

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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India is strengthening TB care through equity

Source: The post India is strengthening TB care through equity has been created, based on the article “**The need for universal and equitable health coverage**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 24th March 2025

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

Context: India has made significant progress in Tuberculosis (TB) care through new detection, treatment, and prevention strategies. The focus is on decentralising care, integrating TB services into the broader health system, and ensuring equity to achieve TB elimination and universal health coverage (UHC).

For detailed information on **India’s progress in fighting tuberculosis** [read this article here](#)

Progress in TB Care in India

1. India has enhanced TB detection with expanded molecular testing for rapid identification and drug resistance assessment.
2. The introduction of the BPaLM regimen, a shorter, all-oral treatment, utilizes four drugs: Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, Linezolid, and Moxifloxacin.
3. Nutritional support under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY) has doubled to ₹1,000 per month.
4. TB preventive therapy has been initiated alongside expanded community involvement through TB Champions.
5. Significant results include a 17.7% decline in TB incidence, from 237 per 100,000 population in 2015 to 195 in 2023.
6. TB-related deaths have decreased by 21.4%, reflecting the impact of these comprehensive strategies on public health outcomes.

Integration and Decentralisation of TB Services

1. TB services are integrated into Ayushman Bharat's Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) and Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs), providing comprehensive care.
2. AAMs act as sputum collection centers, facilitating accessible diagnostics and treatment near patients' homes, improving convenience and reducing travel.
3. Decentralization allows for treatment at primary care levels, crucial during the initial two months of treatment when patients are most vulnerable.
4. Over 50% of TB patients initially seek treatment in the private sector, highlighting the need to strengthen referral systems to public facilities to ensure equitable care.

Steps Towards Equitable and Person-Centred TB Care

1. **Person-Centred Interventions:** States like Tamil Nadu have implemented the Tamil Nadu Kasanoi Erappila Thittam (TN-KET) to reduce TB deaths. It identifies vulnerable patients and ensures hospital referrals. Other states have targeted tribal, migrant, and homeless populations. Strengthening infrastructure, staff, and medicine supply is crucial.
2. **Recognising Intersectionality:** Multiple social factors such as gender, age, caste, disability, and occupation influence TB outcomes. The National TB Programme now includes a gender-responsive approach. Early work on understanding TB and disability has also begun and needs further support.
3. **Integrated Health Services:** People with TB symptoms must also be checked for other illnesses like COPD, asthma, hypertension, and depression. Community screening models should include AI-enabled chest X-rays and monitoring of blood pressure, sugar levels, and BMI.
4. **Reducing Financial Burden:** Schemes like NPY and the 100 Days campaign help reduce direct costs. However, families still face indirect costs. India should expand social support—like nutrition aid to families, wage-loss schemes, and livelihood support for TB survivors.

5. Effective Communication and Awareness: Public knowledge of TB remains low. During COVID-19, science-based communication quickly reached everyone. Similar efforts are needed for TB. Awareness about drug-resistant TB and reducing stigma are essential for early care-seeking and successful treatment.

Way Forward

India's TB response now focuses on equity, person-centred care, and integration with general health services. Continued investment in primary care, digital tools, social protection, and awareness campaigns can strengthen these efforts. Applying an equity lens will accelerate the path toward TB elimination and universal health coverage.

Question for practice:

Examine how India's TB response incorporates equity, decentralisation, and integration with general health services to move towards TB elimination and universal health coverage.

India needs comprehensive efforts to improve tuberculosis patient care

Source: The post India needs comprehensive efforts to improve tuberculosis patient care has been created, based on the article "**The need for universal and equitable health coverage**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 24th March 2025

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

Context: The article addresses Tuberculosis (TB) care in India, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to diagnosis, treatment, and community support. It discusses the critical gaps in the current system and underscores the importance of coordinated efforts across sectors to improve outcomes for TB patients and ultimately aim to eradicate the disease.

For detailed information on India's approach to end TB [read this article here](#)

Issues faced in TB care in India

1. Challenges in TB Diagnosis and Treatment: Many patients experience delays in diagnosis due to lack of awareness or doctors not recommending TB tests. Medicines may be in short supply, forcing patients to travel over 20 kilometres to get them. Side effects from treatment, financial burden of private care, and lack of treatment literacy often lead to dropouts.

2. The Social and Psychological Impact: TB patients often face stigma, isolation, and self-blame. Families may refuse preventive therapy or blame the patient. Neighbours may shun them. Malnutrition, old age, or disability worsens their condition. Such social pressures can damage mental health and weaken recovery.

3. Systemic Gaps and Apathy: TB is wrongly seen as a disease of the poor, leading to limited concern. There are too few trained health workers, and the private sector often provides inconsistent care. This results in poor coordination and weak public response.

What Needs to Be Done

1. Strengthen Public Health Infrastructure: Ensure a continuous supply of medicines and diagnostic tools. Train and fairly compensate healthcare workers to manage TB efficiently and compassionately.

2. Empower Patients and Communities: Engage TB survivors to lead awareness and advocacy efforts, helping reduce stigma and disseminate correct information. Develop community-led support systems to provide psychosocial aid and ensure patient adherence to treatment regimes.

3. Enhance Prevention and Care: Improve airborne infection control measures and nutritional support programs to prevent TB. Introduce an effective TB vaccine accessible to all demographics.

4. Foster Multisectoral Collaboration: Integrate TB care into social and private insurance frameworks. Increase corporate social responsibility (CSR) investments in TB initiatives. Encourage media and political leaders to actively participate in TB eradication efforts. Establish sustainable public-private partnerships to extend high-quality care.

Way Forward

India's National Strategic Plan includes many of these measures, but partial implementation is insufficient. Ending TB requires coordinated action across all levels—health, community, government, and private sectors. Every actor must contribute actively to build a resilient, inclusive, and responsive TB care ecosystem.

Question for practice:

Discuss the key issues in tuberculosis care in India and suggest essential steps to build a comprehensive, responsive TB care ecosystem.

Covid-19 changed migration patterns in India

Source: The post Covid-19 changed migration patterns in India has been created, based on the article “**Tracking migration, five years after Covid**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 24th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1-Society-population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanisation, their problems and their remedies.

Context: The Covid-19 pandemic exposed deep vulnerabilities in India's migration system. It caused large-scale disruptions in internal and international migration, revealed governance gaps, and altered migration patterns. Five years later, many pre-Covid trends have resumed, but new dynamics and challenges have emerged.

For detailed information on **Understanding Internal Migration Trends and Challenges** [read this article here](#)

Impact of Covid-19 on Internal Migration

1. Covid-19 triggered unprecedented reverse migration from urban to rural areas in India.
2. Around 44.13 million migrants returned home during the first lockdown, and 26.3 million during the second.
3. Migrants, mainly low-wage and seasonal workers, suffered wage theft, hunger, discrimination, and violence.
4. Families relying on remittances faced severe financial distress.
5. Rural areas lacked adequate job opportunities; MGNREGA provided only temporary relief.
6. Climate change added stress on rural livelihoods, causing migration due to distress in agriculture, as observed in Odisha (IIMAD-FAO-IOM study).

Migration patterns after 5 years of COVID

1. **Return to Urban Migration:** Within five years, most migrants have returned to urban areas due to lack of opportunities and low wages in rural regions. Migration to cities remains strong, with projections indicating 40% of India's population will live in urban areas by 2026. Programmes like the Smart Cities Mission continue to support urbanisation and rely heavily on migrant labour.

2. **Impact on International Migrants:** During the pandemic, Indian emigrants—especially in GCC countries—faced job losses, wage cuts, overcrowded living conditions, and poor sanitation. Despite these issues, remittances remained stable and vital for many households in India, reinforcing their role as a development driver.

3. **New Destinations and Emerging Trends:** Post-pandemic, Indian migration is diversifying. While GCC countries still attract workers, more Indians are migrating to Europe. In 2023, they were the top recipients of the EU Blue Card. Non-traditional European destinations like Malta and Georgia are gaining popularity. African countries are also attracting Indian migrants, but risks remain, as shown by the Jharkhand workers stranded in Cameroon.

4. **Healthcare and Student Migration:** There is continued global demand for Indian healthcare workers. Student migration has sharply increased. In Kerala, student migrants nearly doubled from 1.29 lakh in 2018 to 2.5 lakh in 2023. Outward remittances for education peaked at \$3,171 million in 2021. Events like the Russia-Ukraine war also highlighted student vulnerabilities.

Challenges in Migration Governance

1. Schemes like e-Shram and ONORC aim to support migrants but face issues like low awareness, digital barriers, and limited coverage.

2. The delay in the 2021 Census and lack of updated data on emigrants restrict effective policy-making. PLFS data from the pandemic period doesn't reflect long-term trends.

Way Forward

India needs a stronger migration governance system backed by reliable data. Expanding the Kerala Migration Survey model to all states can improve planning and policy. Reforms must ensure social security, mobility rights, and inclusive support systems for all migrants.

Question for practice:

Examine how the Covid-19 pandemic impacted internal and international migration patterns in India and the challenges it revealed in migration governance.

India adopts conciliatory approach towards China relations

Source: The post India adopts conciliatory approach towards China relations has been created, based on the article "China ties — beware conciliation without deterrence" published in "The Hindu" on 25th March 2025

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

Context: India has recently adopted a more conciliatory tone towards China, evident from Prime Minister Modi's remarks in a March podcast. This apparent shift in policy comes after heightened border tensions since 2020 and explores the strategic, diplomatic, and military dimensions of these evolving relations.

For detailed information on **India and China agree to restore bilateral relations** [read this article here](#)

Shift in India-China Relations

1. **Podcast Statement:** Prime Minister Modi advocated for a stable, cooperative relationship with China through dialogue, signaling a significant softening in rhetoric since the Ladakh border clash in 2020.
2. **2020 Border Clash Resolution:** Post the violent encounters in Ladakh, both nations gradually disengaged from the key conflict zones, culminating in a disengagement agreement in October 2024.
3. **Trade Growth Despite Tensions:** Despite persistent diplomatic and military strains, trade between India and China surged to record highs, underscoring strong economic bonds.
4. **Strategic Military Meetings:** Concurrently, India engaged with Quad partners, showcasing a balanced strategy between conciliation with China and strategic alliances with other global powers.
5. **Influence of U.S. Policy Fluctuations:** The uncertainty in U.S. policies under the Trump administration has prompted India to balance its strategic engagements carefully, maintaining robust relationships with both China and Quad nations to protect its national interests.

Implications of a Conciliatory Approach for India's Military Strategy

1. **Reduction in Border Tensions:** The series of conciliatory discussions and agreements since 2020 have eased military confrontations at key border sites.
2. **Continued Economic Engagement:** Despite a freeze in diplomatic interactions, the spike in trade indicates a preference for economic engagement over military confrontation.
3. **Increased Dependence on Diplomacy:** With the U.S. showing a shifting stance under Trump, particularly in defense support, India might focus more on diplomatic avenues with China.
4. **Urgency in Military Modernization:** Despite the peaceful overtures, the decline in defense investment poses risks, highlighting the need for rapid modernization and enhancement of military capabilities like submarines and fighter jets.

Way Forward

1. **Continue Diplomatic Engagements:** Modi's approach should be used as a basis for sustained dialogue, vital for easing past tensions.
2. **Invest in Defense Modernization:** It's critical to reverse the trend of declining defense budgets by prioritizing essential investments in advanced military technology.

3. **Deepen Economic Ties:** Capitalize on the thriving trade relations to bolster economic links, which could serve as a foundation for a stable bilateral relationship.

4. **Monitor Global Political Shifts:** India needs to remain adaptable to international political shifts, especially those emanating from the U.S., to ensure its strategic interests are not compromised.

5. **Enhance Military Partnerships:** Strengthen military cooperation with Quad nations through joint exercises and strategic planning to build a robust defense posture.

Conclusion

India's shifting stance towards China combines diplomacy with strategic readiness. As relationships improve through dialogue and trade, India must also bolster its defense to ensure long-term security and maintain a balanced approach in the face of global and regional challenges.

Question for practice:

Discuss the implications of India's conciliatory approach towards China on its military strategy and economic ties.

Food wastage in India is a social and environmental crisis

Source: The post Food wastage in India is a social and environmental crisis has been created, based on the article "Colossal wastage that is food for thought" published in "The Hindu" on 25th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- issues of buffer stocks and food security

Context: The United Nations Environment Programme's Food Waste Index Report (FWIR) 2024 indicates that in 2022, approximately 1.05 billion tonnes of food were wasted globally, with India being a significant contributor. This issue not only reflects resource mismanagement but also underscores a deep moral and environmental crisis. For detailed information on **Causes of Food Loss and Waste (FLW) in India** [read this article here](#)

Current status of Food Wastage

1. In 2022, the world wasted 1.05 billion tonnes of food, nearly 20% of all food available to consumers.
2. India is the second-highest contributor to food waste, after China.
3. Indian households waste 55 kg of food per person annually.
4. Globally, food waste costs about \$1 trillion every year.

Impacts of Food Wastage

1. **Environmental Impact:** Food waste accounts for 10%-12% of India's municipal waste and significant methane emissions, intensifying climate change. Globally, it contributes 8%-10% to annual greenhouse gas emissions.
2. **Economic Loss:** Globally, food worth a trillion dollars is wasted each year. In India, 78 million tonnes of food are wasted annually.
3. **Social Injustice:** Despite being a major food producer, food wastage in India prevents access to food for over 200 million hungry Indians, hindering progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger.

Strategies for Reduction

Addressing food waste requires a multifaceted approach:

1. **Individual Actions:** Households can reduce waste through efficient meal planning, shopping, and food storage practices. Utilizing leftovers creatively and composting kitchen scraps can also mitigate waste.
2. **Systemic Reforms:** The government needs to enhance infrastructure for cold storage and transportation. Businesses should adopt sustainable practices such as redistributing unsold food. Educational institutions play a role in raising awareness about responsible consumption.
3. **Policy Initiatives:** Policymakers should support innovative solutions like food redistribution networks and improved cold storage facilities. Programs like India's "Save Food Share Food" demonstrate the effectiveness of large-scale food redistribution efforts.

Conclusion

The critical situation in India regarding food waste demands urgent attention to reduce the carbon footprint, ensure food security, and address social inequalities. By valuing what is already produced and advocating for

sustainable food systems, India can make significant strides towards a future where no resources are wasted, and no one goes hungry.

Question for practice:

Examine the causes, impacts, and possible solutions to the issue of food wastage in India as highlighted in the United Nations Environment Programme's Food Waste Index Report 2024.

Lohia's ideas are misused in today's politics

Source: The post Lohia's ideas are misused in today's politics has been created, based on the article "Yogendra Yadav Writes: The Ram Manohar Lohia we need" published in "Indian Express" on 25th March 2025

Context: On **March 23**, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** commemorated **Ram Manohar Lohia's 115th birth anniversary**, calling him a visionary leader. However, Lohia's ideas are often **misused, selectively quoted, or ignored** in present-day politics. This article calls for a **true recovery of Lohia's ideological and political legacy**.

Misinterpretation of Lohia's Ideology by Present Politics

1. BJP leaders often use **Lohia's critiques of Nehru** and "**anti-Congressism**" to justify their positions.
2. However, "**anti-Congressism**" was a **short-term tactic**, not a philosophy.
3. Lohia would have likely supported "**anti-BJPism**" today to oppose the dominant establishment.
4. His slogan "**Banish English**" is misused to promote **Hindi imposition**, while Lohia actually **valued English** and used it skillfully.
5. He opposed the **elitism and class inequality** linked with English, not the language itself.
6. Lohia was a **champion of Indian languages**, inspiring writers like **Phanishwar Nath Renu, U.R. Ananthamurthy, and Siddalingaiah**.
7. His support for **backward castes** is often distorted to benefit **dominant OBCs**, ignoring his emphasis on **Dalits, Adivasis, and women**.

Lohia's Inclusive Approach to Social Justice

1. Lohia demanded **60% reservation** with the slogan "**pichhada pave sau mein saath**."
2. For him, "**pichhada**" included **OBCs, Dalits, Adivasis, and women**.
3. He advocated for **intersectionality** — integrating **caste, class, and gender** to fight injustice.
4. He identified **gender injustice** as the most foundational among six injustices and proposed "**saptakranti**" (**seven revolutions**).
5. Lohia supported **special opportunities** for the **Mahadalits** among SCs and **Extremely Backward Classes**.
6. He aimed to form a **bottom-up social bloc** to challenge existing **socio-political hegemony**.

Blending Indian Culture with Socialist Politics

1. Lohia redefined cultural figures to fit progressive politics.
2. He promoted **Draupadi** as the ideal Indian woman — **bold, witty, and independent**, contrasting the image of **Sati-Savitri**.
3. He saw **Lord Rama** as a symbol of **north-south unity** and **Lord Krishna** as east-west unity.
4. He used **rivers like Ganga and Yamuna** to symbolize **kartavya (duty)** and **rasa (joy)**.
5. Drawing from **Nachiketa's story in the Ishopanishad**, he promoted **kanchanmukti** — freedom from material greed.
6. Artists like **M.F. Husain** were inspired by his cultural interpretation of socialism.

Lohia's Stand on Communalism and Indian Modernity

1. Lohia saw communalism as a **conflict within Hinduism** — between **Vashishtha's narrow orthodoxy** and **Valmiki's liberal reformism**.
2. He believed that **India's progress** depended on **liberal Hinduism**, while **illiberal trends** led to decline.
3. He rejected **Eurocentric Marxism** and **romantic nativism**, offering a **decolonized, egalitarian Indian modernity**.
4. Lohia's vision offers a **radical ideological framework** to defend **India's democratic and civilizational values** today.

Question for practice:

Discuss how Ram Manohar Lohia's ideological legacy is misinterpreted and selectively used in contemporary Indian politics.

India rethinks ties with Taliban in Afghanistan

Source: The post India rethinks ties with Taliban in Afghanistan has been created, based on the article "**The 'Great Abandonment' of Afghanistan**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 26th March 2025

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

Context: The article analyzes India's evolving engagement with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan following the U.S. withdrawal. It examines the shift from support for democratic Afghan governments to reluctant dealings with the Taliban, raising concerns about abandoning democratic allies, human rights, and the long-term strategic risks for India.

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

U.S. approach to Ukraine remind Afghans past

1. **Similarities in Withdrawal:** The U.S. pullout from Afghanistan, which led to the fall of the elected government and the rise of the Taliban, is paralleled by a perceived reduction in U.S. commitment to Ukraine, as suggested by recent interactions between U.S. President Trump and Ukrainian President Zelenskyy.
2. **Direct Negotiations with Adversaries:** Just as the U.S. initiated talks directly with the Taliban in 2018 without involving the Afghan government, there is a concern that similar diplomatic moves could happen in Ukraine, undermining the local government's position.
3. **Impact of U.S. Policy Shifts:** The Doha Accords of 2020, favoring the Taliban without securing commitments for a political process or human rights, remind Afghans of possible similar outcomes in other regions where the U.S. modifies its foreign policy stance.

Taliban's return changed life inside Afghanistan

1. Taliban 2.0 (2021-present) holds tighter control over Afghanistan and treats women more harshly than before.
2. Girls are banned from schools, colleges, workplaces, and even public view.
3. This reverses gains from 2001–2021, when women worked in many sectors and one even ran for President.
4. The regime remains unrecognized globally, but countries like Russia, China, and Pakistan have embraced it diplomatically.
5. The U.S. and Europe have disengaged, cutting aid and support.
6. Economic mismanagement and the freezing of USAID and Chabahar access have deepened the crisis, worsening life for ordinary Afghans.

India's Shifting Stance

1. Initially, India closed its embassy in Kabul and avoided formal recognition of the Taliban regime. But by 2022, it had reopened a technical mission.
2. In 2025, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri publicly met the Taliban's Acting Foreign Minister.
3. Reports suggest India may now allow a Taliban-appointed ambassador in Delhi and expand engagement to resume development work.

Reasons for India's Outreach

1. **Pragmatism and Realpolitik:** Officials argue the Taliban's prolonged control makes engagement necessary, though the regime's internal divisions and governance failures challenge its permanence.
2. **Aid Delivery Argument:** It is claimed that working with the Taliban is required to help Afghans, but historical precedents show aid can be routed through other agencies.
3. **Strategic Space:** Some fear India may lose influence as other regional powers deepen ties. However, the Taliban's ideological hostility and past attacks on Indian interests suggest this may not yield real strategic gains.

Way Forward

1. India should not isolate exiled Afghan democrats.
2. It should raise concerns about women's rights, support platforms for political opposition, and remain engaged across the political spectrum.
3. Rebuilding ties with democratic forces is important for long-term relevance and regional stability.

Question for practice:

Examine how India's approach towards the Taliban regime has evolved since the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the strategic factors influencing this shift.

Vaccine Safety Concerns in India and Required Policy Reforms

Source: The post Vaccine Safety Concerns in India and Required Policy Reforms has been created, based on the article "A bad omen for public trust in vaccines" published in "The Hindu" on 26th March 2025

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

Context: In recent years, several petitions have been filed in Indian courts concerning vaccine safety and regulation. While most relate to COVID-19 vaccines, some address issues with the rabies and rotavirus vaccines. These petitions highlight growing concerns over how vaccines are approved, monitored, and administered in India.

For detailed information on Vaccine Regulations In India [read this article here](#)

Reasons for Filing Petitions About Vaccines in India

1. **Deaths and Adverse Events:** A petition in Kerala cited deaths linked to the anti-rabies vaccine.
2. **Transparency Issues:** Concerns over the opacity in the vaccine approval process by CDSCO and undisclosed conflicts of interest among decision-makers.
3. **Inadequate Information Disclosure:** Incomplete information on vaccine side-effects and poor public access to clinical trial data.
4. **Compensation for Harm:** Legal action, like in *Sayeeda v. Union of India (2022)*, seeks government policies on compensating vaccine-related harms.
5. **Ineffective Monitoring:** Weak implementation of the system for tracking adverse events following immunization (AEFI).

Problem highlighted by these petitions

1. Courts are poorly equipped to address vaccine issues due to their complex scientific nature.
2. Legal proceedings are lengthy and often result in unsatisfactory and poorly reasoned orders.
3. For example, courts have granted ex parte interim injunctions to vaccine manufacturers against critics, which can stifle necessary public debate.
4. Judicial handling can detract from the credibility of vaccine manufacturers and does not resolve underlying public health concerns.
5. Effective resolution of these issues lies in policy reform and regulation by health authorities, not litigation.

Steps Needed to Ensure Informed Consent and Public Safety

1. **Clear and Timely Information:** Ensure that information about vaccine side-effects is provided clearly and directly to recipients at the time of vaccination, not merely posted on websites.
2. **Strengthening AEFI Guidelines:** Transition the current Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI) guidelines into a robust legal framework to enhance data collection and transparency.
3. **Public Disclosure of Trial Data:** Mandate the public disclosure of all clinical trial data and the CDSCO's internal analysis to build public trust in vaccine approvals.
4. **Compensation Policy:** Implement a government policy for compensating those adversely affected by vaccines, as directed by the Kerala High Court in *Sayeeda v. Union of India (2022)*. This policy should clarify the circumstances under which vaccine manufacturers or the government is liable, depending on indemnity clauses which are currently not public.

Conclusion

Except for compensation, most vaccine-related concerns are policy matters. The Health Ministry should respond with legal and regulatory reforms instead of leaving them to be settled in courts.

Question for practice:

Examine the concerns raised in recent petitions regarding vaccine safety and regulation in India and suggest policy measures to address them.

Judicial misconduct needs transparent and accountable investigation

Source: The post Judicial misconduct needs transparent and accountable investigation has been created, based on the article “How is an in-house inquiry conducted?” published in “*The Hindu*” on 26th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

Context: A fire at the residence of Justice Yashwant Varma of the Delhi High Court on March 14 led to the discovery of large piles of burnt cash. This incident triggered a preliminary inquiry, which led the Chief Justice of India (CJI) to initiate a deeper investigation through an in-house procedure.

In-house procedure for probing judges

1. **Purpose and Background:** The in-house procedure was developed by the Supreme Court in 1999 to handle complaints of misconduct against higher judiciary judges. It was made public in 2014.
2. **Initial Scrutiny by CJI:** When a complaint is received, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) decides whether it is frivolous or serious. If it is serious, the judge's response and the view of the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court are taken.
3. **Constitution of Inquiry Committee:** If a deeper probe is needed, the CJI forms a three-member committee:
 - For a High Court judge: two Chief Justices of other High Courts and one High Court judge.
 - For a Chief Justice of a High Court: one Supreme Court judge and two Chief Justices of other High Courts.
 - For a Supreme Court judge: three Supreme Court judges.
4. **Inquiry Process:** The committee reviews the facts and gives a recommendation.
 - If misconduct is not serious: the judge is informed.
 - If serious: the judge is asked to resign. If the judge refuses, the report is sent to the President and Prime Minister for removal through Parliament under the Constitution.

Concerns with the collegium system of judge appointments

1. The collegium system protects judicial independence but lacks transparency and accountability.
2. It is opaque and does not involve wider public or institutional participation.
3. This lack of openness may allow misconduct to go unnoticed, as seen in the Justice Yashwant Varma case.
4. The National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) was struck down in 2015 for violating the basic structure of judicial independence.
5. There is need to revisit the NJAC with a broad-based structure headed by the CJI and including members from the legislature, lawyer associations, and academia.

6. This can improve transparency without compromising independence, like South Africa's Judicial Service Commission.

Reforms needed in this process

1. **Lack of Transparency:** The in-house inquiry findings are confidential, reducing public trust in the judicial system.
2. **No Accountability:** Despite being found guilty of misconduct, no judge has faced criminal punishment, undermining the effectiveness of the in-house procedure.
3. **Example of Better Practice:** The UK has a transparent system through its Judicial Conduct Investigations Office. India should create a similar independent body under the CJI. This will ensure both accountability and independence in handling judicial misconduct, unlike the current process which lacks public disclosure and legal consequences.

Question for practice:

Examine the limitations of the in-house procedure for probing judicial misconduct in India and suggest reforms to enhance transparency and accountability.

India cannot surpass US in science publications soon

Source: The post India cannot surpass US in science publications soon has been created, based on the article "The issue is about the 'quality' of India's publications" published in "The Hindu" on 27th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Achievements of Indians in science & technology

Context: At a National Science Day function in February 2025, India's Science and Technology Minister claimed that India would surpass the U.S. in scientific publications by 2029. The article critically examines this claim using data on research output, quality, institutional performance, and ethical concerns. It argues that the claim is unrealistic and gives a misleading picture of India's scientific progress.

For detailed information on **India's Achievements in Research Output** [read this article here](#)

International Comparison of Research Output and Investment

1. **Research Output:** China leads with 8,98,949 publications, followed by the U.S. with 4,57,335, and India with 2,07,390.
2. **Clarivate Data (2024):** Reports India's publications at 1,91,703, while the U.S. has 6,48,905. This shows a wide gap between India and the U.S.
3. **Investment in R&D:** India spends only 0.67% of its GDP on civilian research. This is far lower than Israel (6.3%), South Korea (4.9%), the U.S. (3.46%), and China (2.4%).
4. **Impact of Investment:** Countries like China and the U.S., which invest heavily in research and education, produce both higher quantity and better quality research.
5. **GDP Spend and Output Correlation:** The data clearly shows that higher investment in R&D results in stronger scientific performance.

Concerns in India's Scientific Publication

1. **Low R&D Spending:** India's low research funding is a major barrier to scientific progress. It limits infrastructure, training, and innovation.
2. **Quality of Publications:** India's CNCI score is 0.879, while China scores 1.12 and the U.S. 1.25. India ranks 28th out of 30 countries, showing poor research impact.
3. **Inadequate Performance in High-Impact Journals:** India lags in top scientific journals. Between 2017–2024, India had only 305 papers in the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, compared to 8,503 by the U.S. and 5,521 by China.

4. Ethical Concerns and Fraud: Unethical practices are widespread. A 2018 study found that 62% of the world's fake standalone journals were published in India. The Omics group from Hyderabad, fined \$50 million by the U.S. FTC in 2019, had published around 69,000 low-quality articles.

Way Forward

Quantity alone does not reflect true scientific progress. India must focus on:

- Increasing investment in research and education,
- Training young scientists better,
- Publishing in quality journals,
- Promoting ethical research practices.

As Einstein said, "Not everything that can be counted counts. Not everything that counts can be counted."

Question for practice:

Examine whether India is realistically positioned to surpass the U.S. in scientific publications by 2029, based on current data on research output, investment, and quality.

India must reform its rural water policies

Source: The post India must reform its rural water policies has been created, based on the article "**The role of communities in conserving water**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 27th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

Context: On World Water Day (March 22), Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for collective water conservation efforts. The Ministry of Jal Shakti launched the *Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain 2025*. This occasion highlights the need to revisit India's rural water policies in light of environmental challenges and evolving ecological understandings.

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

Issues for Consideration in India's Water Policies

1. Limited Community Participation: Current policies allow communities to manage water sources but not to participate in key decisions. For example, **Water User Associations (WUAs)** involve farmers in managing irrigation, but they lack decision-making power. Also, traditional ecological practices like **orans—sacred forests in western India** that help conserve water—are often ignored by formal policies.

2. Neglect of Vulnerable Groups: **Marginalised and economically weaker communities** are more affected during water crises. Their **local knowledge** is valuable, yet they are rarely included in decisions. Policies must ensure their **active involvement** and **representation**.

3. Fragmented Ecosystem Management: Water, land, forests, and biodiversity are regulated under separate policies. This **fragmented approach** ignores the **interdependence of ecosystems**. Practices like *orans* show how **integrated management** can support **rainwater harvesting** and **sustain local ecology**.

4. Human-Centric Water Policies: Water policies mostly address **human needs**, overlooking the **non-human environment**. Some local communities consider the **water needs of animals** too. Indian courts have recognised **nature's rights**, but this is missing in current water governance.

5. Impact of Climate Change: A report in the journal **Nature** warns that **rising global temperatures** will **widen India's water gap**. Policies must build **climate-resilient water systems** and strengthen **ecosystem resilience**.

Conclusion

India's water policies must move beyond symbolic engagement. They should empower communities, integrate traditional practices, and build resilience against climate threats. While doing so, local knowledge must be supported through **sensitisation** and **capacity building**, ensuring effective and inclusive water governance.

Question for practice

Examine how India's current rural water policies can be made more inclusive and ecologically sustainable in light of recent environmental and climate challenges.

Trump's new policies are weakening US soft power

Source: The post Trump's new policies are weakening US soft power has been created, based on the article "Whittling down sources of U.S. soft power" published in "The Hindu" on 27th March 2025

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

Context: Since Donald Trump began his second term as U.S. President in January 2025, several foreign policy decisions under the "America First" agenda have drawn global attention. These moves, though aimed at asserting power, are **weakening key pillars of U.S. soft power**, which relies on attraction and persuasion rather than coercion.

For detailed information on **Trump's America First Policy and Global Impact** [read this article here](#)

What is U.S. Soft Power?

1. U.S. soft power means **influencing others through attraction and persuasion**, not force.
2. The term was **coined by political scientist Joseph Nye**.
3. It includes **alliances, education, humanitarian aid**, and values like **freedom and diversity**.
4. **Trump's recent policies** are now **damaging these core sources** of influence.

Recent Trump Administration Moves Have Weakened U.S. Soft Power

1. Impact on Global Alliances: Alliances like **NATO and Five Eyes** have long helped build U.S. soft power. But Trump's remarks, like **annexing Greenland or Canada**, have upset key partners. He **criticised Japan's alliance terms**, praised **North Korea's leader**, and gave **unconditional support to Israel** in Gaza. These actions have hurt trust in the U.S., especially in groups like the **Quad**. They have also reduced support from countries in the **Global South**.

2. Cuts to USAID and Global Messaging: **USAID** had a **\$35 billion budget**, mostly for health, education, and governance, especially in **Africa**. Under the **Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)**, led by **Elon Musk**, only **17% of USAID programs remain**. Cutting USAID has reduced U.S. presence in poor countries. U.S. also cut funds to media like **Voice of America** and think tanks like the **Wilson Center**. This weakens its global messaging and influence.

3. Protectionist Trade Policies: Trump's new "**reciprocal tariffs**", starting April 2, mark a return to **protectionism**. Since 1945, the U.S. supported **free trade** and helped set up the **WTO**. It even pushed for a "tariff-free world by 2015". Now, the shift to **bilateral deals** and **trade barriers** hurts U.S. credibility. Countries like **India**, now in talks, are watching how the U.S. treats partners like **Canada and Mexico**.

4. Anti-Immigration Measures: The U.S. has always been seen as a **land of immigrants**. That image is fading. Trump's team has **rejected DEI policies**. There are visuals of **migrants being deported**. Legal migration is harder. **Visa and Green Card checks** are stricter. A ban on **birthright citizenship** is in court. These changes hurt the U.S.'s image as an **open and welcoming nation**.

5. Pressure on U.S. Education: American universities have long drawn students from across the world. They are seen as symbols of free thought. Now, **student protests face crackdowns**. Some students are being **deported**. Universities may lose funding if they don't follow **government rules** on activism. This has made the U.S. less attractive for foreign students.

Decline of U.S. Influence

Joseph Nye warns that Trump's **coercive, transactional view of power** could erode U.S. soft power, just as **China's aggressive diplomacy** backfired. He notes that Trump isn't solely responsible, and that **checks from courts, public opinion**, and the **2026 Senate races** may moderate his impact. **India is advised to pace negotiations** and avoid premature concessions.

Question for practice:

Examine how recent foreign policy decisions under Trump's second term are weakening the key sources of U.S. soft power.

IAF Concerns Over Indigenous Delays and Dependence

Source: The post IAF Concerns Over Indigenous Delays and Dependence has been created, based on the article "**U.S. defence ties — India needs to keep its eyes open**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 28th March 2025

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

Context: The article discusses the Indian Air Force's (IAF) concerns over delays in indigenous aircraft production amid the Aatmanirbhar Bharat push. Triggered by the IAF chief's critical remarks at Aero India 2025, it examines India's growing defence dependence on the U.S. and the risks to strategic autonomy posed by such reliance.

Reason for Indian Air Force (IAF) facing stress

- 1. Heavy Dependence on HAL:** The IAF depends largely on Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), a defence public sector undertaking.
- 2. Slow Production of Tejas Jets:** HAL's low output of Tejas Mk1A Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) is weakening the IAF's squadron strength.
- 3. Limited Private Sector Involvement:** Despite strong criticism from the IAF chief at Aero India 2025, progress has been limited. Only one rear fuselage—produced by a private company—has been delivered so far, though it was publicly highlighted with the Defence Minister and IAF chief present.

Key realities that caution India against overdependence in defence partnerships

1. India is still a top arms importer

- According to the **SIPRI report (2020–24)**, India remains the **second-largest arms importer** globally.
- Imports have dropped by **9.3%** compared to the 2015–19 period.
- However, **costly platforms** like aircraft, tanks, radars, and special weaponry continue to be imported.
- These imports will likely persist for years, increasing India's dependence and raising the import bill.

2. Indigenous projects still depend on foreign technology

- The IAF has shown full support for indigenous platforms like **Tejas Mk1A, Tejas Mk2, and AMCA**.

- But all these aircraft rely on **American engines**, making India's future air combat power dependent on U.S. policy.
- This raises serious concerns about how India's operational readiness may be affected by shifting **American strategic interests**.

3. Past U.S. defence policies have been short-lived and unreliable

- The **2012 Defence Technology and Trade Initiative** was launched to deepen cooperation and share cutting-edge technologies.
- However, it delivered few meaningful results and gradually lost momentum.
- The newly announced **U.S.-India Major Defence Partnership** also faces uncertainty.
- Under **President Trump**, U.S. foreign policy became **transactional and unpredictable**, showing that partnerships can quickly change.
- This highlights the danger of over-reliance on the U.S. without securing India's **strategic autonomy**.

Conclusion

India must continue essential imports but should avoid critical dependence on any single country. For a **true partnership**, the U.S. must make India **politically indispensable**. At the same time, New Delhi must take a **cautious, interest-driven approach**, ensuring its defence choices are protected against sudden shifts in U.S. policy.

Question for practice:

Examine how delays in indigenous aircraft production and overdependence on foreign defence partners, especially the U.S., impact India's strategic autonomy.

India is improving but facing SDG challenges

Source: The post India is improving but facing SDG challenges has been created, based on the article "**SDGs: Challenges beyond financing**" published in "**Business Standard**" on 28th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context: India's SDG index score has improved from 57 in 2018 to 71 in 2023-24, reflecting notable progress. However, uneven state-level performance, funding gaps, and declining scores in key goals have raised concerns. These developments have triggered a closer examination of challenges in tracking and achieving Sustainable Development Goal targets.

For detailed information on **India's Sustainable Development Goals** [read this article here](#)

India performed on the SDG Index overall and at the state level

1. **Overall Performance:** India's performance on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index has shown significant improvement, with the national index score rising from 57 in 2018 to 71 in 2023-24. This indicates a robust national commitment to achieving the UN SDGs.

2. State-Level Performance:

- There has been a noticeable improvement at the state level, with an average increase of five units in the composite index scores from 2020-21 to 2023-24. Some states have reported even higher increases, up to eight units.
- Kerala and Uttarakhand have excelled by scoring over 80% in eight goals each, marking them as top performers.

- Other states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and West Bengal have achieved scores exceeding 80% in six goals.

3. **Consistent Improvement:** Punjab and West Bengal are notable for showing steady improvements across all goals, contrasting with some states where declines in scores have been observed in up to six goals.

Challenges in tracking and achieving SDG targets

1. **Inadequate Funding:** Developing countries require around \$4 trillion annually to achieve SDG targets. India's current spending may not be sufficient. Though some states like Odisha and Haryana allocate funds for SDGs, progress remains limited in key areas.

2. **Uneven State Performance:** Kerala and Uttarakhand have achieved high scores in eight goals each, while states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and West Bengal have done well in six. However, some states reported a decline in scores for up to six goals.

3. **Decline in Critical Goals:** At least nine states have shown declining performance in Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 10 (Reduced Inequality), and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), indicating persistent challenges in these areas.

4. **Mismatch Between Spending and Outcomes:** Despite significant spending, states like Odisha saw little progress in Goal 4 and Goal 10, Haryana in Goal 16, and Meghalaya in Goal 1 and Goal 4. This shows that higher spending does not always lead to better outcomes.

5. **Measurement Limitations:** Inadequate and delayed data hampers progress tracking. Improvements in the statistical system are underway, but current tools may not fully capture ground-level changes.

6. **Unaccounted Goal Interactions:** Trade-offs and synergies between goals are often overlooked. This can lead to inefficient interventions and poor coordination across sectors.

Conclusion:

India has made commendable progress on the SDG Index, both nationally and in several states. However, funding gaps, uneven development, and declining scores in critical goals highlight the need for focused policy action, better data systems, and coordinated efforts to ensure balanced and inclusive progress across all SDGs.

Question for practice:

Discuss the key achievements and challenges in India's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as reflected in the SDG Index.

India withdraws digital tax and global talks continue

Source: The post India withdraws digital tax and global talks continue has been created, based on the article "A tax that served India's interests – no more" published in "Indian Express" on 28th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy- Taxation

Context: India has decided to withdraw the 6% equalisation levy on online advertising, introduced in 2016. This move revives discussions on the challenges of taxing digital companies. The article explores the evolution of the levy, international responses, negotiations for a global tax framework, and the political-economic factors influencing India's recent decision.

India's Equalisation Levy

1. **Targeting Digital Firms:** The levy aimed at foreign digital companies earning significant revenues from India, which were not paying taxes domestically.

2. **Avoiding Treaty Override:** Introduced through the Finance Act rather than the Income-tax Act, the levy was designed to avoid conflicts with existing tax treaties. This prevented companies from using treaty protections to evade this tax.

3. **Setting a Precedent:** India led by example in taxing digital transactions as international guidelines from bodies like the OECD were unclear and lacked consensus.

4. **Tax Compliance:** Despite their substantial market presence, many multinational digital firms reported low tax payments globally. The levy sought to ensure these companies contributed fairly to India's tax revenues.

5. **Revenue Generation:** By 2022, the levy had generated approximately Rs 40 billion, highlighting its effectiveness as a fiscal tool.

For detailed information on **Equalisation Levy** [read this article here](#)

Global tax system respond to digital taxation

1. The OECD tackled digital taxation under the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project but failed to produce a definitive solution, leaving multiple options on the table.

2. India pioneered by introducing a unilateral 6% equalisation levy in 2016, targeting revenues from foreign digital companies operating in India, which was met with international concern.

3. Global negotiations saw conflicting interests, especially between the US and India. The US favored taxing only surplus profits, while India advocated for taxing profits based on market size.

4. The OECD's prolonged negotiations without consensus led developing nations to support a new UN-led international tax convention in 2024, though achieving consensus remained challenging.

UN role in global digital tax reforms

1. The UN provided an alternative platform for global digital tax discussions when OECD progress was slow.

2. In 2024, the UN gained strong backing from 110 countries for establishing an international tax convention.

3. The UN tax committee proposed a simple withholding tax on digital service payments to prevent double taxation.

4. This withholding tax aimed to introduce fairness and simplicity into the international taxation of digital companies.

5. However, achieving consensus on the UN proposal proved challenging, mirroring the difficulties faced by the OECD.

Reasons for withdrawal of Equalisation Levy

1. **U.S. Pressure:** In 2020, the U.S. declared India's 2% extension of the levy as discriminatory, threatening retaliatory tariffs. To avoid these tariffs, India retracted the 2% tax.

2. **Political Change in the U.S.:** The return of Donald Trump as President intensified pressures, leading India to reconsider the levy to mitigate trade tensions.

3. **Absence of Global Tax Agreement:** The withdrawal occurred in a context where no global consensus on digital taxation had been reached, making unilateral measures like the levy more contentious.

4. **Economic Impact:** The levy, generating Rs 40 billion in 2022, was critiqued for causing double taxation and increasing costs for consumers.

Conclusion

While criticised, the equalisation levy generated Rs 40 billion in 2022 and was a bold assertion of India's tax sovereignty. Its withdrawal amid the absence of a global tax solution raises concerns. The levy remains a symbol of how developing nations can assert fiscal rights through domestic action despite global resistance.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons behind India's decision to withdraw the 6% equalisation levy on digital advertising and its implications for global digital tax reforms.

India seeks greater global role with caution

Source: The post India seeks greater global role with caution has been created, based on the article "U.S. defence ties — India needs to keep its eyes open" published in "The Hindu" on 29th March 2025

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

Context: Russian President Putin's recent praise for PM Modi's efforts in the Ukraine-Russia war highlights India's growing credibility as a global actor. However, this raises a key question: Why has India refrained from a more active political role in regional and international conflicts despite its history of decisive interventions and rising global stature?

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

India's Historical Role in Regional Conflicts

1. In **1971**, India helped stop a genocide in East Pakistan and supported the creation of **Bangladesh**.
2. In **1988**, India sent troops to the **Maldives** to stop armed mercenaries from overthrowing its President.
3. In **2009**, India helped **Sri Lanka** defeat the **Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)**.
4. India has recently taken action against **piracy** in nearby seas.
5. During the **Korean War (1951–52)**, India played a key role in the **UN Security Council** and was made **chair of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission**.
6. India has often acted as a **bridge** between opposing sides, including in its **2021–22 UNSC stint**.
7. These examples show that India has historically taken **bold and active roles** in regional peace and security.

Reasons for India's Political Reticence

1. **Economic Prioritization:** Over the past two decades, under both **UPA** and **NDA** governments, India has focused on **economic growth**, becoming the **world's 5th largest economy**. Political involvement is seen as a risk to development.
2. **Preserving Bilateral Ties:** India avoids interfering in sensitive issues to maintain strong relations with diverse countries.
3. **Leaving Conflicts to Regional Powers:** In regions like **West Asia**, India follows the lead of **Gulf countries**, even though it has major interests there.
4. **Global Order Dynamics:** With increasing geopolitical shifts, India treads carefully to safeguard its standing and future ambitions.
5. **Geopolitical Risks of Inaction:** If India remains passive, others like **Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar** will step in—even in areas crucial to India. For instance, India was **excluded from Afghan talks** and **sidelined in Bangladesh**, despite its proximity.

Changing Global Expectations

1. India's global ambitions—**UNSC permanent seat**, being a leading democracy, and a **pole in a multipolar world**—bring rising expectations.
2. India's **neutral stance** in the Ukraine war influenced other developing nations to take a balanced position.
3. PM Modi's message that **"this is not an era of war"** and his call to avoid nuclear escalation were globally recognised.
4. **Putin's praise** is not just a thank you, but a **subtle signal** for India to take a larger role.

Need for Strategic Shift and Internal Reform

1. India must move from **bilateral to regional strategies**, especially in **West Asia, Central Asia, and East Asia**.
2. It should re-engage with forums like the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** and revisit its **RCEP decision**.
3. Internal **economic reforms** are needed to meet **U.S. trade expectations** and build deeper global ties.
4. India doesn't have to **mediate**, but must show its **readiness to lead** in peace and security.
5. India's early leadership in the **Korean War**, despite its poverty, shows that proactive diplomacy is possible and respected.

Conclusion

India should not view geopolitics and economic development as conflicting. A more active global role, without necessarily becoming a mediator, will enhance India's standing. In a changing world order, India must assert itself as a responsible and capable power.

Question for practice:

Examine why India, despite its history of decisive interventions and rising global stature, has refrained from playing a more active political role in regional and international conflicts.

Africa explores nuclear energy amid global competition and crisis

Source: The post Africa explores nuclear energy amid global competition and crisis has been created, based on the article **"Advantage China in Africa's nuclear energy market race"** published in **"The Hindu"** on 29th March 2025

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

Context: The Russia-Ukraine war exposed Europe's energy vulnerability, prompting a global rethink on energy security. Although Africa is geographically distant, the crisis affected it too. African countries are now exploring nuclear energy as a long-term solution to expand electricity access and strengthen their energy mix.

For detailed information on **Status of Nuclear Energy in India** [read this article here](#)

Africa's Emerging Nuclear Energy Sector

1. **France's Decline:** Once the dominant player, **France** is now losing its hold, especially in **Francophone Africa**.
2. **U.S. Initiatives:** Since **2023**, the **US-Africa Nuclear Energy Summit (USANES)** has been held. However, future progress depends on **U.S. President Donald Trump's** stance on nuclear expansion in Africa.

3. **Russia's Slow Progress:** Russia has signed nuclear agreements with **Egypt, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Burundi**. Its firm **Rosatom** is building a reactor in **El Dabaa, Egypt**, but progress is slow. Due to **economic challenges and sanctions**, Russia may struggle to fund projects in distant African countries, despite MoUs with pro-Russian governments.

4. **South Korea's Entry:** South Korea, through **KHNP**, has shown growing interest in investing in Africa's nuclear sector.

China's Strategic Lead

1. **China** has become the leading player. Since **2012**, it has trained African students through scholarships in partnership with the **IAEA** to promote its procedures and technologies.

2. Its state-owned giants — **China General Nuclear Power Group (CGN)** and **China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC)** — lead its efforts.

3. At the **2024 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)**, **Nigeria** signed an MoU with China for complete cooperation in nuclear plant development and operation.

4. **Uganda** also signed an MoU to build a **2 GW** plant, with the first **1 GW** unit set to start by **2031**.

5. **Kenya** plans to have a research reactor by **2030**, while **Ghana** is working with **U.S. and Chinese** firms on **SMRs** and **large reactors**.

Implications for India

1. **India** currently generates **8,180 MW** of nuclear power and aims to reach **100 GW** by **2047**.

2. To achieve this, India must secure **uranium supplies from Africa**. It has signed a nuclear deal with **Namibia** and is exploring **projects in Niger and Namibia**.

3. However, **China's dominance** and stronger financial capacity may restrict India's access to African uranium and reduce its role in the continent's nuclear future, threatening **India's long-term energy security**.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the Russia-Ukraine war influenced Africa's interest in nuclear energy and the global competition shaping its nuclear future.

AI literacy is essential for India's growth and innovation

Source: The post AI literacy is essential for India's growth and innovation has been created, based on the article "**In the new reading and writing, what will India's role be?**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 29th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-science and technology-Awareness in IT, Space, Computers, and Robotics.

Context: In 1947, India's literacy rate was just 12%; today, it exceeds 75%. This remarkable increase has significantly boosted India's economic growth, global competitiveness, and innovation. Now, with the rising prominence of artificial intelligence (AI), another critical shift emerges, highlighting the necessity of AI literacy for India's next generation.

For detailed information on **India can lead AI with innovation and strategy** [read this article here](#)

Importance of AI Literacy:

1. Just as reading and writing were essential during the industrial era, **AI literacy is vital in today's AI-driven age**.

2. Historically, literacy enabled economic mobility, political participation, and innovation. Similarly, **AI literacy now determines economic competitiveness and technological leadership**, shaping whether individuals actively contribute to the future or remain passive consumers.

Nature of AI Literacy:

1. AI literacy goes beyond coding or programming and emphasizes three key areas:

- **Human-AI Collaboration:** Understanding AI systems and working effectively with them.
- **Critical AI Awareness:** Interpreting AI-generated content critically to identify biases, fairness, and ethical issues.
- **Problem-solving with AI:** Creatively using AI to solve real-world challenges without needing programming skills.

2. AI literacy fundamentally involves problem-solving, abstraction, and systems thinking, aligning closely with computational thinking promoted globally since the early 2000s by scholars like Jeannette Wing.

Current Challenges in India:

1. India's approach to computational thinking and AI education has been narrow, largely industry-focused, and often limited to IT-specific training programs.

2. Such an approach is inadequate, as **AI now impacts all sectors, including education, workplaces, banking, legal systems, and entertainment**.

3. Comprehensive AI literacy must therefore reach every segment of Indian society, irrespective of age, occupation, or location.

For detailed information on **India lagging behind in AI innovation** [read this article here](#)

Opportunity and Need for Strategic Action:

1. Historically, India has mainly provided back-office services and IT outsourcing, limiting its global innovation role.

2. AI offers India an opportunity to move beyond this limited role and emerge as a global leader in innovation.

3. Early examples like **Wadhvani AI's agricultural innovations and Sarvam AI's generative AI technologies** demonstrate India's potential.

4. Realizing this potential, however, requires significant investment in AI education, research, and entrepreneurship.

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

Proposed Initiatives:

1. A national AI literacy initiative is essential. Policymakers must integrate AI into school curricula, industries should prioritize workforce upskilling, and civil society needs to ensure equitable access to AI literacy.

2. Specific actionable steps include:

- Developing a **national K-12 AI literacy curriculum** accessible to all students.

- Establishing **experiential AI maker labs and tinkering spaces** nationwide.
- Investing in **workforce reskilling and future-focused employment readiness**.

2. Launching a **culturally inclusive national AI literacy platform** connecting government, business, education, and civil society stakeholders.

For detailed information on **Recommendations for development of Artificial general intelligence in India** [read this article here](#)

Conclusion:

AI literacy is critical for India's economic competitiveness, innovation, and societal wellbeing. Just as traditional literacy unlocked human potential, **AI literacy presents India with a transformative opportunity**, determining whether India will lead or lag behind globally in the AI era.

Question for practice:

Examine how AI literacy can shape India's future economic competitiveness and societal development.