

1. Status of Islamist Terrorism

- Islamist terrorism remains a significant threat globally.
- It is evolving with modern technology, especially through online radicalization.
- Groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS continue to adapt and decentralize operations.

2. Evolve Over Time

- Started gaining prominence in 1979 with Sunni and Shia militant movements.
- Radicalization led to the creation of global jihad movements like al-Qaeda and ISIS.
- Shifts in tactics are evident as jihadist groups now use digital platforms to spread their ideologies.

3. Comeback

- Al-Qaeda has resumed operations in Taliban-run Afghanistan.
- The Islamic State in Khorasan Province is expanding its reach beyond Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- Recent attacks in various countries signal a resurgence of terrorist activities.
- Small-scale attacks in the West raise concerns about a new wave of terrorism.

Is Peace in West Asia a Reality or an Illusion?

1. **False Peace:** The illusion of peace in West Asia is highlighted by ongoing wars in Gaza and Lebanon. The United States and Israel believe they have diminished Iran's influence, promoting a false sense of stability.
2. **Underlying Instability:** Despite surface calm, underground activities and resistance movements remain active, indicating unresolved conflicts and potential future unrest.
3. **Pyrrhic Victory:** Current victories in the region are described as 'pyrrhic,' meaning they are achieved at too great a cost to be beneficial, suggesting that the supposed peace could be temporary and unstable.
4. **Uncertain Impact:** The long-term impact of these conflicts and interventions by external powers like the United States is still uncertain, hinting at a fragile peace that could easily unravel.

Why Are Experts Worried?

Experts warn that terrorists are using new technologies. Artificial Intelligence and social media are helping spread extremist ideologies. Security agencies believe early action is needed to stop another wave of attacks. Ignoring these warnings could lead to more violence worldwide.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the resurgence of Islamist terrorism and its evolving tactics in the modern world.

India increases funding for research and development

Source: The post India increases funding for research and development has been created, based on the article "A gift horse's teeth: Higher allocations are not enough to boost scientific research" published in "The Hindu" on 10th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Government Budgeting And Science and Technology

Context: The article discusses India's 2025-26 budget, which increases funding for research and development. It highlights a ₹20,000 crore investment in small modular reactors and support for private sector R&D. However, concerns remain about infrastructure, private participation, and effective utilization of funds.

For detailed information on **India's R&D Funding and Private Sector Role** [read this article here](#)

What Is the New Funding Initiative?

1. The 2025-26 budget includes ₹20,000 crore for developing small modular reactors, with a target of five reactors by 2033.
2. A **Research, Development, and Innovation fund** is introduced within the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**.

3. This increases DST's total budgetary allocation to **₹28,000 crore**, which is **over three times** last year's allocation and **seven times** the actual expenditure in **2023-24**.

How Will This Impact the Private Sector?

1. The budget aims to boost **private sector involvement** in **R&D**, a field largely dominated by government spending.
2. Currently, **private sector R&D contribution is only 36%**, while total R&D spending in **India was 0.64% of GDP in 2020**, the **lowest since 1995**.
3. In the last five years, business enterprises accounted for **around 40% of government R&D expenditure**.
4. Public sector R&D units **allocated only 0.30% of their sales turnover** to research, while the private sector **allocated 1.46% in 2020-21** (DST estimates).

What Are the Challenges Mentioned?

1. Despite the increased funding, **India lacks key infrastructure** needed for research growth.
2. The country still does not have essential elements like **chipsets, semiconductor fabs, and a strong innovation ecosystem**.
3. Sectors such as **fuel, metallurgy, pharmaceuticals, textiles, IT, and biotechnology** have technological strengths, but **returns from core R&D and intellectual property generation are still low**.

What Are the Expected Outcomes?

1. The government needs to **clearly define how private entities can access funds** and outline **tangible public benefits**.
2. Increased funding alone **will not ensure success** unless **structural issues are resolved**.
3. To make India a **global research leader**, focus must be on:
 - **Strengthening foundational infrastructure**
 - **Incentivizing private innovation**
 - **Ensuring long-term industry engagement**

Question for practice:

Examine how the 2025-26 budget's increased funding for R&D addresses private sector participation and infrastructure challenges in India.

India's role in the AI Action Summit in Paris

Source: The post India's role in the AI Action Summit in Paris has been created, based on the article "**India's opportunity at the AI Action Summit**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 10th February 2025

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

Context: The article discusses India's role in the AI Action Summit in Paris. It highlights India's opportunity to advocate for AI resource access, promote relevant AI applications, and address AI risks for the Global South. Hosting the next summit could strengthen India's global AI leadership.

For detailed information on **Paris AI Summit 2025** [read this article here](#)

What is the AI Action Summit in Paris?

1. The AI Action Summit will be held in Paris on February 10-11, 2025. India is co-chairing the event with France.
2. This is the third summit after the UK (2023) and South Korea (2024). The Paris summit will discuss AI safety, innovation, governance, and the future of work.

How has India engaged in global AI discussions?

1. India participated in AI summits in the UK and South Korea.
2. The UK summit focused on AI safety and led to the launch of the UK AI Safety Institute (AISi).
3. The South Korea summit expanded discussions on multilateral cooperation. India has also announced its own AI Safety Institute.
4. India has promoted AI for the Global South in multilateral forums. Under India's G20 presidency in 2023, leaders agreed on a "pro-innovation regulatory approach" to balance AI growth with safety.
5. India hosted the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) meeting in 2023, calling for equitable AI access.

For detailed information on **India's role in shaping global AI governance** [read this article here](#)

What should India focus on at the Paris Summit?

1. Expanding AI resource access

India should push for fair access to AI tools, including:

- AI computing power (like India's 18,600-GPU facility with 40% government funding).
- Data storage, cloud computing, and open-source AI models (like DeepSeek).
- Easier global transfer of AI technologies with safety rules.

2. Developing AI for local needs

India should support AI applications for real-world problems in the Global South, such as:

- Early disease detection in local healthcare systems.
- Personalized education platforms for different learning needs.
- AI tools for improving agriculture.
- A repository of AI use cases can help guide future projects.

3. Addressing AI risks for the Global South

1. Advocate for AI risk assessments based on real-world harm, as noted in the **International Scientific Report on AI Safety**.
2. Highlight **cultural risks** from AI models trained on Western data.
3. Propose a **repository of AI-related harms** to shape future safety policies.

How can India benefit from this summit?

By leading these discussions, India can strengthen its position as an AI leader. This could help India host the next AI Action Summit. It would also establish India as a bridge between AI superpowers and developing nations.

Question for practice:

Discuss how India can leverage the AI Action Summit in Paris to strengthen its role in global AI leadership.

Mass layoffs are returning in Big Tech 2025

Source: The post Mass layoffs are returning in Big Tech 2025 has been created, based on the article “**A DIFFERENT WAY FORWARD: In culture that equates productivity with purpose, what happens when jobs vanish?**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 10th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Employment

Context: The article discusses the return of mass layoffs in Big Tech in early 2025. Companies like Meta, Amazon, and Google are cutting jobs. AI is replacing workers. People are struggling financially and emotionally. Many are searching for new ways to find purpose and stability.

Why Are Mass Layoffs Returning in 2025?

Big Tech companies like Meta, Amazon, Microsoft, and Google are cutting jobs again. Layoffs had decreased in 2024 but are increasing in early 2025. Companies are focusing on cost-cutting, reversing earlier hiring trends.

What Is Causing These Layoffs?

Several factors are driving job losses:

1. **Political Changes:** The return of Donald Trump as U.S. President is reshaping Silicon Valley. Companies are adjusting to new policies and increased regulatory scrutiny.
2. **Company Strategies:** Meta laid off 5% of its workforce, citing "low performance." Alphabet introduced voluntary exit programs, similar to Elon Musk's restructuring of Twitter (now X).
3. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI is both a threat and an opportunity. A report suggests that 60% of jobs in advanced economies are vulnerable to automation. China's DeepSeek has shown that innovation can happen with small research teams, reducing the need for large workforces.

How Are Layoffs Affecting Workers?

Job loss is causing financial and emotional distress:

1. Many workers are unable to afford their apartments.
2. Severance packages are running out, creating financial uncertainty.
3. Job searches feel overwhelming, as past career achievements no longer guarantee employment.
4. Work was once a source of identity, but now that sense of stability is disappearing.

What Are People Doing to Survive?

Workers are trying alternative income sources:

1. Some move back in with their parents or sublet their apartments.
2. Some take contract work without benefits or long-term security.
3. Others monetize hobbies, selling art, essays, or handmade items.
4. Many turn to social media, creating vlogs, reviewing products, and selling courses on content creation.

What Is the Bigger Shift in Work Culture?

The traditional career path—starting from entry-level, reaching mid-career success, and retiring—is breaking down. The structure of work is crumbling, forcing people to find meaning outside of jobs. The future of work remains uncertain, but new lifestyles are emerging.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors driving mass layoffs in Big Tech in early 2025.

Trump's Gaza Plan and West Asia's Challenges

Source: The post Trump's Gaza Plan and West Asia's Challenges has been created, based on the article “Gaza and Trump’s ‘expanding the canvas’ strategy” published in “The Hindu” on 11th February 2025

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 Trump’s proposal to relocate Gaza’s population and redevelop the area, his efforts to expand the Abraham Accords, and Saudi Arabia’s stance on Palestinian statehood. It also examines West Asia’s conflicts, economic issues, and Saudi-U.S. relations under Mohammed bin Salman.

For detailed information on **Donald Trump’s return as U.S. President and its impact on South Asia** [read this article here](#)

What are the major problems in West Asia?

A. Political Problems in West Asia

1. **Unresolved Israel-Palestine Conflict:** Gaza war caused destruction. Trump’s relocation plan for 2.3 million Gazans is unrealistic. Israel rejects a Palestinian state, but Saudi Arabia demands it.

2. **Regional Instability:** Violence since October 7, 2023, has weakened Iran's influence. The "Axis of Resistance" is inactive but could return. Syria's civil war has left lasting damage.

3. **Growing Religious Extremism:** Ultra-religious Jewish groups influence Israel. HTS-led groups are strong in Syria.

4. **Trump's Unpredictable Diplomacy:** His aggressive approach could increase tensions. He struggles to adapt to new regional realities.

B. Economic Problems in West Asia

1. **War Damage:** Rebuilding Gaza costs \$50 billion, Lebanon \$8.5 billion, and Syria \$500 billion. Western sanctions slow recovery.

2. **Oil Dependence:** Saudi Arabia's GDP is \$1.07 trillion, but oil demand may decline. Trump's energy policies threaten oil prices.

What is Trump's proposal for Gaza?

1. Donald Trump proposed relocating 2.3 million Gaza residents to Egypt and Jordan.

2. He suggested the U.S. should take over Gaza and develop it into a global tourist destination. This idea was seen as unrealistic and controversial. Some called it a colonial land grab.

3. He also hinted at a plan for the West Bank.

What is Saudi-U.S. relations under Mohammed bin Salman?

1. **Long-standing Alliance:** Saudi-U.S. relations have lasted over 80 years, based on security cooperation and oil trade.

2. **Saudi Arabia's Economic Strength:** The country has a GDP of \$1.07 trillion, a Public Investment Fund worth \$930 billion, and Aramco's market value is \$1.79 trillion.

3. **Trump-MbS Partnership:** Trump's first call after returning to office was to MbS. MbS offered to invest \$600 billion in the U.S., and Trump asked him to increase it to \$1 trillion.

4. **Geopolitical Role:** MbS hosted two major Arab-Islamic summits on Gaza, ended Saudi involvement in Yemen, and normalized ties with Iran and Qatar.

5. **Abraham Accords Stalemate:** Saudi Arabia refuses to recognize Israel without a Palestinian state, complicating Trump's efforts to expand the accords.

What are Trump's challenges?

Trump's aggressive diplomacy is unpredictable. He must convince Israel to be more flexible. He must also work with MbS, who may invest up to \$1 trillion in the U.S. A strong Saudi-U.S. partnership could help stabilize West Asia, but major obstacles remain.

Question for practice:

Examine the major political and economic challenges in West Asia and how they impact Saudi-U.S. relations under Mohammed bin Salman.

India strengthens Global South ties and leadership

Source: The post India strengthens Global South ties and leadership has been created, based on the article “**India as a bridge between the Global North and South**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 11th February 2025

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 explains India's efforts to lead the Global South while strengthening ties with the West. It highlights India's competition with China, its need for inclusive partnerships, human-centric development, and global governance reforms to become an effective global development leader.

For detailed information on **India and Global South** [read this article here](#)

Why is India Increasing Its Focus on the Global South?

India's increasing focus on the Global South is driven by several key factors:

1. **Strategic Positioning:** India aims to establish itself as a leader in global governance reforms, advocating for the interests of developing nations, as emphasized by Prime Minister Modi at the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and the 3rd Voice of Global South Summit in 2024.
2. **Balancing Global Powers:** India is deepening ties with Western nations while countering China's influence in regions like Africa, where both countries are heavily investing.
3. **Building New Alliances:** High-level visits, such as to Poland and hosting US officials, showcase efforts to forge new partnerships.
4. **Alternative Development Model:** The Global Development Compact highlights India's approach, rooted in its own developmental experiences, promoting a partnership model rather than traditional donor-recipient dynamics.

Is India's Approach Different from the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM)?

1. Yes, India's current approach differs from NAM. NAM was driven by **decolonization** and was often critical of the West.
2. Today, India is increasing its influence in the Global South while also strengthening ties with the **U.S. and Europe**.
3. High-level visits, such as **Jake Sullivan's (former U.S. National Security Adviser) visit to India in January 2025** and **Modi's visit to Poland in August 2024**, show this shift.
4. Unlike NAM, India **seeks inclusive partnerships** rather than ideological divisions.

How Can India Be a Strong Development Partner?

A. Equal Partnerships, Not Just India-First Policies

1. India promotes equal partnerships with developing nations instead of following traditional donor-recipient models.
2. However, India's '**Global Development Compact**' focuses on strategies rooted in Indian experiences.

3. To be more effective, India must also **learn from other Global South nations** instead of positioning itself as a sole knowledge provider.

B. A More Human-Centric Development Model

1. India promotes **Mission LiFE ('Lifestyle For Environment')**, which focuses on **low-consumption lifestyles**.
2. While this is important, India should **expand its human-centric approach** to focus on **building human resources and capacity**.
3. Countries in the Global South need strategies to **boost their domestic industries**, which India can support.
4. India has traditionally provided training through the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program**, but it should **help countries develop long-term institutional capacity**.
4. **Exchanges in small business development (MSMEs), digital infrastructure, climate action, and energy solutions** are potential areas of cooperation.

How Can India Lead Global Governance Reforms?

1. India helped include the **African Union in the G20 (2023)** during its **presidency**, demonstrating its commitment to inclusive global governance.
2. India should not only push for reforms in existing institutions but also **build domestic capacity** to support development partnerships.
3. Initially, India can **leverage partnerships with experienced development players like the UN, Germany, and France**.
4. In the long term, India must develop its **own international cooperation systems to scale up its global initiatives**.

What is India's Challenge as a Leader of the Global South?

1. India wants to be the **"Voice of the Global South,"** but it must also **listen** to developing nations.
2. During the **NAM era**, India provided a **third option beyond the Cold War blocs**.
3. Now, India has an opportunity to create a **new development model** for the Global South.

Question for practice:

Evaluate India's strategy for becoming a strong development partner for the Global South.

Uttarakhand UCC restricts live-in relationships legally

Source: The post Uttarakhand UCC restricts live-in relationships legally has been created, based on the article **"The problem of regulating live-in relationships"** published in **"The Hindu"** on 11th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Indian Constitution

Context: The article discusses Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and its impact on live-in relationships. It highlights concerns about compulsory registration, lack of protection for same-sex couples, legal

uncertainties in maintenance, violation of privacy, and increased state and parental control over personal relationships.

For detailed information on **Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Debate- In wake of Uttarakhand UCC** [read this article here](#)

What does the Uttarakhand UCC say about live-in relationships?

1. **Mandatory Registration:** The UCC requires opposite-sex live-in relationships to be registered within **one month**. Failure to register can lead to **criminal charges, fines, or imprisonment**.
2. **Criminalization of Non-Registration:** If a couple does not register their relationship, they can be punished with imprisonment and/or hefty fines.
3. **No Recognition for Same-Sex Couples:** The law **only applies to opposite-sex couples**, leaving **same-sex relationships unprotected**.
4. **Police Involvement:** Registered live-in relationships must be **reported to the local police**, treating them as a law-and-order issue.
5. **Parental Notification:** If either partner is under **21 years**, their **parents/guardians are informed**, which could lead to **honour-based violence**.

What are the problems with defining live-in relationships?

1. The UCC defines a live-in relationship as a union "in the nature of marriage," similar to the Domestic Violence Act, 2005. But many live-in relationships do not resemble marriages.
2. The law requires couples to register within a month, but many such relationships do not have a clear start date. This may force casual or short-term relationships into legal registration.

How does the UCC affect privacy and sexual autonomy?

1. The Supreme Court, in *Shakti Vahini v. Union of India (2018)*, upheld an adult's right to choose their partner.
2. However, the UCC allows authorities to inform parents if one partner is below 21 years.
3. This could lead to parental control over adult relationships. Many parents misuse legal provisions, such as false rape cases, to stop inter-caste and inter-religious relationships.

What is the overall impact of these provisions?

1. The law increases state and parental control over personal choices. It makes live-in relationships harder to maintain.
2. Instead of providing legal protection, it may expose couples to social and legal risks.

Question for practice:

Examine how the Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code (UCC) impacts live-in relationships in terms of legal recognition, privacy, and individual autonomy.

EFTA India partnership boosts trade and innovation

Source: The post EFTA India partnership boosts trade and innovation has been created, based on the article “**India-EFTA trade agreement opens the door to long-term, multifaceted cooperation**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 11th February 2025

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 space success and its growing innovation. It explains the new EFTA–India trade agreement. EFTA countries bring advanced technology and investment. The partnership aims to create jobs, boost trade, and support India's green transition through long-term collaboration.

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

Why is the EFTA–India Partnership Important?

- 1. Strong Investment Commitment:** EFTA plans to invest **USD 100 billion** in India and create **1 million jobs** in the next **15 to 20 years**.
- 2. Boosts India's Innovation:** EFTA countries are leaders in **advanced technology, pharmaceuticals, financial services, and precision engineering**. Their expertise supports India's **innovation-driven economy**.
- 3. Supports Green Transition:** **Norwegian and Icelandic expertise** in **renewable energy** can help India's sustainability goals.
- 4. Proven Collaboration in Space:** **Swiss technology** contributed to India's **Moon mission** success.
- 5. Expands Trade Opportunities:** The **TEPA agreement** ensures **lower tariffs, better customs procedures, and intellectual property protection**.
- 6. Enhances Business Cooperation:** Over **100 EFTA companies** visited India, showing strong business interest.
- 7. Long-Term Partnership:** Unlike traditional trade deals, this partnership is based on **trust, shared values, and sustainable growth**.

What is the Role of the EFTA Desk in India?

The **EFTA desk**, launched on **February 10, 2024**, will help businesses **find partners, understand regulations, and navigate the market**. It ensures **strong cooperation and smooth implementation of TEPA**.

Conclusion

EFTA–India Partnership is just beginning. Both sides need **continuous efforts** to build a **win-win relationship**. **Innovation, investment, and sustainability** will drive mutual prosperity.

Question for practice:

Examine how the EFTA–India Partnership contributes to India's economic growth, innovation, and sustainability.

COP29 is called the Climate Finance COP

Source: The post COP29 is called the Climate Finance COP has been created, based on the article “**A role for India in South-South climate cooperation**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 12th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Environment

Context: The article discusses COP29, called the *Climate Finance COP*, and its role in implementing Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. Article 6.2 allows countries to trade carbon credits to meet climate goals. India can benefit by attracting climate finance, collaborating internationally, and supporting South-South cooperation, especially with African nations.

For detailed information on **COP 29 Outcomes** read this article [here](#)

Why is COP29 Called the Climate Finance COP?

1. COP29, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, focused on financial mechanisms for climate action.
2. A major achievement was operationalizing **Article 6 of the Paris Agreement**, enabling carbon markets.
3. **Article 6.2** allows trading of **Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs)** to fund emissions reductions.
4. India demanded **\$1 trillion annually** in climate finance for developing nations.

What is ITMO Trading?

1. Definition and Purpose

- ITMO (Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcome) trading allows countries to **trade carbon credits** under **Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement**.
- It helps developing countries reduce emissions while attracting **finance, technology, and capacity-building support** from developed nations.

2. India's Role in ITMO Trading

- India is the **third-largest greenhouse gas emitter** in absolute terms but faces financial and technical constraints in meeting its **45% emission intensity reduction target by 2030**.
- Before COP29, India **demanded \$1 trillion annually** from developed nations for climate finance.

ITMO transactions can **fund climate-resilient projects and green technology development**.

3. Key Sectors Benefiting

- India identified **14 priority areas**, including **renewable energy (RE), energy storage, carbon capture, and sustainable aviation fuel**.
- India has partnerships with **South Korea, the European Union, and Japan** to develop these technologies.

What is India's Role in South-South Cooperation?

1. **Supporting African Nations:** India can help African countries tackle climate impacts in **agriculture and water resources**.

2. **Technology and Capacity Building:** India can share expertise in **renewable energy, digital tools, and sustainable agriculture** with African nations.

3. **Policy Commitment:** PM Modi's **10 principles for India-Africa engagement** emphasize economic cooperation and climate resilience.

4. **Climate Finance Mobilization:** Article 6.2 allows India to **generate ITMOs while investing in African sustainable projects** to meet global climate targets.

What Challenges Does India Face?

India faces several challenges in utilizing ITMOs under Article 6.2:

1. **Risk of Developed Nations' Over-Reliance:** Developed countries might buy low-cost emissions reductions from India, avoiding significant emissions cuts domestically.

2. **Opportunity Cost:** Selling ITMOs could hinder India from achieving its own sustainability goals.

3. **Governance and Transparency Issues:** Inadequate regulation can lead to inefficiencies and inequities in ITMO transactions.

4. India needs robust policies to ensure fair ITMO agreements that benefit its climate ambitions while supporting global climate goals.

Question for practice:

Examine why COP29 is referred to as the "Climate Finance COP"?

Bail Conditions Forcing Marriage Harm Survivors' Dignity

Source: The post Bail Conditions Forcing Marriage Harm Survivors' Dignity has been created, based on the article "**A legal 'remedy' that perpetuates survivor trauma**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 12th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Governance – Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections.

Context: The article criticizes courts granting bail to rape accused on the condition of marrying the survivor. It argues that this violates legal guidelines, harms survivors, and shifts the state's responsibility. Such conditions reinforce patriarchal norms and may affect the trial's fairness.

Can Courts Grant Bail on the Condition of Marriage?

1. In *Atul Gautam vs State of Uttar Pradesh (2025)*, bail was granted if the accused married the survivor and deposited ₹5 lakh.

2. In *Abhishek vs State of Uttar Pradesh and Ors. (2024)*, bail was given with a similar condition.

3. The Supreme Court in *Aparna Bhat vs State of Madhya Pradesh (2021)* ruled that bail conditions must prevent contact with the survivor.

4. In *Re: Right to Privacy of Adolescents (2024)*, the Court held that the state must provide support to survivors.
5. Bail conditions must not violate *Article 21*, ensuring dignity and justice.

Does This Violate Legal Guidelines?

1. The Supreme Court in *Aparna Bhat vs State of Madhya Pradesh (2021)* ruled that bail conditions must prevent contact between the accused and the survivor to avoid secondary trauma.
2. Courts must not reinforce gender stereotypes or patriarchal views.
3. In *Kunal Kumar Tiwari vs State of Bihar (2017)*, the Court ruled that bail conditions should not be arbitrary.
4. The Allahabad High Court's decisions contradict these rulings.
5. Bail conditions forcing marriage violate the survivor's autonomy and create dependence on the accused.

How Do These Conditions Affect Survivors?

1. **Violates Legal Guidelines:** The Supreme Court in *Aparna Bhat vs State of Madhya Pradesh (2021)* ruled that bail conditions must prohibit contact between the accused and survivor to prevent trauma. The Allahabad High Court's decisions contradict this.
2. **Forces Unequal Relationships:** Marriage as a condition assumes it can undo the crime. This forces survivors into coercive relationships, violating their autonomy.
3. **Encourages Manipulation:** The accused may misuse marriage to escape conviction, as seen in *Atul Gautam vs State of Uttar Pradesh (2025)*.
4. **Affects Trial Fairness:** Bail conditions should not influence trials. Marriage alters survivor-accused dynamics, impacting testimony and justice.
5. **Shifts State Responsibility:** In *Re: Right to Privacy of Adolescents (2024)*, the Court ruled the state must support survivors, not shift responsibility to courts or accused.

What Needs to Change?

1. Judicial decisions must focus on justice, not social norms.
2. The dignity, rights, and autonomy of survivors must be protected.
3. Courts should ensure fair trials and prevent conditions that may harm survivors.
4. The state must take responsibility for survivor welfare, not shift it to courts.

Question for practice:

Evaluate whether granting bail on the condition of marriage violates legal guidelines and affects the rights and dignity of survivors.

Impact of Trump freezing USAID foreign aid

Source: The post Impact of Trump freezing USAID foreign aid has been created, based on the article “**How will freeze on USAID affect the world?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 12th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations-Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests,

Context: The article talks about U.S. President Donald Trump freezing USAID's foreign aid for 90 days. USAID staff were placed on leave, and funding was halted. This could harm many countries, including India. Elon Musk and Marco Rubio support restructuring USAID, but critics call it politically motivated.

For detailed information on **Trump freezes foreign aid affecting global help** [read this article here](#)

What is USAID?

1. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was created in 1961 to manage U.S. foreign aid.
2. It works in over 100 countries, supporting health, education, food security, and governance.
3. In 2024, it had a budget of \$44.2 billion, contributing 42% of humanitarian aid tracked by the UN.

What action did President Trump take?

1. On January 20, President Donald Trump froze USAID's foreign aid for 90 days. The order aimed to review how funds were used.
2. USAID staff (about 10,000 people) were placed on leave. Only mission-critical personnel remained. A judge temporarily delayed the staff reduction, but the funding freeze continued.
3. Elon Musk, head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), called USAID a “criminal organization.”
4. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, acting as USAID's administrator, said the agency needed restructuring. Trump has long criticized foreign aid, arguing that funds should help the U.S. first.

How will this affect other countries?

1. **Funding Freeze:** USAID supports many nations, including Ukraine, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan. The aid freeze will disrupt ongoing projects.
2. **Health Impact:** Over six million people could die from HIV/AIDS in four years if funding is cut, according to the UN AIDS agency.
3. **Exceptions:** While \$13.3 million in aid to Haiti was frozen, \$40.7 million was allowed for its police force.
4. **Job Cuts:** Only 294 of 10,000 USAID employees may remain.
5. **Criticism:** Former USAID administrator Andrew Natsios called this a disaster for the Global South.

What impact will this have on India?

USAID's funding to India has declined over time. In the last decade, India received about \$1.5 billion. In 2024, USAID funded \$79.3 million for health programs like HIV/AIDS, TB, and child immunization. The impact may be limited, but some healthcare projects could suffer.

Why is this decision controversial?

1. **Limited Overall Effect:** USAID's funding to India has decreased over time. In the last decade, India received about **\$1.5 billion**, which is **only 0.2% to 0.4% of USAID's global funding**.
2. **Health Programs at Risk:** In 2024, **\$79.3 million** was allocated for health programs like **HIV/AIDS, TB, maternal and child health, and immunization**. These projects may face disruptions.
3. **Temporary Suspension of Operations:** USAID has asked all partner organizations in India to **pause their projects**.
4. **Government Role:** It is unclear if **the central or state governments** will fund and continue these programs.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the impact of President Donald Trump's decision to freeze USAID's foreign aid on global health programs and economies, including its effects on India.

India Announces Major Tax Cuts for Growth

Source: The post India Announces Major Tax Cuts for Growth has been created, based on the article **"TRUST IN THE TAXPAYER: Budget reinvigorates debate on whether taxes can encourage spending and growth"** published in **"Indian Express"** on 12th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy-Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Context: The article discusses recent tax cuts in India. Incomes below ₹12 lakh are now tax-free, benefiting 83.52% of taxpayers. It examines whether this will boost spending and growth. The article also covers corporate tax reforms and upcoming changes in the Income Tax Act.

For detailed information on **Tax Cut Boosts Spending and Economic Growth** [read this article here](#)

Who Benefits from the New Tax Cuts?

1. Taxpayers with annual incomes below ₹12 lakh are exempt from paying income tax, affecting 83.52% of tax assesses.
2. Those earning above ₹12 lakh also see significant tax reductions, with an example showing a possible tax reduction of more than a third for incomes at ₹25 lakh.

What Effects Are Anticipated from the New Tax Cuts?

1. **Higher Savings and Spending:** Median taxpayers earn **₹5–5.5 lakh**, and their monthly spending is **₹6,334 (urban) and ₹3,866 (rural)**. More disposable income could boost demand.
2. **Potential Job Creation:** Increased spending on goods and services may create jobs.
3. **Mixed Investment Impact:** Past **corporate tax cuts** did not sustain investment beyond a year.

4. **Fiscal Cost:** The tax cut costs **₹1 lakh crore** but could raise future tax revenue if demand grows.
5. **Alternative Approach:** Revising **indirect taxes** might be more effective in increasing consumption.
6. **Ease of Compliance:** New tax reforms include **simplified audits and rationalized tax rules** for corporations.

What Further Tax Reforms Are Expected?

1. **New Income Tax Act:** The Finance Minister plans to introduce a new **Income Tax Act**, which will be **half its current size** and remove **penal provisions**.
2. **Simplified Transfer Pricing Audits:** A **block audit system** will be introduced, locking transfer pricing assessments for **two years**, reducing compliance burden.
3. **Rationalization of TDS and Capital Gains Tax:** The government will simplify **TDS thresholds** and **capital gains tax calculations** to improve compliance.
4. **Focus on Ease of Business:** Measures aim to **prevent tax disputes** and simplify operations for large corporations.
5. **Impact on Growth:** The changes seek to boost **taxpayer trust, spending, and economic activity**.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the recent tax cuts in India are expected to impact savings, spending, and economic growth.

India's plan to amend nuclear liability laws

Source: The post India's plan to amend nuclear liability laws has been created, based on the article "**Nuclear energy — dangerous concessions on liability**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 13th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Infrastructure: Energy

Context: The article criticizes India's plan to amend nuclear liability laws. It argues that changes will benefit U.S. companies but weaken safety and accountability. It highlights past nuclear disasters, high reactor costs, and U.S. pressure to remove supplier liability.

For detailed information on **India's nuclear liability law and associated issues** [read this article here](#)

What Changes Are Proposed in India's Nuclear Liability Laws?

1. The government plans to amend the **Atomic Energy Act** and **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act** to reduce supplier responsibility.
2. **Current Law:** The **operator (NPCIL)** is liable for damages, capped at **₹1,500 crore**, but can recover costs from the supplier if faulty equipment causes an accident.

For detailed information on **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLNDA)** [read this article here](#)

How have past accidents shown supplier faults?

1. At Fukushima (2011), U.S. company General Electric ignored safety warnings from 1972.

2. After the Three Mile Island accident (1979), Babcock & Wilcox failed to act on safety risks.
3. In Bhopal (1984), the Supreme Court ruled that hazardous enterprises have “absolute liability.”

Why is the U.S. pressuring India?

1. **To protect U.S. nuclear companies:** The U.S. wants India to amend liability laws to indemnify suppliers. Currently, Indian law allows the operator (NPCIL) to recover damages from suppliers for defective equipment.
2. **Fear of legal risks:** U.S. firms worry that India might increase the liability cap, exposing them to financial losses.
3. **Lobbying efforts:** Former U.S. Ambassador Eric Garcetti confirmed lobbying Indian leaders to amend the law.
4. **Failure to sell reactors:** Despite the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement, no U.S. reactors have been sold to India.
5. **Global corporate interests:** U.S. firms fear accepting liability in India might set a precedent in other countries where they demand complete indemnity.
6. **To push costly U.S. reactors:** The AP1000 project in South Carolina failed after spending \$9 billion. Two AP1000 reactors in Georgia cost \$36.8 billion, over 250% of the initial estimate. The U.S. wants India to buy these reactors despite their high costs and delays.

Why is supplier indemnity dangerous?

1. Without liability, suppliers have no economic incentive to ensure reactor safety.
2. Westinghouse claims AP1000 accidents happen only once in 50 million years but still seeks indemnity.
3. If suppliers fear losses, Indian citizens near reactors face greater risks.

What does this mean for India?

1. The government appears to prioritize U.S. corporate interests over citizen safety.
2. The proposed amendments could lead to higher costs and lower accountability.
3. India must decide whether to protect its people or bow to foreign pressure.

Question for practice:

Examine how the proposed amendments to India's nuclear liability laws could impact safety, accountability, and foreign influence.

Union Budget 2025-26 supports women's economic growth

Source: The post Union Budget 2025-26 supports women's economic growth has been created, based on the article “**Budgeting for a gender-inclusive ‘Viksit Bharat’**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 13th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy-government budgeting

Context: The article discusses the Union Budget 2025-26 and its focus on women's development. It highlights increased gender budget allocation, support for women's employment, skilling, and entrepreneurship. It also emphasizes formalizing gig workers, AI education, and financial inclusion for women entrepreneurs and farmers.

For detailed information on **Union Budget 2025-2026 Highlights** [read this article here](#)

How Does the Budget 2025-26 Support Women's Development?

1. The Union Budget 2025-26 focuses on **inclusive growth**, giving special attention to women. The government aims for **70% women's participation in economic activities by 2047**.
2. The budget includes **gender-responsive policies** to increase women's employment, entrepreneurship, and financial inclusion.
3. The gender budget has increased to **₹4.49 lakh crore**, which is **8.8% of the total budget**, up from **6.8% last year**.
4. This is the highest allocation in **two decades**. **49 Union Ministries and departments** have gender-focused policies.
5. 12 new ministries, including Railways, Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Land Resources, Pharmaceuticals, and Food Processing Industries, have integrated gender-responsive policies.

What Are the Key Initiatives for Women?

1. Employment Initiatives for Women:

- **Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR)** increased from **33% in 2021-22 to 42% in 2023-24**.
- **52% of funds from employment schemes** are directed toward women.
- **Major schemes include:** Skill India Programme; Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESDP); National Skill Training Institutes; Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM); MGNREGS and PM Employment Generation Programme; PM Vishwakarma and Krishonnati Yojana

2. Initiatives to Boost Women's Workforce Participation:

- **New schemes to promote women's participation:** Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana ; First-time Entrepreneurs' Scheme; Sustainable Livelihood for Urban Workers Initiative; Centres of Excellence for Make in India

3. Support for Women in the Gig Economy

- **90% of working women are in the informal sector**.
- Government introduced **identity cards and e-Shram portal registration** for gig workers.
- Access to **social security entitlements and financial benefits**.

4. Women in Technology

- ₹600 crore gender budget under India AI Mission for digital education and skilling.
- Centre of Excellence on AI for Education to prepare women for tech jobs.

How Will Women Farmers and Entrepreneurs Benefit?

1. **Simplifying loan requirements**, such as delinking Kisan Credit Cards from land ownership, will help women farmers.

2. **Tracking gender-disaggregated data** will improve policy effectiveness.

20.5% of MSMEs are women-owned, employing **27 million people**.

3. **Providing collateral-free loans and alternative credit scoring models** will help women entrepreneurs.

4. According to **Bain & Company and Google**, **30 million new women-owned businesses** could create **150-170 million jobs** by 2030.

How Will These Measures Help Achieve Viksit Bharat?

1. The government's vision for **zero poverty, 100% skilled labour, and India as the food basket of the world** depends on women's economic empowerment.

2. Gender-responsive budgeting, improved infrastructure, and social support will help achieve **70% women's workforce participation by 2047**.

Question for practice:

Examine how the Union Budget 2025-26 supports women's economic empowerment through employment, entrepreneurship, and financial inclusion.

Supreme Court petition seeks lifetime ban for convicts

Source: The post Supreme Court petition seeks lifetime ban for convicts has been created, based on the article "Should convicted persons contest elections?" published in "The Hindu" on 13th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Salient features of the Representation of People's Act.

Context: The article discusses a Supreme Court petition seeking a lifetime ban on convicted persons from contesting elections. It explains existing disqualification laws, past court rulings, and concerns about criminalization in politics. It also highlights recommendations for stricter rules and electoral reforms.

What are the current legal provisions?

1. **Section 8(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951:** A person convicted of a criminal offense and sentenced to at least **two years of imprisonment** is disqualified from contesting elections for **six years after release**.

2. **Section 8(1) of the RP Act, 1951:** A person convicted under laws like the **Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, UAPA, Prevention of Corruption Act**, or for **heinous crimes like rape** is disqualified **irrespective of the sentence period, plus six years after release**.

3. **Section 11 of the RP Act, 1951:** The Election Commission (EC) has the power to remove or reduce the disqualification period of a convicted person. For **Example (2019)**, the EC **reduced the disqualification period** of **Prem Singh Tamang**, convicted under the **Prevention of Corruption Act**, from **six years to 13 months**, allowing him to contest and win a **by-election in Sikkim**. This decision was questioned because the EC had earlier recommended **strict action against criminalization in politics**.

What were past Supreme Court decisions?

1. **ADR Case (2002):** The Supreme Court ruled that all candidates must **disclose their criminal records** before contesting elections.

2. **CEC vs. Jan Chaukidar Case (2013):** The Supreme Court upheld the **Patna High Court's interpretation** that undertrial prisoners **cannot contest elections** because **Section 62(5) of the RP Act** states that prisoners **cannot vote**. Since one qualification to contest elections is to be an **elector**, undertrials **lost eligibility** to contest. However, Parliament **amended the law in 2013**, overturning this judgment and **allowing undertrial prisoners to contest elections**.

3. **Lily Thomas Case (2013):** The Supreme Court **struck down Section 8(4) of the RP Act, 1951**, which earlier allowed **sitting legislators** to continue in office **if they filed an appeal** after conviction. After this ruling, any sitting legislator **is disqualified immediately upon conviction**.

What is the Central government's stance?

In 2020, the Central government filed an affidavit stating that **MPs and MLAs are not government employees** and do not have **service conditions** like civil servants. Therefore, it argued that the **current disqualification period of six years** after serving the sentence is **adequate**.

Why is criminalization of politics a concern?

1. **ADR Report (2024) Findings:**

- **251 (46%) of 543 elected MPs** have **criminal cases** against them.
- **171 (31%) of MPs** face **serious charges**, including **rape, murder, attempt to murder, and kidnapping**.
- Candidates with **criminal backgrounds** had a **15.4% chance of winning**, while candidates with **clean records** had only a **4.4% chance**.

2. **Recommendations from the Law Commission (1999, 2014) and the Election Commission (EC):**

- They suggested that even persons **against whom charges have been framed** for offenses punishable by **more than five years** should be **barred from contesting elections**.
- However, political parties have **not agreed** due to concerns over possible **misuse of this provision**.

What could be the way forward?

1. **Lifetime ban for serious crimes:** Convictions for **heinous crimes** and offenses under the **Prevention of Corruption Act** could justify a **permanent disqualification** to ensure **probity in public life**.

2. **Review of EC's power to reduce disqualification:** The **constitutional validity** of Section 11 of the RP Act, which allows the **Election Commission to reduce or remove disqualifications**, should be **reviewed by the Supreme Court**.

Question for practice:

Evaluate whether the current legal provisions on disqualification of convicted persons from contesting elections are sufficient to address the issue of criminalization in politics.

India should not exit the WTO despite farmer demands

Source: The post India should not exit the WTO despite farmer demands ban for convicts has been created, based on the article **"DON'T GO IT ALONE: Rather than withdraw from WTO, India should strengthen trade multilateralism"** published in **"Indian Express"** on 13th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations-Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Context: The article discusses why India should not exit the WTO despite farmer demands. WTO rules limit MSP, but India has policy options like the peace clause and income support. Leaving the WTO would harm exports, trade dispute resolution, and global trade relations.

For detailed information on **WTO Reforms and India** [read this article here](#)

What Are the Main Issues with MSP and WTO Rules?

- 1. Indian farmers want India to leave the WTO** because it restricts their MSP (Minimum Support Price) through its rules.
- 2. MSP as a Trade-Distorting Subsidy:** The WTO's Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) classifies MSP as a trade-distorting subsidy. It restricts how much subsidy a country can provide to its farmers.
- 3. Outdated External Reference Price (ERP):** The WTO uses an outdated ERP from 1986-88 to compare MSP. Due to inflation, the gap between MSP and ERP has widened, making India's subsidies appear excessive.
- 4. India's Negotiation Efforts:** India has been pushing for ERP revision at the WTO but has not succeeded.
- 5. Existing Policy Leeway:** The peace clause allows India to provide higher MSP for crops like wheat and rice without immediate legal challenges.
- 6. Alternative Support Mechanisms:** The **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi** provides Rs 6,000 per year to farmers, which does not violate WTO rules.

What Would Happen If India Left the WTO?

- 1. Loss of Export Benefits:** India's exports currently enjoy **Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) treatment** and **National Treatment** under WTO rules. Leaving the WTO would make Indian products less competitive in global markets.
- 2. More Trade Agreements Needed:** India would have to negotiate separate Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with many countries. FTAs usually have stricter conditions, especially when developing countries negotiate with developed ones.
- 3. Weaker Trade Dispute Protection:** The WTO provides a platform for resolving trade disputes. Without WTO membership, India would lose this option.

Why is Staying in the WTO Important for India?

1. The WTO is facing challenges, especially from the US, which is not supporting it fully. A weaker WTO could allow countries like the US to take unilateral actions in trade.
2. India should work to strengthen the WTO rather than leave it. Strengthening **multilateral trade** benefits developing countries like India by keeping global markets open and fair.
3. Farmers should be informed about these realities and involved in policy decisions.

Question for practice:

Examine how WTO rules impact India's MSP policy and the potential consequences of India leaving the WTO.

China's dam project raises concerns for India

Source: The post China's dam project raises concerns for India has been created, based on the article "**China's dam project opens the floodgates of concern**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 14th February 2025

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

Context: China plans to build a large dam on the Yarlung Zangbo river in Tibet. This worries India due to water flow, environmental risks, and bilateral tensions. Legal issues exist, and regional cooperation is weak. Renewing agreements and expert talks may help.

For detailed information on **Tsangpo Dam: Impact on India Explained Pointwise** [read this article here](#)

Why is China building a dam on the Yarlung Zangbo?

1. China is constructing a large hydroelectric dam on the Yarlung Zangbo river in Tibet to meet its renewable energy goals.
2. The dam aligns with China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025), which aims to transition from coal to renewable energy sources.
3. Hydroelectric power is a major component of China's strategy to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels.
4. The project is part of China's broader initiative to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060.
5. China's push towards renewable energy is driven by its commitment to sustainable development and reducing environmental pollution from fossil fuels.

How will the dam impact India?

- 1. Reduced Water Flow:** The Brahmaputra is vital for millions in India's northeast. The dam may disrupt water supply, affecting agriculture and livelihoods.
- 2. Environmental Risks:** The dam is in a seismically active zone. A Tibet earthquake in January 2025 killed 120 people and injured 150.
- 3. Ecosystem Disruption:** It may alter sediment flow, increase riverbank erosion, and harm biodiversity. The dam may also alter sediment flow, increase riverbank erosion, and harm biodiversity.
- 4. Geopolitical Tensions:** The expired MoUs and China's control over upstream water increase India's vulnerability.

What are the legal and diplomatic challenges?

- 1. Lack of Legal Framework:** The 1997 UN Watercourses Convention emphasizes fair water use, cooperation, and harm prevention, but neither India nor China is a signatory.
- 2. China's Water Policies:** China claims to follow fair water-sharing principles, but lower riparian states, including India, accuse it of using water as a tool for pressure.
- 3. Expired Agreements:** MoUs between India and China for sharing water data on the Brahmaputra and Sutlej rivers have expired, increasing uncertainty.
- 4. Expert Level Mechanism (ELM):** It remains the only forum for water discussions between India and China but lacks a binding agreement.
- 5. Political Tensions:** Bangladesh has not strongly opposed the dam due to its growing ties with China. Relations between India and Bangladesh worsened after Sheikh Hasina's government fell in August 2024. Other lower riparian countries like Nepal, Bhutan, and Pakistan may also be affected. However, regional cooperation on water issues is weak.

Question for practice:

Examine the environmental, legal, and geopolitical challenges posed by China's dam on the Yarlung Zangbo.

Doctor shortage and students studying abroad

Source: The post Doctor shortage and students studying abroad has been created, based on the article "The problematic globalisation of medical education" published in "The Hindu" on 14th February 2025

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

Context: The article discusses the global shortage of doctors and limited access to medical education. Many students study abroad due to intense competition at home. Quality concerns exist in foreign medical schools. Governments are expanding medical seats but face resistance from the medical establishment.

Why do students go abroad for medical education?

- 1. Limited Medical Seats:** In India, around 2.3 million students take the medical entrance exam, but only one in 22 secures admission.
- 2. High Private Tuition Fees:** Many students cannot afford costly private medical colleges in India.
- 3. Foreign Universities as an Alternative:** Over 20,000 Indian students study abroad annually in countries like Russia, Ukraine (before the war), Kazakhstan, China, the Philippines, and Nepal.
- 4. Western Students Also Move Abroad:** Many French, German, and Norwegian students study in Poland, Hungary, and Romania due to limited seats in their home countries.

Which countries attract international medical students?

1. Over 2,00,000 students study medicine abroad. Ukraine had 24,000 foreign students before the war.

2. Indian students prefer Russia, Ukraine (before the war), Kazakhstan, China, the Philippines, Nepal, and Mauritius.
3. Western students also study in Hungary, Poland, and Romania.
4. Some foreign medical colleges are controlled by Indian institutions, like Manipal College of Medical Sciences in Nepal.

What challenges do foreign-trained medical students face?

1. **Licensing Exam Requirement:** Indian students who complete medical education abroad must clear a national licensing examination to practice in India.
2. **Mandatory Internship:** They must also complete an internship upon returning to India.
3. **Varying Global Standards:** Different countries have different licensing rules, making it difficult for foreign-trained doctors to practice globally.
4. **Quality Concerns:** Many foreign medical schools operate for profit and lack proper regulation.

What steps are governments taking to solve the issue?

1. **Increasing Medical Seats:** The Indian government has significantly expanded the number of medical seats, adding nearly 1.1 lakh undergraduate and postgraduate seats over the past decade, a 130% increase.
2. **Future Expansion Plans:** In the Union Budget speech of February 2025, it was announced that an additional 10,000 seats will be introduced in medical colleges and hospitals in 2026. This is part of a broader five-year goal to add 75,000 new seats, addressing the growing demand for qualified medical professionals.
3. **Addressing Global Needs:** This expansion aims to reduce the pressure on students to study abroad and improve domestic medical training quality.

Conclusion

Governments struggle to balance demand and quality in medical education. The medical establishment resists increasing seats, fearing a loss of exclusivity. With aging populations, the need for doctors is growing. Ensuring quality education for future doctors is a key challenge.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons for the increasing number of students going abroad for medical education, the challenges they face, and the efforts taken by governments to address this issue.

Supreme Court approves ad-hoc judges for backlog

Source: The post Supreme Court approves ad-hoc judges for backlog has been created, based on the article “Is appointing ad-hoc judges a viable means to reduce backlog?” published in “The Hindu” on 14th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Judiciary

Context: The article discusses the Supreme Court’s approval of appointing retired judges as ad-hoc judges to reduce pending criminal cases. Experts debate the effectiveness, challenges, and reforms needed for the

process. They highlight government cooperation, judicial independence, infrastructure needs, and incentives for retired judges to return.

For detailed information on **Ad Hoc Judges of HC** [read this article here](#)

Why did the Supreme Court approve ad-hoc judges?

1. **Case Backlog:** As of January 25, 2025, there were 62 lakh pending cases in High Courts, indicating a severe backlog that needs immediate attention.
2. **Judicial Vacancies:** As of February 1, 2025, High Courts had 367 vacancies out of a sanctioned strength of 1,122 judges.
3. **Previous Endorsements:** The Supreme Court had previously supported the idea in its 2021 Lok Prahari v. Union of India ruling, recognizing the need for additional judicial resources.
4. **Limited Success of Past Efforts:** Only three instances of such appointments had been recorded before, showing that while the concept was not new, it hadn't been effectively utilized.
5. **Operational Independence:** Ad-hoc judges are meant to alleviate case burdens without interfering with the regular judicial appointment process, making them a practical solution to expedite pending cases, particularly criminal appeals. This helps reduce the financial strain of maintaining overcrowded jails.

What are the challenges in appointing ad-hoc judges?

1. **Limited Historical Use:** Only three instances of ad-hoc judge appointments have been recorded so far, showing the lack of implementation despite constitutional provisions.
2. **Presidential Approval Required:** These appointments need government approval, making executive cooperation crucial, though political sensitivity is usually not a concern.
3. **Cumbersome Procedures:** The process involves High Court Chief Justices recommending candidates, Supreme Court collegium approval, and government clearance, which causes delays.
4. **Lack of Incentives:** Retired judges may prefer arbitration or private practice due to better financial returns and career flexibility.
5. **Judicial Independence Concerns:** Serving judges returning to legal practice face restrictions, limiting their future career opportunities.

Will ad-hoc appointments affect regular judicial appointments?

- Experts believe they will not interfere with the appointment of sitting judges.
- Ad-hoc judges serve for only two to three years and do not compete with existing judges.
- High Courts are already functioning below their sanctioned strength, with 367 vacancies as of February 1, 2025.
- These appointments will help in clearing criminal appeals, reducing overcrowded jails.

Are there infrastructure and resource challenges?

- Courts need more personnel, such as stenographers and secretaries, to support ad-hoc judges.

- The government must allocate funds to provide essential facilities.
- High Courts already have space that can be converted into courtrooms.
- Logistical challenges can be addressed with proper planning.

Will retired judges be interested in ad-hoc appointments?

- Many retired judges prefer arbitration or independent practice due to higher earnings.
- Tribunal positions are also hard to fill for similar reasons.
- After serving as ad-hoc judges, senior lawyers face restrictions in practicing in the same High Court.
- To attract judges, better perks and privileges may be required.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the effectiveness of appointing ad-hoc judges in reducing the backlog of criminal cases in High Courts.

India faces rising heatwave threats and challenges

Source: The post India faces rising heatwave threats and challenges has been created, based on the article “**We need to tackle heatwaves with greater urgency**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 14th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Environment and Disaster and disaster management.

Context: The article talks about the rising heatwave threat in India due to climate change. It explains its impact on health, water, power, and jobs. It highlights NDMA’s efforts in creating Heat Action Plans (HAPs) to improve preparedness, awareness, and long-term heatwave management.

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

Why Are Heatwaves a Growing Concern in India?

1. **Rising Frequency and Severity:** India is experiencing more frequent, prolonged, and intense heatwaves due to climate change.
2. **Global Temperature Increase:** January 2025 was the 18th month in the last 19 when global temperatures crossed the 1.5°C threshold.
3. **Health Risks:** 90% of Indians are vulnerable to heat-related illnesses, overburdening healthcare systems.
4. **Job Losses:** The World Bank estimates 34 million job losses in India by 2030 due to heat stress.
5. **Water Scarcity:** 54% of India’s land faces high-to-extreme water stress. India has only 4% of the world’s freshwater but 18% of its population.
6. **Agricultural Impact:** High temperatures lead to crop failures, lower yields, and increased irrigation demands, affecting food security.

7. **Power Shortages:** 70% of India's electricity comes from thermal power plants that need water for cooling. Heat reduces their efficiency and causes power shortages.

8. **Industrial Impact:** Increased electricity demand for cooling affects power availability for industries, reducing manufacturing productivity.

What Is NDMA Doing to Tackle Heatwaves?

1. **Classified Heatwaves as a Major Hazard:** The NDMA recognizes heatwaves as a serious disaster and works to improve public awareness.

2. **Developed Heat Action Plans (HAPs):** Over 250 HAPs have been created to manage heatwave risks at state, district, and city levels.

3. **National Workshops on Heatwaves:** It organizes workshops to improve preparedness and response strategies.

4. **National Framework for Heatwave Mitigation and Management (2024):** This framework shifts focus from short-term response to long-term preparedness and mitigation.

5. **Encouraging States to Notify Heat as a Disaster:** Helps in better resource allocation.

6. **Early Warning Systems:** Strengthened NDMA-IMD coordination for accurate and localized heat alerts.

7. **Cooling Solutions:** Promoting cool roofs, green infrastructure, cool rooms and water kiosks and revised working hours and cooling vests to reduce heat exposure.

8. **Public Awareness Programs:** Educating people on health risks, prevention, and response strategies.

What Are the Challenges Ahead?

1. Despite the increase in Heat Action Plans, implementation remains a challenge.

2. Scaling up successful strategies and ensuring local ownership are priorities.

3. Transforming cities into heat-resilient ecosystems is necessary to withstand rising temperatures in the future.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the effectiveness of NDMA's Heat Action Plans (HAPs) in mitigating the rising heatwave threat in India.

China's restrictions threaten India's manufacturing and growth

Source: The post China's restrictions threaten India's manufacturing and growth has been created, based on the article "Dealing with China's weaponisation of e-supply chains" published in "The Hindu" on 15th February 2025

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

Context: China is restricting its engineers and critical equipment exports to India, affecting Apple-Foxconn's production. This move is to slow India's manufacturing growth. India must develop local industries, invest in skilled labor, and attract private capital for long-term manufacturing independence.

For detailed information on **Issue with China's Export Restrictions** [read this article here](#)

Why is China Restricting Engineers and Equipment to India?

1. China has stopped its engineers and technicians from working in Foxconn's India facilities. It is also restricting exports of critical manufacturing equipment.
2. This move affects Apple-Foxconn's production in India. China is using its dominance in advanced machinery and skilled workforce to slow India's progress.
3. China is reacting to India's growing role in global supply chains.
4. Many companies are adopting a **China Plus One** strategy to reduce dependence on China. India, Vietnam, and Mexico are gaining from this shift. China wants to protect its role in global production and maintain its geopolitical advantage.

How Does This Impact India's Manufacturing Growth?

1. **Disrupts Apple-Foxconn's Production:** China's restrictions on engineers and critical equipment are slowing down manufacturing in India.
2. **Affects India's Global Manufacturing Ambitions:** Apple-Foxconn is key to India's goal of becoming a manufacturing hub.
3. **Creates a Manpower Shortage:** Foxconn is replacing Chinese engineers with Taiwanese workers.
4. **Hurts Production of iPhones:** In FY 2023-24, Apple assembled **\$14 billion** worth of iPhones in India.
5. **Exposes Dependence on China:** India relies on China for specialized machinery and components.
6. **Threatens Supply Chain Growth:** India benefits from the **China Plus One** strategy but needs self-reliance.

What is India Doing to Boost Manufacturing?

1. **Encouraging Apple-Foxconn's Growth:** In **FY 2023-24**, Apple assembled **\$14 billion** worth of iPhones in India through Foxconn, Pegatron, and Tata Electronics.
2. **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme:** The **Union Budget 2024** increased allocation to **₹8,885 crore (\$1.02 billion)** from **₹6,125 crore (\$0.70 billion)**.
3. **Removing Import Duties:** The **Union Budget 2025** removed import taxes on mobile phone components and lithium-ion battery machinery.
4. **Expanding the National Manufacturing Mission:** India is promoting **technological clusters** and **worker skill development programs** for a self-sufficient electronics ecosystem.
5. **Attracting Private Investment:** India encourages private capital to develop **domestic contract manufacturers**.

How Do India-China Relations Affect This Issue?

1. India and China signed a **patrolling agreement** in **October 2024** to ease military tensions in Ladakh.

2. However, China's restrictions show that economic ties do not always depend on stable borders. Competition between India and China is expected to increase.

What Should India Do Next?

1. India must plan for long-term self-reliance in manufacturing. It should involve Apple and Foxconn to negotiate with China.
2. At the same time, India should:
 - Develop a strong **domestic supply chain** for components and machinery.
 - Invest in **worker training** and **skill development programs**.
 - Support **private capital** to create **Indian contract manufacturers**.
 - Expand the **National Manufacturing Mission** with more financial support.
3. India needs a **holistic manufacturing ecosystem** to reduce dependence on China and become a global leader in electronics production.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the impact of China's restrictions on engineers and critical equipment exports to India on India's manufacturing growth and its efforts to achieve self-reliance.

Rebuilding Teesta-3 Dam poses risks and challenges

Source: The post Rebuilding Teesta-3 Dam poses risks and challenges has been created, based on the article "The Teesta dam and the long shadow of climate change" published in "The Hindu" on 15th February 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Disaster and disaster management.

Context: The article discusses the risks of rebuilding the Teesta-3 dam in Sikkim after its destruction by a 2023 glacial lake outburst flood. Experts warn that climate change increases such risks, and rebuilding should prioritize local safety over commercial viability.

For detailed information on **Issue with hydropower projects on the Teesta River** [read this article here](#)

Why Was the Teesta-3 Dam Destroyed?

1. **Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF):** In October 2023, the **Teesta-3 dam** was destroyed by a GLOF originating from **South Lhonak Lake**.
2. **Moraine Slope Failure:** The dam's destruction was triggered by a **slope failure** at the lake's moraine, causing rocks to tumble into the water, creating a powerful ripple effect.
3. **Volume of Water Released:** Satellite data showed that approximately **50 billion litres of water** surged into the valley below, carrying dam debris that intensified the destruction downstream.
4. **Catastrophic Impact:** The flood killed **over 100 people** and affected **more than 80,000** across four districts, also triggering landslides about **30 to 40 kilometres downstream**.

How Is Climate Change Making GLOFs More Dangerous?

1. **Accelerated Glacier Melting:** Rising temperatures are **melting Himalayan glaciers faster**, increasing water accumulation in glacial lakes.
2. **Increase in Glacial Lakes:** Between **2011 and 2024**, the number of glacial lakes grew by **10.8%**, and their surface area expanded by **33.7%** (Central Water Commission report).
3. **Black Carbon Deposition:** Soot from industries speeds up glacier melting, worsening the risk.
4. **Unstable Geological Formations:** Glacial retreat weakens mountain slopes, making landslides and floods more likely. For example – South Lhonak Lake: It grew to 167 hectares by 2023, leading to the Teesta-3 dam disaster.

Why Is the Government Planning to Rebuild the Dam?

1. **Successful and Commercially Viable:** The **Teesta-3 dam** was considered a **successful project** before its destruction and was commercially profitable.
2. **Power Generation Equipment Intact:** The **hydroelectric machinery** survived the GLOF, making restoration easier.
3. **Growing Power Demand:** India's **rising electricity needs** require continued hydropower production.
4. **Stronger Design Proposed:** The new design includes a **larger spillway, stronger concrete construction, and an early-warning system**.
5. **Worst-Case Scenario Modeling:** The **India Meteorological Department** used **maximum future rainfall predictions** to guide reconstruction.

Why Is Rebuilding the Dam Controversial?

1. **Seismic and Landslide Risks:** The dam is in an **earthquake- and landslide-prone area**, making it vulnerable to future disasters.
2. **Flawed Clearance Process:** The dam has faced **public interest litigations over techno-economic approval issues and alleged corruption**.
3. **Unpredictable Disaster Patterns:** Experts warn that **rainfall models alone** cannot predict future floods, as seen in **2023 GLOF**.
4. **Potential for Greater Destruction:** If another, stronger flood occurs, the new dam might **fail catastrophically, causing greater downstream damage**.
5. **Erosion and Sediment Transport:** A study in **January 2025** highlighted that existing models do not fully account for **erosion and sediment transport**, making risk predictions uncertain.
6. **Engineering Limitations:** Some experts argue that **engineering solutions alone** cannot prevent climate-related disasters and suggest that long-term safety measures should be prioritized.

For detailed information on **On Dam Safety** [read this article here](#)

What Are the Broader Risks?

1. The dam increased damage in the 2023 flood by obstructing water flow.
2. A stronger or different flood in the future could cause even greater destruction.
3. Some experts argue that rebuilding in disaster-prone areas is unsustainable.
4. They suggest prioritizing local safety, social security, and economic resilience over commercial viability.
5. The cost of risk mitigation should be included in the dam's power tariff.

Question for practice:

Examine the risks and challenges associated with rebuilding the Teesta-3 dam in Sikkim after its destruction by the 2023 Glacial Lake Outburst Flood.

India's Growing Influence in the Indian Ocean

Source: The post India's Growing Influence in the Indian Ocean has been created, based on the article “**What India needs to do in the Indian Ocean**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 15th February 2025

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 role in the Indian Ocean and its maritime influence. It highlights historical trade, security challenges, and India's naval neglect. It also covers efforts like the SAGAR initiative and India's hosting of the **Eighth Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) in Muscat**.

For detailed information on **India's rising power in the Indian Ocean** [read this article here](#)

Why is the Indian Ocean important?

1. The Indian Ocean is the world's third-largest ocean and connects 26 countries.
2. It handles **70% of global container traffic** and **80% of India's external trade**.
3. **90% of India's energy trade** passes through its waters.
4. The region is crucial for landlocked nations like **Nepal and Bhutan**.
5. Global powers like the **US, UK, France, and China** have a strong presence here.

What was India's historical role in the Indian Ocean?

1. Ancient Indian traders like the **Manigramam Chettis** and **Nanadesis** dominated maritime trade.
2. Indian kingdoms like the **Andhras, Pallavas, and Cholas** traded with the **Arab world and Southeast Asia**.
3. **Kautilya's Arthashastra** mentioned port commissioners, showing India's early focus on maritime affairs.
4. The **British colonial rulers** did not develop India's naval power.

5. After independence, India continued to focus more on land-based defense.

What challenges does the Indian Ocean region face today?

1. **Security threats** include piracy, terrorism, arms trafficking, and illegal fishing.
2. **Climate challenges** include rising sea levels, disaster relief, and evacuations.
3. **Undersea cables**, mostly controlled by European and Chinese firms, are critical for global communication.
4. The region has become a crowded space with ships from major global powers.

How is India strengthening its maritime presence?

1. India ranks **20th in global shipbuilding**, with only **0.06% market share**.
2. Diplomat **K M Panikkar**, in *India and the Indian Ocean* (1945), warned about India's maritime dependence.
3. The **SAGAR Initiative (Security And Growth for All in the Region)** was launched in **2015**.
4. India is hosting the **Eighth Indian Ocean Conference (IOC)** in **Muscat** with **30 countries** participating.

What is the future of India's role in the Indian Ocean?

1. Geopolitical strategist **Alfred T. Mahan** said that control over the Indian Ocean is key to global power.
2. India aims to **become a strong blue-water navy** and lead the **Global South**.
3. Regional leaders must ensure that **the Indian Ocean remains under their control** and is not dominated by external powers.

Question for practice:

Examine the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean and the challenges it faces today.

Modi's visit to Washington impacted India-US relations

Source: The post India's Growing Influence in the Indian Ocean has been created, based on the article "**Express View on Modi and Trump's meeting: A promising future**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 15th February 2025

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

Context: The article discusses India-US relations after Modi's visit to Washington. It covers trade, immigration, and defense cooperation. Both leaders aim to resolve differences and strengthen ties. India will repatriate illegal immigrants. The US wants better market access. Defense and technology partnerships will expand.

How are India and the US strengthening their strategic partnership?

1. Modi and Trump aimed to **reduce differences** and expand cooperation.

2. A new framework, **COMPACT** (Catalysing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce & Technology), was introduced to enhance **military, trade, and technology partnerships**.

3. The summit marked a commitment to a “**result-driven agenda**”, which India needs to implement effectively.

4. Modi’s visit set the stage for deeper ties before **Trump’s expected visit to India later in the year**.

What are the key issues in trade and immigration?

1. Trump emphasized **reducing the US trade deficit**, which had shifted in India’s favor.

2. He demanded **better market access for US goods** and criticized India’s **tariffs**.

3. Reciprocal tariffs were expected by **spring**, giving India a chance to **negotiate a fair trade arrangement**.

4. Both countries set an ambitious target of **\$500 billion in annual bilateral trade by 2030**.

5. On **illegal immigration**, India agreed to **repatriate verified illegal immigrants** from the US.

6. Both nations planned to **combat human trafficking** by targeting criminal networks.

7. The US acknowledged the importance of **legal and sustainable mobility** for **skilled Indian professionals, students, and businesspeople**.

In which sectors are India and the US increasing cooperation?

1. **Energy**: India, a major **hydrocarbon importer**, aimed to benefit from **US energy exports**.

2. **Nuclear energy**: Both countries agreed to **expand cooperation**, as the sector was experiencing a revival.

3. **Defense**: India planned to **increase US arms imports**, and Trump agreed to **review restrictions on defense technology transfers**.

4. **Technology**: Both leaders committed to **expanding cooperation in emerging areas like Artificial Intelligence**.

5. **Regional security**: They pledged to **enhance engagement in the Indo-Pacific and broaden their focus on the Middle East**.

What is the broader impact of the Modi-Trump partnership?

1. Modi’s “**India First**” and Trump’s “**America First**” policies found common ground.

2. Both leaders emphasized **self-interest and deal-making** in international relations.

3. Their partnership set **India and the US on a promising path** for economic and strategic collaboration.

Question for practice:

Evaluate how Modi’s visit to Washington impacted India-US relations in terms of trade, immigration, and defense cooperation.