9 PM Current Affairs Monthly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination

March 2025

UPSC

सत्यमेव जयते

Features :

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

INDEX

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Wetlands are disappearing and need urgent protection

Source: The post Wetlands are disappearing and need urgent protection has been created, based on the article "**The necessity of mainstreaming wetland conservation**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 1st March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Environment- Conservation

Context: The article discusses the importance of wetlands and their conservation. It highlights global and Indian wetland loss due to urbanization, climate change, and pollution. It stresses better management, stronger policies, and integrating wetlands into development plans for sustainability and climate change mitigation.

For detailed information on **What are Ramsar Sites, and what is the significance of this listing?** read this article here

What Is the Global Importance of Wetlands?

1. Vital Ecosystems: Wetlands cover **6% of the Earth's surface** but provide **40.6% of global ecosystem services**.

2. **Biodiversity Hotspots:** Since **1970, 81% of inland wetland species and 36% of coastal species** have declined.

3. **Rapid Decline:** Wetland surface area decreased **35% between 1970 and 2015**.

4. **Climate Mitigation:** Wetlands store carbon and help regulate climate change.

5. **Economic Loss:** In **Cali, Colombia**, wetland degradation caused a loss of **$76,827 per hectare annually** in urban areas.

6. The **COP14 meeting (2022)** stressed linking wetland conservation with **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Global Biodiversity Framework, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.**

What Are the Major Threats to Wetlands?

Wetlands face serious threats from urbanization, industrialization, and climate change.

1. **Global Loss:** Since 1900, 50% of wetlands have disappeared. Between 1970 and 2015, wetland surface area declined by 35%. The Wetland Extent Trends (WET) index shows a loss of 0.78% per year.

2. **Loss of Species:** Since 1970, 81% of inland wetland species and 36% of coastal and marine species have declined.

What Is the Situation of Wetlands in India?

1. India is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention. By **2023, India had 75 Ramsar sites covering 1.33 million hectares**, which is only 8% of India's **15.98 million hectares** of mapped wetlands.

2. **Types of Wetlands:** India has **66.6% natural wetlands (43.9% inland, 22.7% coastal).**

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3. **Wetland Loss in India:**

• **30% of natural wetlands lost in four decades** (WISA study).

• **Mumbai lost 71% of its wetlands (1970–2014).**

• **East Kolkata Wetlands shrank by 36% (1991–2021).**

• **Chennai lost 85% of its wetlands (WWF study).**

What Needs to Be Done?

1. India's wetland conservation efforts focus on ecology but ignore **land use changes, human impact, and governance issues.**

2. Wetlands also store and release carbon, so their role in **climate change mitigation** must be studied.

3. Wetland conservation should be part of **urban planning, economic policies, and climate strategies.**

4. The **Ramsar COP14** suggested an **ecosystem-based approach** to integrate wetlands into development plans.

Question for practice;

Examine the major threats to wetlands and their impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

How India Can Boost Textile Jobs and Exports

Source: The post How India Can Boost Textile Jobs and Exports has been created, based on the article "**India can be the world leader in textiles. Here's how**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 1st March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy-Industry

Context: The article discusses how India's textile industry can create more jobs and boost exports. It highlights India's advantages and challenges. It suggests building textile hubs in labor-rich areas, providing worker housing, improving efficiency, and using technology to compete globally and grow the sector.

For detailed information on **Textile Sector in India** read this article here

How Can the Textile Industry Help India Become Viksit Bharat by 2047?

1. The textile and apparel industry is **India's second-largest employer**, providing **45 million direct jobs**.

2. It is growing at **10% annually** and is expected to become a **$250 billion market by 2030**.

3. If **exports rise from $45 billion to $100 billion**, the sector can create **one million jobs every year** until 2030.

What Are India's Strengths and Challenges in the Global Textile Market?

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1. Global markets are looking at India as **China, Bangladesh, and Vietnam face issues** like geopolitics and internal disruptions.

2. India has advantages like **a stable economy, strong global relationships, a long textile tradition, and a young workforce**.

3. However, India faces a **15-20% cost disadvantage** compared to competitors due to lower labor efficiency.

4. The **high worker attrition rate (10%)** and the mismatch between **job locations and labor availability** further add to challenges.

What Government Policies Can Boost the Sector?

1. The government has introduced major schemes to support the textile industry:

• **PM MITRA Parks** – To create textile hubs where labor is available.

• **PLI Scheme** – To boost production and investment.

• **RoSCTL Scheme** – To make Indian exports globally competitive.
 2. The government can also **support industrial housing** by providing **grants, FSI relaxations, or GST exemptions**, reducing costs for workers and improving productivity.

What Can Be Done to Improve Jobs and Competitiveness?

1. **Set up factories in labor-rich states** like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, and Madhya Pradesh.

2. Reduce worker migration issues by providing **housing near factories**, like China.

3. **Empower women**, who make up **90% of the workforce**, by ensuring safer and stable jobs.

4. **Use automation wisely** to **increase efficiency** without reducing jobs.
 5. With these changes, India can **increase its global market share** and become a **leading textile exporter**.

Question for practice:

Examine how government policies like PM MITRA Parks, PLI Scheme, and RoSCTL Scheme can address the challenges faced by India's textile industry and boost its global competitiveness.

How AI Power is Shifting Globally

Source: The post How AI Power is Shifting Globally has been created, based on the article "**On AI, the big leap India needs**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 1st March 2025

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

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Context: The article discusses the shifting AI power balance, China's rapid AI advancements, and global competition. It highlights India's need to lead in AI with top talent, innovation, and a human-centric approach to achieve its goal of becoming developed by 2047.

For detailed information on **DeepSeek's AI Disruption and Lessons for India** read this article here

How Did DeepSeek Challenge the AI Landscape?

1. **Launch of DeepSeek-R1:** DeepSeek, a Chinese startup, introduced its AI model DeepSeek-R1 in January, directly competing with OpenAI's GPT-4.

2. **Open Source and Free:** Unlike many other high-performing AI models, DeepSeek-R1 is open source and available for free, making it accessible to a broader audience.

3. **Technological Innovation:** This development is not just a technological achievement but also a strategic move, showcasing that innovation can be driven by efficiency and strategic planning, not just resources.

4. **Shift in AI Power:** The emergence of DeepSeek-R1 is a warning to established AI powers, highlighting a shift towards more distributed AI leadership globally.

What Were the Key Outcomes of the AI Action Summit in Paris?

1. Leaders from nearly **100 nations** attended the summit to shape AI's future. They agreed to prioritize **AI growth** over heavy regulations.

2. France announced a **€109 billion AI investment plan** to boost competitiveness.

3. **President Macron** and **Finland's Minister Timo Harakka** committed to reducing AI regulations in Europe.

4. **India** promoted a **human-centric AI approach**, focusing on jobs, environment, and social well-being.

5. The summit emphasized **inclusive and sustainable AI** to drive economic growth responsibly.

How is China Advancing in AI Despite Restrictions?

China improved AI by focusing on efficiency due to export controls. Key developments include:

• **Pure Reinforcement Learning:** AI learns from real-world feedback.

• **Mixture-of-Experts (MoE) Architecture:** Reduces cost by using fewer parameters per task.

• **Multi-Head Latent Attention:** Enhances data processing by understanding complex relationships.
 • China also shifted from NVIDIA's CUDA to PTX to reduce dependence on external technology.

What Steps Did the US Take to Maintain AI Leadership?

1. On **January 13**, former President Biden introduced an **Interim Final Rule** to control **GPU exports**, limiting access to advanced AI technologies for adversaries.

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2. On **January 14**, he signed an **executive order** to promote **clean energy for AI data centers** by directing federal agencies to lease land for infrastructure projects powered by low- or zero-carbon energy sources.

3. These measures aimed to secure the US's AI leadership by controlling critical resources and ensuring AI development is sustainable and resilient.

What is India's AI Goal for 2047?

1. India aims to become a developed nation (**Viksit Bharat**) by 2047.

2. The focus is on **world-class AI talent** to boost global competitiveness.

3. Advanced **R&D and innovation** are needed to create new technologies, not just use them.

4. At the AI Action Summit, Prime Minister Modi emphasized that AI must serve society responsibly.

5. India's AI strategy is **bold, visionary, and ambitious** to lead AI disruption, not just follow.

Question for practice:

Examine how the launch of DeepSeek-R1 has challenged the existing AI power balance globally.

Trump's Anti-Zelenskyy Stand Advances Authoritarian Forces Worldwide

Source: The post Trump's Anti-Zelenskyy Stand Advances Authoritarian Forces Worldwide has been created, based on the article "**Multiple bullies at work, out to create a 'multipolar world'**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 3rd 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: The article criticizes the rise of an "illiberal international" led by leaders like Trump, Putin, and others, threatening democracy. It urges defending universal human rights and supporting Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression and authoritarian influence.

Why is Donald Trump Criticizing Volodymyr Zelenskyy?

1. Donald Trump criticizes Volodymyr Zelenskyy, calling him a "dictator" with a "4% approval rating."

2. Trump suggests peace with Russia is possible only if Zelenskyy steps down.

3. This aligns with Vladimir Putin's goal of installing a pro-Russian government in Ukraine.

4. Trump's stance reflects John Mearsheimer's view that Ukraine's democracy threatens Russia.

5. Trump and his allies, like J.D. Vance, support authoritarian models in Europe, opposing liberal democracy.

6. They favor an "illiberal international" challenging universal democratic values and human rights.

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What is John Mearsheimer's Perspective on Ukraine's Democracy?

1. Political scientist John Mearsheimer views Ukraine's pursuit of a liberal democracy as an existential threat to Russia.

2. He argues that the geopolitical realities of living next to a powerful Russia make a democratic Ukraine unfeasible.

3. Mearsheimer suggests that Ukraine must consider Russian interests closely to avoid provocation and conflict.

4. He defines the situation as "great-power politics," where smaller nations must align with the interests of neighboring great powers.

5. In his opinion, the ideal of Ukrainians choosing their political system freely is not realistic in the current multipolar world order.

How Does Russia Influence Neighboring Nations?

1. **Support for Authoritarian Regimes:**

• Russia backs authoritarian leaders in neighboring countries like Belarus and Kazakhstan to maintain control and suppress democratic movements.

• Example: Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko has openly preferred a dictatorship, which has been brutal in suppressing democratic protests with Russian military support.

2. **Influence in Political Policies:**

• Russia's influence extends to promoting policies that align with its interests, discouraging neighboring countries from adopting Western democratic standards.

• Example: In Belarus and Kazakhstan, Russia's support has helped enforce regimes that limit freedoms and crack down on opposition, mirroring Russian domestic policies.

What is the Goal of the "Illiberal International"?

1. The goal of the "Illiberal International" is to establish a world order that favors authoritarian values over democratic norms.

2. Leaders like former U.S. President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán promote this vision.

3. They oppose universal human rights and push for national policies that reflect authoritarian ideals, like Hungary's declared aim for an "illiberal democracy."

4. Examples include Trump's support for right-wing groups in Germany and Orbán's refusal to honor international warrants against authoritarian leaders.

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5. This group undermines democratic institutions and supports laws that restrict freedoms, such as those banning "gay propaganda" in Russia.

Why is Defending Ukraine Important for Global Democracy?

1. **Countering Authoritarian Influence:** Defending Ukraine is crucial to resist the spread of authoritarian regimes led by Russia and supported by figures like Trump and Orbán.

2. **Support for Democracy:** Ukraine's fight symbolizes resistance against Russia's push to install a pro-Russian government that opposes liberal democracy.

3. **Global Political Stability:** A free Ukraine promotes stability and counters the "multipolar world" ideal where major powers dominate smaller neighbors.

4. **Example of Belarus and Kazakhstan:** The suppression of democracy in Belarus and Kazakhstan with Russian support highlights the threat posed to democratic systems by authoritarian powers seeking to expand their influence.

5. **Impact on the EU and U.S.:** Strengthening Ukraine helps prevent the rise of far-right movements and illiberal policies in the EU and the U.S., promoting broader democratic governance.

Question for practice:

Examine how the rise of the "illiberal international" challenges universal democratic values and influences the geopolitical situation in Ukraine.

Three-language formula burdens public school students

Source: The post Three-language formula burdens public school students has been created, based on the article "**The student and the three language debate**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 3rd March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Polity

Context: The article argues that making three languages compulsory in schools burdens public school students without clear benefits. It suggests focusing on improving teaching quality and English proficiency instead, and offering Hindi as an optional third language from middle school.

For detailed information on **Three-Language Formula** read this article here

Who are the most affected by the three-language formula?

1. Public school students in Tamil Nadu are the most affected by the three-language formula. They make up about 55% of school enrolments in the state. Unlike private school students, they cannot afford extra coaching or tuition.

2. Many struggle with basic literacy, as shown by the ASER Survey 2024, which found that 88% of Class 3 students in Tamil Nadu lack basic literacy skills.

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3. Adding a third language may worsen their burden instead of helping them compete with more privileged students.

Is the NEP's hypothesis on language learning valid?

1. The NEP claims that learning three languages improves cognitive ability, job mobility, and national integration.

2. However, advancing technology, like AI, reduces the need for multiple language proficiency for knowledge acquisition.

3. Research shows a strong foundation in the mother tongue is better than learning many languages.

4. Focusing on quality teaching and English proficiency would benefit public school students more than adding a third language.

What are the challenges in implementing the three-language formula?

1. **Burden on Public School Students:** Public school students, who form 55% of enrolment in Tamil Nadu, cannot afford extra coaching like private school students.

2. **Funding Constraints and Teacher Availability:** About 80%-90% of Tamil Nadu's education budget is spent on teacher salaries, leaving limited funds for infrastructure. This financial strain makes it difficult to hire competent third-language teachers and improve facilities needed for effective language education.

3. **Ineffective Language Learning:** Research suggests a strong foundation in the mother tongue is more beneficial than learning multiple languages.

For detailed information on **The Three-Language Formula and Its Challenges** read this article here

What should be done?

1. **Improve Teaching Quality and Learning Outcomes:** Focus on enhancing teaching standards instead of adding a third language, ensuring students grasp core subjects effectively.

2. **Develop Critical Skills:** Use limited school time to build curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity, which are vital for the 21st century.

4. **Offer Hindi as an Option:** Introduce Hindi as an optional third language in middle school, based on demand and national trends.

4. **Avoid Rigid Political Stances:** Maintain a balanced approach to language education to ensure students' national competitiveness.

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges faced by public school students in Tamil Nadu due to the implementation of the three-language formula.

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India's Gender Budget 2025 lacks care investments

Source: The post India's Gender Budget 2025 lacks care investments has been created, based on the article "**Centring care in India's economic policy**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 3rd 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: The article highlights India's increased Gender Budget. This growth mostly stems from the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, not from new care investments. Women face heavy unpaid care burdens. The government must invest in care infrastructure. That fosters inclusive growth and empowerment.

For detailed information on **Union Budget 2025-26 supports women's economic growth** read this article here

What is the main highlight of the Gender Budget 2025?

1. The Union Budget for 2025 allocated a record ₹4,49,028.68 crore to the Gender Budget (GB).

2. This is a 37.3% increase from FY24, making up 8.86% of the total Budget.

3. The rise is mainly due to the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, which covers 24% of the GB.

4. However, there were no significant investments in care infrastructure or new gender-responsive schemes.

Why is care infrastructure important for women?

1. Globally, women spend about 17.8% of their time on unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW).

2. In India, women do 40% more UCDW than those in South Africa and China.

3. The International Labour Organization reports that 53% of Indian women are outside the labour force due to care responsibilities, compared to just 1.1% of men.

4. Poor women often work 17–19 hours daily, balancing paid work and household duties. This leads to **'time poverty**' and affects their well-being.

What challenges do women in the Global South face?

1. Women in the Global South perform a wide range of unpaid tasks beyond household chores, including farming, water and fuel collection, and cooking.

2. They spend up to 73% of their time on unpaid activities due to poor infrastructure.

3. Indian women spend nearly five hours daily collecting water, compared to 1.5 hours for men.

4. Climate change worsens this burden, with water-related unpaid labour in India projected to reach $1.4 billion by 2050.

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5. Limited public investment and social norms assign care work to women, increasing their workload.

What solutions does the Economic Survey propose?

1. **Increase Care Investments**: Allocate more funds to care infrastructure. Despite a 37.3% rise in the Gender Budget for 2025, there were no substantial investments in care infrastructure.

2. **Expand Access to Water**: Strengthen the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) for 100% potable water coverage by 2028, as women spend nearly five hours daily collecting water compared to 1.5 hours for men.

3. **Adopt the 'Three R Framework'**: Implement Recognise, Reduce, Redistribute, and Represent unpaid care work. Investing 2% of GDP in care infrastructure could create 11 million jobs.

4. **Use the Urban Challenge Fund**: Utilise the ₹1 lakh crore fund to develop care infrastructure, inspired by Bogotá's Care Blocks, to reduce women's unpaid work.

5. **Involve Women in Decision-Making**: Enhance women's representation to ensure gender-responsive policies, which can be six to seven times more effective.

Question for practice:

Examine how the lack of investment in care infrastructure despite the increased Gender Budget for 2025 impacts women's unpaid care burdens in India.

Trump's Tariff Plan Threatens India's Exports

Source: The post Trump's Tariff Plan Threatens India's Exports has been created, based on the article "**Trump's America First, an opening for Indian farms**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 3rd 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: The article discusses how US President Donald Trump's plan for "reciprocal tariffs" could hurt India's agricultural exports. It urges India to negotiate smartly, lower tariffs, and invest in agriculture to remain competitive and keep the US as a key trade partner.

For detailed information on **Trump's Policies Impact India's Economy and Workers** read this article here

What are Reciprocal Tariffs and Why is Trump Proposing Them?

1. US President Donald Trump plans to impose "reciprocal tariffs" to reduce the US trade deficit, which rose to $918.4 billion in 2024 from $784.9 billion in 2023.

2. The largest deficit was with China at $295.4 billion, while India accounted for $45.7 billion.

3. Trump criticized India's high tariffs, calling it the "tariff king," and hinted that India would not be exempt from these tariffs.

4. The goal is to match the import tariffs that other countries impose on US goods.

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How Do India's Tariffs Compare to the US Tariffs?

1. India's simple average tariff is 17%, much higher than the US average of 3.3%.

2. The trade-weighted average tariff in India is 12%, compared to 2.2% in the US.

3. The difference is significant in agriculture: India's simple average tariff is 39% and trade-weighted average is 65%, while the US has 5% and 4%, respectively.

4. This gap makes Indian agricultural exports to the US vulnerable if reciprocal tariffs are imposed.

Which Indian and US Goods are Affected the Most?

1. The US is India's largest agricultural export market, with a surplus of $3.46 billion in 2023-24.

2. India exports shrimp, basmati rice, processed foods, and honey to the US. Key US exports to India include almonds, cotton, ethanol, and soybean oil.

3. High Indian tariffs affect US exports like whiskey (150%), walnuts and chicken legs (100%), skimmed milk powder (60%), and GM crops.

4. India bans GM soy and maize despite rising demand for animal feed and ethanol production, which frustrates the US.

What Can India Do to Address This Challenge?

1. India needs to negotiate smartly to retain the US market.

2. It has shown willingness to reduce tariffs selectively, like cutting tariffs on Washington apples from 50% to 15%.

3. Phased reductions in tariffs for food preparations (150%), walnuts (100%), cut chicken legs (100%), and dairy products (30–60%) can help ease tensions.

4. Seeking market access for Indian goods with a comparative advantage can balance the trade.

5. Improving R&D investments, which are below 0.5% of agri-GDP, is essential to stay competitive.

How Can India's Agricultural Trade Benefit in the Long Run?

1. India should shift from heavy tariff protection to a strategy focused on competitiveness.

2. Investing at least 1% of agri-GDP in R&D and enhancing export value chains can help.

3. Developing agri-export hubs with APEDA's support and targeting high-value commodities like bananas, mangoes, and pomegranates can expand export potential.

4. Effective negotiations and smart investments can turn Trump's tariff threats into an opportunity for India's agricultural growth.

Question for practice:

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Evaluate how India's high agricultural tariffs impact its trade relations with the United States in light of President Donald Trump's proposal for reciprocal tariffs.

Supreme Court decision may limit orans' community control

Source: The post Supreme Court decision may limit orans' community control has been created, based on the article "**The way to protect orans**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 4th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Environment-Conservation

Context: The article discusses the Supreme Court's move to protect orans (sacred forests) in Rajasthan by formalizing their governance but argues that this may limit community control. It suggests empowering existing informal community institutions instead of imposing centralized formal regulations.

For detailed information on **Implications of Supreme Court order on sacred groves** read this article here

What are Orans and Why are They Important?

1. Orans are sacred forests in Rajasthan, preserved by local communities since pre-agrarian times.

2. Each oran has a local deity, and cutting trees is prohibited due to religious beliefs.

3. Orans enhance local fauna and support water sources by trapping runoff, increasing groundwater levels.

4. They are part of informal watershed management in some villages.

5. Orans hold socio-religious, ecological, and economic importance for local communities.

What Did the Supreme Court Decide About Orans?

1. In December 2024, the Supreme Court recognized the socio-cultural and ecological value of orans in *T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India*.

2. It declared orans as "forests" under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, ensuring legal protection.

3. The Court suggested declaring orans as "community reserves" under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

4. It recommended classifying orans as "common forest land" under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

5. The Court advised the Environment Ministry to create a comprehensive policy for orans, considering informal governance models.

What Problems Arise from Formalizing Orans?

1. **Loss of Community Access:** Local communities in Rajasthan fear losing access to orans if they are declared as "forests" under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. *Down To Earth* reported this concern in May 2024.

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2. **Exemptions Dilute Protection:** The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023, exempts activities like zoos, safaris, and ecotourism from needing central approval for forest land use. This could open orans to such uses, undermining their conservation.

3. **State Control Limits Local Governance:** Declaring orans as "community reserves" under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, would place ultimate control with the State. Management committees would only handle managerial tasks, not decision-making.

4. **Eligibility Barriers for Informal Institutions:** Informal community institutions managing orans might not qualify for rights under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. They could lose management rights if they do not meet the Act's criteria.

Question for practice:

Examine how the Supreme Court's decision to formalize the governance of orans in Rajasthan might impact the traditional community-based management of these sacred forests.

Australia Supports India's Growth and UN Seat

Source: The post Australia Supports India's Growth and UN Seat has been created, based on the article "**Australia, the partner for India's growth trajectory**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 4th 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: The article talks about Australia's belief in India's economic growth and supports India's UN Security Council seat. It highlights a new Roadmap to boost ties through trade, clean energy, education, and more, using shared strengths and the Indian diaspora.

For detailed information on **India-Australia relations** read this article here

Why Does Australia Believe in India's Economic Growth?

1. **Economic Projection:** Australia predicts India will be the third largest economy by 2030, indicating significant economic potential.

2. **UN Security Council Support:** Australia backs India's bid for a UN Security Council seat, recognizing its growing global influence.

3. **Complementary Economies:** The two countries' economies are interlinked; Australia produces critical resources like lithium, nickel, and cobalt, essential for India's burgeoning electric vehicle sector.

4. **Trade Growth:** India's exports to Australia have increased by 66% over the past five years, nearly double the growth rate of its global exports, demonstrating robust economic engagement.

What Is the New Roadmap for Australia-India Economic Ties?

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1. **Introduction of the Roadmap**: Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese launched the new Roadmap for Australia's Economic Engagement with India. It aims to enhance bilateral relations based on mutual economic interests.

2. **Focus Areas**: The Roadmap identifies four main sectors for growth: clean energy, education and skills, agribusiness, and tourism.

3. **Additional Sectors**: It also highlights seven more sectors for collaboration: investment, technology, sports, culture and arts, resources, defence, space, and health.

4. **Trade Growth**: Since the 2018 economic strategy and the signing of the ECTA, India's exports to Australia have grown by 66%, compared to a 35% increase to the world.

How Are Trade Relations Between India and Australia Growing?

1. Trade relations between India and Australia have grown significantly, underpinned by the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA).

2. Over the past five years, India's exports to Australia have increased by 66%, which is nearly double the global growth rate of India's exports at 35%.

3. This growth rate highlights the successful economic integration and mutual benefits derived from the ECTA.

How Is the Indian Diaspora Strengthening Ties?

1. The Indian diaspora in Australia, which numbers over 10 lakh people, plays a crucial role in enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries.

2. Australia recognizes the value of this 'human bridge' and is investing ₹22 crore into the Maitri grants program to leverage the diaspora's potential for creating business opportunities and deepening mutual understanding.

3. The establishment of the Centre for Australia India Relations, supported with ₹132 crore from the Australian government, is led by eminent Australians of Indian origin, further strengthening ties.

Question for practice:

Evaluate how the Roadmap for Australia's Economic Engagement with India plans to utilize the strengths of the Indian diaspora to enhance bilateral relations.

How China's Communist Party Controls Foreign Policy

Source: The post How China's Communist Party Controls Foreign Policy has been created, based on the article "**How is China's foreign policy structured?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 4th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-International Relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
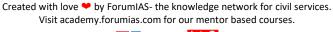
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Context: The article explains how China's foreign policy is controlled by the Communist Party (CPC). The top decision-makers are the Politburo Standing Committee and the Foreign Affairs Commission, led by President Xi Jinping. The International Liaison Department handles party-to-party diplomacy, while the Foreign Ministry manages state-to-state relations, following the party's directives.

For detailed information on **Global Impacts of China's European Strategy and India's Foreign Policy** read this article here

Who makes the key decisions in China's foreign policy?

1. The **Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC)** is at the top of all political decision-making in China, setting overall policy direction.

2. The **CPC Central Committee's Foreign Affairs Commission (FAC)** is responsible for policy coordination and decision-making. It is led by **President Xi Jinping** as head and **Li Qiang** as deputy.

3. **Wang Yi** heads the **Office of the FAC**, which handles agenda setting, gathering information from line agencies, and making recommendations.

4. The **International Liaison Department (IDCPC)**, led by **Liu Jianchao**, manages the CPC's diplomatic outreach to political parties in more than **150 countries** to boost CPC's international legitimacy.

5. The **United Front Work Department (UFWD)**, led by **Shi Taifeng**, manages relations with overseas Chinese, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and influences narratives about ethnic minorities in **Tibet and Xinjiang**.

What role does the International Liaison Department play?

1. The International Liaison Department of the CPC (IDCPC) handles the CPC's diplomatic outreach.

2. It connects with political parties in over 150 countries to boost the CPC's international legitimacy.

3. IDCPC is led by Liu Jianchao, a former diplomat and spokesperson.

4. It operates through regional bureaus like 'South and Southeast Asian Affairs.'

5. IDCPC has hosted delegations from major Indian political parties.

6. Its work complements state-to-state diplomacy and enhances China's influence globally.

7. IDCPC's head holds a rank equal to state council ministers but outranks them in party hierarchy.

How does the United Front Work Department influence foreign policy?

1. The United Front Work Department (UFWD) is led by Politburo member Shi Taifeng.

2. It manages relations with the overseas Chinese diaspora and oversees Hong Kong and Taiwan affairs.

3. The UFWD controls narratives about ethnic minorities in Tibet and Xinjiang.

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4. It seeks to influence international views on China by engaging with intellectuals abroad.

5. This approach helps the CPC expand its influence and legitimacy globally.

6. The UFWD's activities show how the CPC integrates foreign and domestic policy strategies.

What is the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)?

1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is a governmental body under the state council, responsible for implementing China's foreign policy.

2. It is led by the Foreign Minister, whose influence in the party hierarchy has varied over time.

3. In the past, it was headed by Premier Zhou Enlai, but its power later declined.

4. MFA communicates China's positions on foreign policy, security, and domestic politics through statements and press releases.

5. Xi Jinping has increased the MFA's stature by regularly instructing its officials directly, showing a 'top-level design' in foreign policy.

What other bodies contribute to China's foreign policy?

Other influential bodies include the National Security Commission, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and the National People's Congress. They have diplomatic roles and align with CPC directives. This multi-level foreign policy setup requires careful attention from Indian policymakers.

Question for practice:

Examine how the Communist Party of China (CPC) integrates various departments and bodies to execute its foreign policy effectively.

India Taxes and Regulates Virtual Digital Assets

Source: The post India Taxes and Regulates Virtual Digital Assets has been created, based on the article "**The implications of treating Virtual Digital Assets as taxable properties**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 4th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy

Context: The article explains how India's Income Tax Bill, 2025, classifies Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs) like crypto and NFTs as property and capital assets. It details their taxation, reporting rules, and aligns India's approach with global standards for better regulation.

For detailed information on **Virtual digital assets(VDAs) and India's stand on it** read this article here

How does India classify Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs) in the Income Tax Bill, 2025?

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1. India's Income Tax Bill, 2025, defines VDAs in Section 2(111) and classifies them explicitly as *property* (Section 92(5)(f)) and *capital assets* (Section 76(1)) for the first time.

2. This classification includes crypto assets, Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), and similar digital assets.

3. The move aligns India's approach with countries like the U.K., Australia, and New Zealand, which treat digital assets as property, and the U.S., where many crypto assets are considered securities.

How are VDAs taxed under the new bill?

1. The bill continues the 30% tax on income from VDA transfers, introduced in 2022.

2. No deductions are allowed except for the cost of acquisition, which means expenses like mining, transaction fees, and platform commissions cannot be deducted.

3. For example, if someone sells Ethereum bought for ₹5 lakh at ₹7 lakh, the ₹2 lakh profit is taxed at a flat 30%, with no relief for transaction costs.

4. This tax treatment is stricter compared to the UAE, where some VDA gains are not taxed. Additionally, a 1% TDS (Tax Deducted at Source) applies on VDA transfers, even in peer-to-peer (P2P) transactions.

5. The exemption threshold for TDS is ₹50,000 for small traders and ₹10,000 for others.

What are the reporting and compliance requirements for VDAs?

1. Section 301 mandates that individuals report VDA holdings in tax filings. Unreported VDAs can be taxed as undisclosed income.

2. Section 524(1) empowers tax authorities to seize VDAs during investigations or tax raids, similar to the seizure of cash, gold, or real estate. This is in line with practices in the U.K., where courts can freeze or seize crypto assets.

3. Section 509 requires entities dealing in VDAs, including exchanges and individual traders, to report transactions in a prescribed format.

4. VDAs must also be included in Annual Information Statements (AIS) to ensure all crypto transactions are recorded.

How does India's approach align with global standards?

1. India's classification of VDAs as property and capital assets aligns with practices in the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S.

2. This helps in taxing, regulating, and seizing VDAs, preventing their misuse for illicit activities.

3. However, despite these developments, India lacks a comprehensive regulatory framework for VDAs.

4. Key areas like investor protection, market regulation, and enforcement mechanisms remain unaddressed, highlighting the need for a more cohesive policy approach.

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Question for practice:

Examine how the Income Tax Bill, 2025, classifies and regulates Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs) in India, and how this approach aligns with global standards.

Strengthening UAE India aviation ties for growth

Source: The post Strengthening UAE India aviation ties for growth has been created, based on the article "**Remodelling the UAE-India aviation partnership**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 5th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests. And GS paper3- Infrastructure

Context: The article highlights the need for stronger UAE-India aviation ties. It suggests easing regulations to meet rising travel demands, lower costs, and boost trade. It also emphasizes cooperation over competition for mutual growth in the aviation sector.

For detailed information on **India UAE Relations** read this article here

How is Navi Mumbai International Airport shaping India's aviation ambitions?

1. Navi Mumbai International Airport is central to India's aviation growth, designed to handle the increasing travel demands and congestion at Mumbai's existing airport.

2. It aims to enhance the country's third-largest aviation market by providing improved infrastructure and better connectivity.

3. The airport is expected to serve as a hub that supports India's rising domestic and international travel needs, facilitating smoother and more efficient travel experiences.

4. Government initiatives like the UDAN scheme complement the airport's role by promoting regional air connectivity, further boosting the overall aviation sector in India.

Why is the UAE a key partner for India's aviation sector?

1.The UAE is India's most significant outbound travel market, with over 4.5 million Indian tourists visiting the UAE in 2023.

2. Indian carriers fly over 600 times weekly to the UAE, and UAE carriers operate over 500 weekly services to India.

3. Current bilateral agreements limit UAE carriers to only 15 Indian cities, excluding key growth centres like Surat, Visakhapatnam, Indore, Tiruchirappalli, and Patna.

4. This mismatch between supply and demand has led to higher ticket prices and fewer travel options.

5. Enhancing UAE-India aviation ties can reduce costs, improve connectivity, and boost trade and investment.

What challenges do restrictive regulations pose?

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1. **Limited Destinations:** UAE carriers can fly to only 15 Indian cities, excluding key growth areas like Surat, Visakhapatnam, and Patna.

2. **High Ticket Prices:** The gap between supply and demand has led to rising ticket prices for travelers.

3. **Restricted Frequency:** Indian carriers cannot increase flights to Dubai despite high demand for business and leisure travel.

4. **Rising Demand:** Over 4.5 million Indians visited the UAE in 2023, but existing agreements cannot meet growing travel needs.

5. **Economic Impact:** Restrictive policies could harm UAE-India trade and investment partnerships.

How can a modern aviation strategy benefit India and the UAE?

1. An open aviation policy could attract investments, boost trade, and enhance connectivity.

2. The UAE is interested in supporting India's aviation growth through investments and partnerships.

3. This could involve pilot training, MRO services, and investments in India's UDAN scheme to connect more Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

Why is cooperation better than competition in UAE-India aviation ties?

1. Cooperation can help both nations expand their aviation sectors effectively.

2. By working together, they can offer better connectivity and support economic growth.

3. Enhanced partnerships could make Indian cities as well-connected as Dubai and Abu Dhabi, benefiting both countries.

Question for practice:

Examine how restrictive regulations impact UAE-India aviation ties and suggest potential benefits of easing these regulations.

Ukraine's Invasion Exposed Global Security Failures

Source: The post Ukraine's Invasion Exposed Global Security Failures has been created, based on the article "**Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes: After Ukraine, imperialism is now the norm**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 5th 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: The article criticizes how the international community handled the Ukraine crisis. It argues that Ukraine's invasion showed a failure to uphold security guarantees and warns that this may encourage more countries to seek nuclear weapons to protect themselves.

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For detailed information on **The Russia-Ukraine Conflict** read this article here

What was the significance of the Trump-Zelenskyy confrontation?

1. The Trump-Zelenskyy confrontation highlighted U.S. hypocrisy in foreign policy.

2. Trump accused Zelenskyy of risking World War III while respecting Kim Jong Un for his nuclear leverage.

3. In 2018, Trump met Kim in Singapore, seeking to reduce North Korea's nuclear stockpile in exchange for lifting sanctions.

4. The deal failed as the U.S. offered insufficient sanctions relief for North Korea's demands.

5. Unlike North Korea, Ukraine lacked nuclear leverage, exposing its vulnerability.

6. The incident portrayed the U.S. as a bully, treating weaker nations unfairly.

How did the invasion of Ukraine change international norms?

1. The invasion of Ukraine was the second instance since World War II where one country tried to erase another entirely, not just over territory or regime change.

2. It challenged the post-1945 norm against territorial conquest, as highlighted by over 150 wars for territory before 1945, which significantly dropped afterward.

3. The invasion exposed the failure of security guarantees given to Ukraine in 1994 when it surrendered its nuclear weapons.

4. This failure undermined trust in international commitments and encouraged nuclear proliferation for self-defense.

What was the impact of Ukraine giving up its nuclear weapons?

1. In 1994, Ukraine gave up one of the largest nuclear arsenals, trusting security guarantees from the West and Russia.

2. The invasion by Russia proved these guarantees were hollow, showing a failure of the international community.

3. This event suggests that nations without nuclear weapons risk invasion or coercion.

4. Ukraine's experience may encourage other small and midsize countries to pursue nuclear weapons for protection.

5. This could lead to increased nuclear proliferation, making the world less stable and secure.

What are the broader implications for global order?

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1. **Revival of Imperialism:** Russia's attempt to erase Ukraine fully was the second such act since World War II, showing imperialism's return as a norm.

2. **Failure of Security Guarantees:** Ukraine's 1994 decision to disarm, trusting Western and Russian security assurances, was betrayed.

3. **Nuclear Proliferation Risk:** The invasion's lesson was that only nuclear-armed states are safe, encouraging other countries to seek nuclear weapons.

4. **Hypocrisy in International Order:** The West's response, focusing on power politics over principles, revealed the system's double standards.

5. **Destabilization Risk:** Increasing nuclear states could disrupt the global balance of power.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the impact of Ukraine's decision to give up its nuclear weapons on the credibility of international security guarantees.

More Solar Missions Launched as Sun's Activity Peaks

Source: The post More Solar Missions Launched as Sun's Activity Peaks has been created, based on the article "**NASA's PUNCH set to lift off: Why there has been an increase in the launch of solar missions**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 5th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Science and technology-Awareness in the fields of Space.

Context: The article talks about the increase in solar missions due to the current solar cycle nearing its peak. It mentions three missions: India's Aditya L1, ESA's Proba-3, and NASA's PUNCH, aimed at studying the Sun's activity and effects.

For detailed information on **Space sector in India** read this article here

What is the solar cycle and why is it important?

1. The **solar cycle** is an **11-year period** during which the Sun's **magnetic field** completely flips, causing its **north and south poles** to switch places.

2. This cycle has two main phases: the **solar maximum** (most active) and the **solar minimum**(least active).

3. During the solar maximum, the Sun has more **sunspots** and can send out stronger and more frequent **solar flares** and **coronal mass ejections (CMEs)**.

4. These eruptions can **disrupt satellite communications** and affect **electricity grids on Earth**.

5. Scientists track the cycle by **counting sunspots**.

Why are more solar missions being launched now?

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1. Current solar activities suggest that this cycle may be **nearing its maximum**, but it is **not officially confirmed yet**.

2. According to the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**, solar activities have been above normal since **May 2022** and continued through most of **2024**.

3.The solar maximum provides the **best opportunity** for scientists to study the Sun's behavior, as the next period of intense solar activity will not occur until **2035-2036**.

Which recent solar missions have been launched and what are their goals?

Three major solar missions have been launched recently to study different aspects of the Sun:

1. Aditya L1 (India) - Launched on **September 2, 2023**, it is **India's first solar mission** and is designed to study **solar flares, solar winds**, and to measure **low-intensity magnetic fields** and **solar soft X-ray flux**.

For detailed information on **Aditya-L1 mission** read this article here

2. **Proba-3 (European Space Agency)** - Launched on **December 4, 2024**, it has a unique design to study **solar winds**and **solar storms**.

3. **PUNCH (NASA)** - Scheduled for **March 6, 2025**, it will use **four identical suitcase-sized satellites** to continuously image the **Sun's inner corona** and study the origins of **solar flares**.

For detailed information on **PUNCH Mission** read this article here

Question for practice:

Discuss why more solar missions are being launched during the current phase of the solar cycle.

How AI Can Improve India's Justice System

Source: The post How AI Can Improve India's Justice System has been created, based on the article "**Law, order and AI: New technologies can enable greater efficiency and transparency in tackling crime and delivering justice**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 5th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Science and technology

Context: The article discusses how AI can help improve India's criminal justice system by making police work and court processes more efficient and transparent. It suggests using AI for managing cases, analyzing data, and reducing backlogs in courts.

For detailed information on **AI's best use case may actually be in our judicial system** read this article here

How Are the US and China Competing in AI Development?

1. **US Stargate AI Initiative**: The US has launched a massive $100 billion initiative aimed at advancing AI technologies and securing its leadership in the global AI race.

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2. **China's Approach**: In contrast, China is focusing on developing cost-effective AI technologies, such as the LLMs QWQ and DeepSeek, making AI accessible and competitive.

3. **Global Impact**: These strategic moves by both superpowers are pivotal, shaping the future of global technology and security landscapes, with each country pushing to outpace the other in AI capabilities and influence.

How Can AI Transform Crime and Crime Control?

1. **Enhancing Cybercrime Methods**: AI enables criminals to use text generation, image creation, and voice cloning more efficiently. This makes traditional methods of cybercrime more advanced and harder to detect.

2. **Improving Police Efficiency**: AI can streamline complaint registration, track investigations, and suggest necessary steps. This can help handle the heavy workload of police in India effectively.

3. **Predictive Policing**: AI can analyze crime location data, patrolling patterns, and routes used by offenders to develop predictive models. This guides police operations strategically.

4. **Reducing Administrative Burden**: AI can manage spreadsheets, images, and audio data, freeing police personnel for fieldwork like investigations and traffic management.

5. **Supporting SMART Policing**: AI aligns with India's SMART policing goals by making data interpretation strategic, meticulous, and transparent.

What Policy Measures Can Help Integrate AI in Justice Administration?

1. **Massive Backlog**: Indian courts have a backlog of over 50 million cases, making justice delivery slow and inefficient.

2. **Limitations of Traditional Solutions**: Increasing courts and personnel has high costs with limited impact.

3. **AI-Powered Transcription**: AI can automate court proceedings transcription, saving time and reducing manual work.

4. **Efficient Case Management**: AI can organize, store, and access case files swiftly, improving document handling and reducing delays.

5. **Fraud Detection**: AI can detect fraud or contradictions in documents submitted to courts, ensuring accuracy.

6. **Legal Research Support**: AI can quickly compare previous judgments, aiding judges in bail and sentencing decisions.

7. **Supervisory Efficiency**: AI can help higher courts oversee the workload of lower courts more effectively.

Question for practice:

Examine how AI can help reduce the judicial backlog in India by improving efficiency and transparency in court processes.

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Supreme Court decision impacts state medical admissions

Source: The post Supreme Court decision impacts state medical admissions has been created, based on the article "**Over-centralisation threatens federal health policy**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 6th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Polity-challenges pertaining
to the federal structure And Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health
Context: The article criticizes the Supreme Court's decision to strike down domicile-based reservations in post-graduate medical admissions, arguing that it undermines State health planning, discourages investment in medical colleges, and increases central control over medical education, worsening regional disparities.
For detailed information on **Reservations in super-speciality courses** read this article here

Why did the Supreme Court strike down domicile-based reservations in post-graduate medical admissions?
1. **Constitutional Violation:** The Supreme Court struck down domicile-based reservations as it found them to violate Article 14 of the Constitution, which ensures equality before the law.

2. **Precedent Reliance:** The decision relied on the *Pradeep Jain vs Union of India* (1984) case, which sets a precedent for ensuring equal opportunities in medical admissions across states.

3. **Meritocracy Emphasis:** The Court aimed to uphold meritocracy, arguing that admissions should be based solely on merit to maintain educational standards and fairness.

4.**Distinction Overlooked:** Critics argue that the Court overlooked the crucial distinction between undergraduate (MBBS) and post-graduate medical education, the latter being essential for replenishing the state's specialist workforce.

How did the ruling impact State investments in medical education?

1. The ruling discourages States from investing in medical colleges, fearing that specialists trained there might leave.
2. States allocate significant funds for medical education to retain a local specialist workforce, crucial for public health.
3. Without domicile quotas, States might deprioritise medical college funding, risking infrastructure decline.
4. Central institutions like AIIMS and JIPMER have autonomy in admissions, but State colleges lack similar control.
5. The Economic Survey 2024-25 noted that domicile quotas help retain specialists, supporting local healthcare access and reducing disparities.
What are the risks of excessive centralisation in medical education?

1. The Court's decision promotes centralisation in medical education, limiting States' ability to address local health needs.

2. Public health is a State responsibility under the Constitution, and medical colleges are part of this infrastructure.

3. Critics argue that centralisation could widen healthcare disparities and weaken the States' role in managing public health.

4. The Economic Survey 2024-25 highlighted that domicile-based reservations help retain specialists in their home States, ensuring better healthcare access.

Does the judgment overlook structural issues in medical education?

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1. Yes, the judgment overlooks structural issues in medical education.
2. NEET PG 2023 results exposed flaws, with qualifying percentiles reduced to zero to fill seats.
3. Cases like *Jagdish Saran (1982)* and *Neil Aurelio Nunes (2022)* highlighted that merit should consider social equity.
4. Domicile-based reservations help retain local doctors, addressing specialist shortages.
5. Prioritizing merit without addressing inequalities risks deepening regional healthcare disparities and undermining State health planning.

Why is there a need to reconsider the verdict?

1. **Impact on State Investment:** States may reduce funding for medical colleges without domicile quotas, fearing specialists might migrate. This could worsen regional health disparities.
2. **Healthcare Challenges:** Shortages of specialists and rising non-communicable diseases require policies retaining local doctors.
3. **Proven Models:** Tamil Nadu's model links quotas to public service mandates, ensuring local healthcare benefits.
4. **Merit System Flaws:** In 2023, NEET PG's qualifying percentile was lowered to zero to fill seats, revealing flaws in the merit-based system.

Question for practice:

Evaluate whether the Supreme Court's decision to strike down domicile-based reservations in post-graduate medical admissions effectively balances meritocracy with the need to address regional healthcare disparities.

Norway's apology illuminates Himalayan communities 'similar injustices

Source: The post Norway's apology illuminates Himalayan communities 'similar injustices has been created, based on the article "**Who will apologise to the 'Himalayans'?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 6th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.
Context: The article discusses Norway's apology to indigenous groups for past assimilation policies and compares it to the exploitation of Himalayan communities in India. It highlights resource exploitation, cultural erosion, and the need for similar acknowledgment and justice for Himalayan tribes.
What was Norway's apology about?
1. Norway's Parliament apologized for past policies of *Norwegianisation* that targeted the Sami, Kven, and Forest Finn peoples.

2. These policies, enforced between the 1850s and 1960s, aimed to erase indigenous languages and cultures.

3. The government also proposed steps to combat ongoing discrimination, including protecting indigenous languages and monitoring inclusion efforts starting in 2027.

4. Despite repealing discriminatory laws and establishing the Sami Parliament, challenges like endangered languages and inequalities in healthcare, education, and land rights persist.

How are Himalayan communities similar to Nordic indigenous groups?

1. **Cultural Suppression:** Similar to Norway's *Norwegianisation* policies that suppressed Sami languages, British trade blockades in 1874 disrupted Himalayan communities. The blockade halted access to iron and silk, stopping cultural practices like marriages and traditional agriculture (*A.S.R. Foreign proceedings, 1881*).
2. **Resource Exploitation:** British forest laws destroyed large parts of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand forests to supply timber for 80,000 km of railway tracks between 1853 and 1910, similar to Nordic exploitation.
3. **Economic Marginalization:** Hydropower projects in Arunachal Pradesh bypassed local laws and tribal land rights for profit, mirroring past economic policies against Nordic tribes.

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4. **Environmental Threats:** Both regions face climate-induced disasters that threaten traditional lifestyles and resource security.

How did Indian policies impact Himalayan tribes after independence?

1. After independence, Prime Minister Nehru advocated for respecting tribal lifestyles.

2. However, by the 5th and 6th Five-Year Plans, rapid resource exploitation disrupted these communities.

3. The 1990s brought fiscal policies that pressured Himalayan States to generate revenue through tourism and hydropower, causing environmental damage and cultural loss.

4. Despite legal protections, customary land rights were often ignored in favor of profit-driven projects.

Why are hydropower projects controversial in the Himalayan region?

1. Hydropower projects have caused large-scale land acquisitions, often bypassing local laws and ignoring tribal land rights.

2. For example, Arunachal Pradesh's hydropower projects were expected to generate ₹445 crore annually, but civil groups criticized this "hydro-criminality" for prioritizing profits over the environment and cultural preservation.

3. This has led to the marginalization of traditional practices and ethnic diversity in the region.

What lessons can the Himalayan region learn from Norway's apology?

1. **Acknowledge Historical Injustices:** Norway apologized for suppressing Sami culture through *Norwegianisation*. The Himalayan region needs to recognize past exploitation, such as the 1874 trade blockade that halted iron and silk supplies, disrupting local traditions.

2. **Protect Indigenous Rights:** Norway's measures to safeguard Sami languages highlight the need to protect Himalayan tribes 'cultural practices and land rights, often ignored in hydropower projects.

3. **Legal and Policy Reforms:** Repealing discriminatory laws, as Norway did, could help Himalayan communities preserve their identity.

Question for practice:

Examine how the policies of resource exploitation and cultural suppression have impacted the indigenous communities in both Norway and the Himalayan region.

Arab League proposes Cairo Declaration for Gaza

Source: The post Arab League proposes Cairo Declaration for Gaza has been created, based on the article "**The Egyptian alternative to Trump's Gaza 'Riviera' plan**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 6th 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: The article discusses the Cairo Declaration, an Arab League plan to rebuild Gaza with $53 billion. It supports a two-state solution, rejects "ethnic cleansing," and proposes an interim administration. The plan faces challenges from Israel and the U.S.
What is the Cairo Declaration and its purpose?
1. The Cairo Declaration is an Arab League plan for Gaza's reconstruction with a $53-billion Egyptian proposal.
2. It was adopted on March 4, a day after Israel stopped all humanitarian aid to Gaza.

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3. The plan supports a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as Palestine's capital.

4. It calls for a "Gaza administration committee" of qualified Gazans for a transitional period and a trust fund for recovery projects.

5. The Declaration rejects Trump's proposal to evict Palestinians and emphasizes the role of Jordan and Egypt in protecting Palestinian rights.

How does the Cairo Declaration differ from previous proposals?

1. The Cairo Declaration follows the Bahrain Declaration from May 2024 but introduces some changes.

2. It does not mention removing Hamas, allowing room for the group in the interim. Hamas welcomed the plan due to its commitment to fresh elections.

3. In contrast, the U.S. and Israel criticized it for not addressing Hamas directly.

4. Unlike Trump's recent proposal to permanently evict Palestinians from Gaza, the Cairo plan rejects the "ethnic cleansing" of Palestinians and emphasizes the role of Jordan and Egypt in protecting Palestinian rights.

What challenges does the Cairo Declaration face?

1. The Declaration faces challenges from Israel and the U.S., especially regarding Hamas's role.

2. Israel opposes the Palestinian Authority's control of Gaza and the West Bank, which the plan proposes.

3. The plan also demands Israel's complete withdrawal from Gaza, including the Philadelphi Corridor, which Israel has resisted.

4. The Israeli settler population in the West Bank, which reached 700,000 in 2023, poses another challenge to the two-state solution.

Why is the two-state solution uncertain?

1. The two-state solution is uncertain due to Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank.

2. In 2023, Israel approved over 1,000 new settler homes and promised 5,300 more in 2024.

3. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights linked this expansion to the elimination of a viable Palestinian state.

4. The Cairo Declaration envisions a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. However, this vision conflicts with the current realities on the ground, making the solution seem unlikely without major changes from Israel.

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges faced by the Cairo Declaration in achieving its objectives.

India's first complete survey finds dolphin threats

Source: The post India's first complete survey finds dolphin threats has been created, based on the article "**What the first-ever comprehensive survey of India's river dolphins found**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 6th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Environment- Conservation

Context: The article talks about the first complete survey of river dolphins in India. It found 6,324 Gangetic dolphins and only 3 Indus dolphins. The survey showed threats to dolphins from pollution and low water levels, and identified areas with more or fewer dolphins.

What were the main findings of the dolphin population survey in India?

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1. **Total Population**: The survey estimated an average of 6,324 Gangetic dolphins, ranging from 5,977 to 6,688, in the Ganga and Brahmaputra river basins. Only 3 Indus dolphins were found, all in the Beas River in Punjab.

2. **State-wise Distribution**: Uttar Pradesh had the most Gangetic dolphins (2,397), followed by Bihar (2,220), West Bengal (815), Jharkhand (162), and a combined count of 95 in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

3. **River-specific Findings**: In the Ganga's main stem, 3,275 dolphins were recorded, 2,414 in its tributaries, 584 in Brahmaputra's main stem, and 51 in its tributaries.

4. Hotspots and Coldspots:

• **Hotspot**: The **Chausa-Manihar stretch** in Bihar had the **highest density** with **2.20 dolphins per km**. Another dense population was found between **Manihari in Bihar and Rajmahal in Jharkhand** with **2.75 dolphins per km**.
• **Coldspot**: The **Narora-Kanpur stretch** in Uttar Pradesh had an **encounter rate of 0.1 dolphins per km**.

How was the survey conducted and what challenges did it face?

1. The survey covered 7,109 km of the Ganga and 1,297 km of the Brahmaputra, including tributaries, and 101 km of the Beas River.
Visual and acoustic methods were used to estimate dolphin numbers.
2. Dolphins surface for 1.26 seconds and dive for 107 seconds, causing observer and availability errors.
3. Hydrophones captured dolphins' clicks for accurate counts, overcoming observer errors.
4. Different methods were used based on channel width and depth, like the double observer method for wide channels.
5. Challenges included turbid waters, brief surfacing time, and varying river conditions.

What threats do river dolphins face in India?

1. Gangetic and Indus dolphins are endangered and protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

2. They face threats from pollution, riverbed mining, low water depth, habitat damage, prey decline, and climate change.

3. Coldspots with few or no dolphins were found in stretches like Narora to Kanpur in the Ganga and in parts of the Yamuna, Sharda, and Rapti rivers.

What are the trends in dolphin populations in Assam's rivers?

1. In Assam, the main Brahmaputra river has a healthy depth, but its tributaries have low depths, leading to fewer dolphins.

2. The Barak River was a coldspot. The dolphin population in Subansiri and Kulsi rivers is declining, showing a worrying trend for these habitats.

Question for practice:

Discuss the effectiveness of the methods used in the first complete survey of river dolphins in India and the implications of their findings for conservation efforts.

Challenges Women Face in Corporate Leadership Roles

Source: The post Challenges Women Face in Corporate Leadership Roles has been created, based on the article "**Women in corporate leadership, the lived reality**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 7th March 2025

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UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context: The article discusses the challenges women face in the corporate workforce despite diversity efforts. It highlights legal mandates, benefits of women in leadership, and the need for real power, not tokenism, to ensure meaningful participation and gender parity.

For detailed information on **Women Empowerment- Economic Political and Social** read this article here

What are the challenges women face in the corporate workforce?

1. **Rollback of DEI Programmes:** In the U.S., rolling back Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programmes threatens women's workforce participation.
2. **Leadership Gap:** In India, women form 35.9% of the workforce but hold only 12.7% of senior and middle management roles (2024).
3. **Tokenism:** DEI efforts often appear as token gestures, limiting real influence for women.
4. **Unequal Pay:** Pay parity with men is still a challenge for women leaders.

How have legal mandates impacted women's representation in leadership roles in India?

1. Legal mandates in India have helped increase women's representation in corporate leadership roles.
2. The Companies Act, 2013, mandates at least one woman director on the boards of certain public limited companies.
3. In 2015, SEBI required the top 1000 listed companies to appoint at least one independent woman director.
4. These mandates increased the presence of women directors on NSE 500 boards from 5% in 2011 to 18% in 2023.
5. Such regulations have encouraged companies to adopt better gender diversity practices.

Why is women's leadership beneficial for companies?

1. Women leaders increase the talent pool and bring diverse perspectives from different educational and career backgrounds.
2. They enhance corporate governance, risk management, and stakeholder value, benefiting companies' efficiency and reputation.
3. Companies with more women in leadership often appear on lists of most admired and ethical companies.
4. Women leaders focus on relationship-building and effective communication, reducing corporate risks.

What is needed for real change in women's corporate leadership?

1. Tokenism is not enough; women need real power and responsibility.

2. More women in C-Suite positions, key managerial roles, and as independent directors and committee chairs are essential for meaningful leadership.

3. Equal pay for women compared to men is also a key indicator of genuine progress.

What further research is being done on women in corporate leadership?

1. **Ongoing Study:** Thought Arbitrage is conducting a 10-year study on women in corporate boards.
2. **Scope:** The study involves about 1,000 companies and uses both qualitative and quantitative methods.
3. **Focus Areas:** It examines patterns of women's participation, their effectiveness, and barriers in leadership.

Question for practice:

Examine how legal mandates in India have impacted women's representation in corporate leadership roles.

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India's Progress in Advancing Gender Equality

Source: The post India's Progress in Advancing Gender Equality has been created, based on the article "**Beyond 'Beijing', unlocking a feminist future in India**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 7th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Governance-mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context: The article highlights India's progress on gender equality since the 1995 Beijing Declaration. It covers health, education, economic empowerment, and safety for women, emphasizing policies, grassroots efforts, and leadership. Challenges like violence persist, but advancements inspire continued efforts.

For detailed information on **The Alliance for Global Good – Gender Equity and Equality** read this article here

How has India progressed in women's health and education since the Beijing Declaration?

1. Maternal mortality reduced from 130 to 97 per 1,00,000 births between 2014 and 2020, supported by schemes like *Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan* and *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana*.

2. Institutional deliveries reached 95% and 56.5% of married women use modern contraceptives.

3. *Ayushman Bharat* provided free healthcare to millions of women.

4. *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* improved the child sex ratio and girls 'school enrollments.

5. *National Education Policy 2020* boosted STEM education for girls.

6. Better sanitation reduced menstruation-related school absences.

How has India advanced women's economic empowerment?

1. **Financial Networks:** Nearly 100 million women connected to financial systems through self-help groups under the *National Rural and Urban Livelihood Missions*.

2. **Digital Payments:** Unified Payments Interface (UPI) simplified transactions, boosting women's financial independence.

3. **Digital Literacy:** *Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan* trained over 35 million rural women.

4. **Gender Budgeting:** Share increased from 6.8% in 2024-25 to 8.8% in 2025-26, with $55.2 billion allocated for gender-specific programs.

5. **Entrepreneurship:** Financial literacy and credit access empowered women under *Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihood Mission*.

What challenges persist regarding gender-based violence in India?

1. **Ongoing Prevalence of Violence:** Gender-based violence is still a significant issue despite global and national efforts to eliminate it.

2. **Implementation Challenges:** The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 strengthens legal protections, but effective implementation remains a challenge.

3. **Insufficient Support Systems:** The 770 One Stop Centres offer essential support, but their reach is limited considering the scale of the problem.

4. **Coordination Issues:** The blockchain-based system in Odisha ensures swift and confidential support, yet similar coordinated efforts are limited nationwide.

5. **Trust in Policing:** Efforts to improve gender-responsive policing through partnerships, like with the Rajasthan Police Academy, face challenges in building consistent trust with survivors.

How is women's leadership shaping India's future?

1. The *Women's Reservation Bill* ensures 33% legislative seats for women, empowering about 1.5 million women leaders — the world's largest group of women political leaders.

2. Initiatives like *Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI)* support women in STEM fields.

3. The *G20 TechEquity* platform has trained thousands of young women in emerging technologies.

4. Their leadership strengthens India's progress in gender equality, social development, and inclusive growth.

What is India's approach to achieving gender equality?

1. India's approach to gender equality includes strong government leadership, international partnerships, and comprehensive policies.

2. The focus is on women-led development, financial inclusion, and social transformation.

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3. The Beijing Platform for Action continues to guide India's efforts toward inclusive and sustainable growth, with a commitment to addressing systemic barriers and empowering young women leaders.

Question for practice:

Evaluate how effective India's policies and initiatives have been in advancing gender equality since the 1995 Beijing Declaration.

Should AI Be Allowed in College Classrooms

Source: The post Should AI Be Allowed in College Classrooms has been created, based on the article "**Is Artificial Intelligence affecting critical thinking skills?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 7th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.
Context: The article discusses the use of AI tools in education. Experts argue about allowing AI in classrooms, its impact on critical thinking, and the need for ethical and responsible AI usage. They also highlight the importance of regulations and training for safe integration.
For detailed information on **Significance of AI for Education Sector** read this article here
Should AI Be Allowed in College Classrooms?
1. AI should be allowed in college classrooms as it is already widely used by students and teachers.
2. Experts argue that banning AI is impractical since students will use it anyway.
3. Over 61% of educators in India use AI tools, according to TeamLease EdTech.
4. AI's use should depend on the course type. For coding courses, it can help evaluate and validate codes.
5. Ethical and responsible AI usage policies are essential due to the lack of government regulations.
6. Experts suggest that universities should create AI usage guidelines until formal regulations are in place.
7. Responsible AI use training is crucial to address potential biases and data privacy risks.
How Can AI Change Teaching and Learning?
1. AI is becoming part of daily tools like Microsoft Word and Adobe Reader, suggesting summaries and helping users.
2. Over 61% of educators in India already use AI tools, showing its growing role in education.
3. Both students and teachers use AI, making it necessary to adapt teaching methods.
4. In a copyright law course, students use AI to understand legal issues better.
5. Schools and policymakers support more AI usage, but ethical guidelines are needed to prevent biases and risks.
For detailed information on **Schools Must Adapt to AI with Values** read this article here

Is AI Becoming Essential Educational Infrastructure?
1. **Future Skills Requirement**: The World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report 2025* highlights AI and cognitive thinking skills as top requirements, signaling a shift in educational focus.
2. **Practical Implementation**: Institutions are already using AI to teach courses effectively, such as in comparative copyright law at Harvard Law School, where students explore AI's capabilities and limitations.
3. **Preparations Underway**: Schools and governments are preparing for wider AI integration, emphasizing the need for secure and ethical usage policies.
Should AI Usage Be Regulated in Education?
1. AI should be regulated in education to ensure ethical and responsible use.
2. The *Future of Jobs Report 2025* shows rising demand for AI-related skills, making regulations necessary.
3. Data privacy risks exist as AI tools can send user data to servers.
4. The European Union is already active in regulating AI, but India is still discussing it.
5. Experts suggests universities create AI guidelines until formal regulations are established.
Does AI Affect Critical Thinking Skills?
1. There are concerns that students may rely too much on AI, harming their critical thinking skills. 2. Some experts believe AI might reduce students' critical thinking by encouraging them to accept information without analysis.

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3. However, some argue that it depends on the skills institutions prioritize—whether practical or scholarly.

4. Others warn of over-dependence on AI, even among teachers, which might harm critical thinking.
5. Experts calls for responsible AI use education, focusing on understanding AI's limitations.

Question for practice:

Discuss the potential impact of AI usage on critical thinking skills in college classrooms.

Nepali student suicide at KIIT sparks protests

Source: The post Nepali student suicide at KIIT sparks protests has been created, based on the article "**The academic link between Nepal and India**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 7th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-International Relations-India and its neighbourhood- relations.
Context: The article discusses the harassment-based suicide of a Nepali student at KIIT, Bhubaneswar, and the ensuing protests. It highlights the challenges Nepali students face in India, the historical ties in education, and concerns about fair treatment under the Indo-Nepal Treaty.
What happened at KIIT involving a Nepali student?
1. On 16th February 2025, a Nepali student at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) died by suicide due to harassment by a male student.

2. Nepali students protested, accusing the university of ignoring complaints.

3. KIIT initially ordered Nepali students to leave but withdrew this after widespread outrage, including objections from the Nepali government.

How significant is Nepal's student population in India?

1. In 2021-22, India had 46,878 foreign students from 170 countries, as per AISHE data.
2. Nepali students made up the largest group, accounting for 28% of this number.
3. In 2012-13, Nepali students also led with 21% of total foreign enrolments.
4. Most Nepali students pursue undergraduate courses, but interest in PhD programs is growing.
5. Many prefer engineering and technology fields at IITs, IISc, and private institutes like KIIT.
6. This trend highlights strong educational ties between India and Nepal.
What is the historical connection between Nepal and India's education systems?
1. Nepal's academic ties with India trace back to the colonial era, despite Nepal never being a British colony.

2. Elite Nepalis studied in Indian cities like Banaras, Patna, Dehradun, Gorakhpur, and Darjeeling during the Rana regime when education in Nepal was elitist.

3. Tri-Chandra College, Nepal's first college established in 1918, was affiliated first to Calcutta University and later to Patna University in India.
4. This affiliation meant Indian universities controlled courses, textbooks, pedagogy, exams, and degrees.
5. Instructors in Nepal were mostly educated in Indian universities, influencing Nepal's educational content.
6. Before Tribhuvan University's establishment in 1959, higher education in Nepal was limited to undergraduate studies.
7. Indian influence on Nepal's education system remained strong even after efforts to 'Nepalise 'it with the National Educational Planning Commission in 1954 and the New Education System Plan in 1971.
What are the cultural and political implications of the KIIT incident?
1. **Violation of Treaty Rights:** The KIIT incident conflicts with the Indo-Nepal Peace Treaty of 1950, especially Articles 6 and 7, which ensure equal treatment and rights for Nepali nationals in India.
2. **Strained Diplomatic Relations:** Nepal's protest against KIIT's order to vacate Nepali students shows potential harm to India-Nepal ties.

3. **Cultural Alienation:** Nepali students, the largest group among foreign students in India (28% in 2021-22), may feel unwelcome.

4. **Institutional Responsibility:** The incident highlights the need for fair treatment of foreign students in Indian institutions.

Question for practice:

Examine how the KIIT incident involving a Nepali student reflects challenges to the rights ensured under the Indo-Nepal Peace Treaty of 1950.

Why Public Spaces in India Are Unsafe Women

Source: The post Why Public Spaces in India Are Unsafe Women has been created, based on the article "**Inclusion in public spaces — from fear to freedom**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 8th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Social Justic

Context: The article discusses how public spaces in India are unsafe and unwelcoming for women. It emphasizes the need for better design, stronger laws, and societal changes to make these spaces safer and more accessible for women to move freely and confidently.

For detailed information on **Women Safety in India- Challenges and Way Forward** read this article here

Why Are Public Spaces in India Unsafe for Women?

1. India ranked 128 out of 177 in the Women, Peace, and Security Index 2023, showing low safety for women.

2. Patriarchal norms limit women's access to public spaces, making them feel unsafe.

3. National Family Health Survey-4 (2015–16) shows only 54% of women can visit markets alone, and 48% can travel unaccompanied.

4. Women prefer curated spaces like malls due to safety concerns on streets and bus stops.

5. Low conviction rates for gender-based crimes worsen women's fear of public spaces.

How Do Gendered Spatial Controls Affect Women's Freedom?

1. Gendered spatial control limits women's access to public spaces.

2. The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for women in 2023–24 was 35.6%, showing that most women remain outside the workforce.

3. For working women, public spaces are mainly transitional zones for commuting, not for leisure.

4. As highlighted in *Why Loiter?* (Phadke, Ranade, Khan, 2011), public spaces should allow women to move freely without a purpose, urgency, or conforming to societal expectations.

What Role Does Safety Play in Restricting Women's Mobility?

1. Safety concerns significantly restrict women's mobility. Women face risks of violence in both public and private spaces.

2. To avoid danger, they often prefer curated spaces like malls and cafes.

3. Unregulated spaces such as bus stops, streets, and footpaths remain unwelcoming.

4. The societal belief that women need protection leads to further restrictions on their freedom.

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5. This belief also shifts the blame to women for being in the "wrong place," ignoring the actions of the perpetrators.

How Can Policies Make Public Spaces Safer for Women?

1. Government policies can improve safety in public spaces by ensuring proper street lighting, safe public toilets, street furniture like benches, and more recreational areas for women.

2. Strengthening laws and ensuring effective enforcement against gender-based violence are crucial. 3. The low conviction rate for crimes against women highlights a major gap.

4.?Policy changes must focus on making public spaces inclusive and accessible for women without fear.

What Needs to Change in Society's Attitude Towards Women in Public Spaces?

1. Society must normalize women's presence in public spaces for leisure and not just for work or essential tasks.

2. Conversations around women's right to access these spaces freely are necessary.

3. Small, everyday actions can gradually change societal attitudes, making public spaces safer and more welcoming for women.

4. Empowering women to reclaim these spaces can help dismantle long-standing patriarchal controls.

Question for practice:

Examine how societal attitudes and patriarchal norms contribute to making public spaces unsafe and unwelcoming for women in India.

Avalanche in Himalayan village claims lives and challenges

Source: The post Avalanche in Himalayan village claims lives and challenges has been created, based on the article "**Himalayan tragedy: Impact of natural disasters, which are not very predictable, can be controlled**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 8th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3-Disaster and disaster management.
Context: The article talks about a rescue operation in Mana village, Uttarakhand, after an avalanche. It highlights the risks faced by workers, the need for safer living conditions, and the lack of preventive measures despite frequent natural disasters in the Himalayan region.
What happened in Mana village, Uttarakhand?
1. An avalanche struck a Border Roads Organisation site in Mana village, Uttarakhand.
2. The site housed 54 workers in eight containers.
3. 23 workers were rescued by Indian Army and Indo-Tibetan Border Police teams. And 8 workers died in the disaster.
4. Rescue teams worked for nearly 60 hours amidst heavy snowfall at 10,500 feet.
5. Roads were blocked by snow, requiring helicopter evacuations.
6. Five Army, two Air Force, and one civilian helicopter were used.
7. Drone-based detection systems identified buried containers.
8. Avalanches are common in this Himalayan region, where villagers migrate during winter.

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Why are avalanches common in this region?

1. Mana village is located at a high altitude, about 10,500 feet above mean sea level, contributing to its susceptibility to avalanches.

2. The village is among the last outposts near the border with China, a region known for its challenging weather conditions.

3. Historical practices of the villagers, such as 'winter-migration' to avoid harsh winter conditions, highlight an awareness of the risks posed by the environment.

4. Avalanches are common in this part of the Himalayas, which experience heavy snowfall.

5. The construction site was at a strategic location that required constant activity despite the inherent risks, showing the necessity of the work despite potential dangers.

What preventive measures could be taken?

1. **Design safer shelters:** Living containers should be built like bomb shelters or Antarctic research stations to withstand avalanches.

2. **Raise risk awareness:** Many workers were migrants and might not have known the risks of avalanches, so better information and training are needed.

3. **Use advanced detection:** Drones were used to detect containers buried under snow, showing the need for more such technology.

4. **Ensure winter evacuation:** Villagers migrate to lower areas during winter to avoid disasters; a similar strategy can protect workers.

5. **Improve emergency response:** Helicopters from the Army, Air Force, and a civilian copter were used effectively for evacuation, proving the need for such resources.

Question for practice:

Discuss the preventive measures that can be taken to protect workers from avalanches in Mana village, Uttarakhand.

US and Israel's Gaza Plan Faces Rejection

Source: The post US and Israel's Gaza Plan Faces Rejection has been created, based on the article "**There is a crisis of leadership in the Middle East**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 8th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations

Context: The article discusses US and Israeli plans for Gaza, including relocating Palestinians, which were rejected by Arab countries. Egypt proposed a reconstruction plan for Gaza, but both the US and Israel dismissed it, escalating tensions in the region.

For detailed information on **Arab League proposes Cairo Declaration for Gaza** read this article here

What was the US and Israel's proposal for Gaza?

1. US President Donald Trump proposed relocating Palestinians from Gaza, claiming they could not live amidst war debris.

2. **Trump suggested transforming Gaza into a "riviera"** that would be taken over by the US.

3. **Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu supported the proposal**, emphasizing preparations for a post-Hamas phase.

4. **The proposal was widely criticized by the global community** and **rejected by Palestinians and Arab countries** like Egypt and Jordan.

5. **US Secretary of State Marco Rubio clarified** that the plan aimed to encourage countries with resources to rebuild Gaza but **denied intentions to deploy US troops**.

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6. **Israel rejected the Arab reconstruction plan**, arguing it relied too much on the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA.

How did the Arab world respond to the US proposal?

1. **Rejection of Relocation:** Egypt and Jordan strongly rejected Trump's proposal, insisting Palestinians would stay on their land without forced deportations.

2. **Saudi Leadership:** Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman hosted seven Arab leaders in Riyadh to emphasize Arab unity against the proposal.

3. **Egypt's Reconstruction Plan:** Egypt proposed a $53 billion plan for Gaza's reconstruction, focusing on de-mining, infrastructure, and governance by the Palestinian Authority, supported by Arab leaders and Hamas.

4. **Criticism of Jordan's Offer:** The King of Jordan's offer to host 2,000 sick Palestinian children faced criticism from other Arab countries.

5. **Mediation Efforts:** Egyptian and Qatari mediators found Hamas dissatisfied with Israel's delays in prisoner releases and blockade of international relief, highlighting mistrust.

What was Egypt's plan for Gaza's reconstruction?

1. Egypt proposed a $53 billion reconstruction plan for Gaza, divided into three phases until 2030.

2. The first phase would clear mines and debris, providing temporary shelters.

3. The second phase would build infrastructure and housing.

4. The final phase would focus on industrial development and transferring control to the Palestinian Authority.

5. The plan also suggested replacing Hamas's control with independent Palestinian experts, using a World Bank-managed trust fund, and deploying international peacekeepers.

6. Arab leaders, Hamas, and the Palestinian Authority supported this plan, but the US and Israel rejected it.

What challenges does the Israel-Palestine conflict face?

1. The conflict is deeply rooted, with Israel seeking security and Palestinians fighting to retain their land.

2. Displacement in Gaza and the West Bank fuels Arab resistance.

3. The lack of trust between Israel and Palestine, the influence of militant groups, and the expansion of Israeli settlements complicate peace efforts.

4. There is need for a two-state solution, as outlined in the Oslo Accords, to achieve lasting peace and security for both sides.

What are the prospects for peace in the region?

1. Achieving peace requires trust-building measures, addressing humanitarian costs, and ensuring the return of hostages and prisoners.

2. The Palestinian Authority, led by Fatah, must restore credibility and governance.

3. Israel's security concerns and the need for stable governance in Gaza remain key issues.

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4. Only a balanced, compromise-based approach, ensuring coexistence, can end the conflict.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons behind the rejection of the US and Israel's proposal for Gaza by Arab countries.

How Trump's Rudeness Hides American Imperialism History

Source: The post How Trump's Rudeness Hides American Imperialism History has been created, based on the article "**There is a crisis of leadership in the Middle East**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 8th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-International Relations
Context: The article argues that the focus on Trump's rudeness distracts from the long history of American imperialism. It criticizes the portrayal of Putin as mad, highlighting Western hypocrisy and the realpolitik behind actions of all modern nation-states, including America.
How has the United States intervened in other countries since World War II?
Since World War II, the United States has intervened in over 70 countries to destabilize or overthrow governments. Key examples include:

1. In 1947, under President Truman, the US supported pro-monarchist forces in Greece against communists.
2. In 1953, during Eisenhower's presidency, the US helped overthrow Iran's Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, restoring the Shah's autocracy.
3. In 1960, the CIA was involved in the assassination of Congo's leader, Patrice Lumumba.
4. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, US actions escalated the Vietnam War.
5. In 1973, during Nixon's presidency, the US supported the rise of Augusto Pinochet's regime in Chile.
Is Trump's foreign policy fundamentally different from previous US presidents?
1. Trump's foreign policy is not fundamentally different from his predecessors. The main difference lies in Trump's lack of politeness, not in the substance of his actions. For example:

2. Under President Obama, US special operations were active in 138 countries by 2016, marking a 130% increase from the Bush era.
3. Obama's actions were similar to Trump's but were more diplomatically presented.
How does Western media portray leaders like Putin and Trump?
1. Western media often simplifies and psychologizes global politics by depicting Trump as rude and Putin as a madman.

2. This narrative masks the imperialist actions of past US presidents by focusing more on style than substance.

3. It contrasts European "civilisational values" with non-Western leaders, ignoring European colonial brutality, such as King Leopold II's exploitation of Congo.

What are the real motives behind nation-state actions?

1. Nation-states, including Russia and the US, primarily act to protect their interests.

2. Framing Russia's actions as madness while presenting US actions as rational reflects hypocrisy.

3. Past US aggressions, like the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, are analyzed in terms of national interest rather than madness.

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4. The focus on manners distracts from understanding realpolitik and the true motives of powerful countries.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the focus on Trump's rudeness diverts attention from the history of American imperialism, as highlighted in the article.

India strengthens ties with Mauritius during PM visit

Source: The post India strengthens ties with Mauritius during PM visit has been created, based on the article "**India, Mauritius and a visit to deepen long-standing ties**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 10th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations-India and its neighbourhood- relations.
Context: The article discusses Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Mauritius for its Independence Day. It highlights the strong historical, cultural, and economic ties between India and Mauritius, and the importance of their maritime security cooperation, especially amid China's growing influence.
For detailed information on **India's foreign policy towards its neighbors** read this article here
What is the significance of Prime Minister Modi's visit to Mauritius?
1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting Mauritius on March 11-12, 2025, as the guest of honour for its Independence Day celebrations. His last visit was in 2015.

2. This visit aims to strengthen ties with the new government led by Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

3. India-Mauritius relations have been positive, regardless of the ruling party.

4. The visit is also a chance for Modi to connect personally with Ramgoolam, who has previously supported India's security concerns.

How do historical and cultural ties shape India-Mauritius relations?

1. Mauritius has deep historical and cultural links with India. Nearly 70% of its population is of Indian origin, with many tracing their roots to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

2. Languages like Bhojpuri, Tamil, Telugu, and Marathi are preserved there.

3. The Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the Indian Cultural Centre promote Indian languages and culture.

4.The World Hindi Secretariat in Mauritius also strengthens these ties.

5. The island's French community, though only 2%, is influential in business.

What is the status of economic relations between India and Mauritius?

1. India-Mauritius bilateral trade reached $554 million in 2022-23.

2. Mauritius's well-developed finance sector and its Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with India have made it a major route for foreign investments into India.

3. Mauritius also serves as a gateway for business with Africa, especially Francophone countries, due to its bilingual population and strong trade agreements with African nations.

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Why is Mauritius important for India's maritime security?

1. Mauritius's location in the western Indian Ocean makes it vital for India's maritime security.

2. India has established coastal radar stations and redeveloped the Agaléga island for joint surveillance.

3. Mauritius also has access to India's Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR).

4. With its Exclusive Economic Zone of 2.3 million square kilometers, Mauritius plays a key role in the Colombo Security Conclave, which includes India, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Bangladesh. This cooperation has become crucial due to China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean.

What challenges do India-Mauritius relations face?

1. **Ethnic Diversity**: Maintaining relations with all ethnic groups is challenging. Nearly 70% of the population is of Indian origin, while the rest includes African, mixed, and 2% French communities.
2. **China's Growing Influence**: China's expanding presence in the Indian Ocean poses security challenges.
3. **Balancing Cultural Ties**: Celebrating ties with Indian-origin communities without alienating other groups is essential for stable relations.
Question for practice:

Examine how historical, cultural, economic, and security dimensions influence India-Mauritius relations, especially in the context of China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean.

Low representation of women in India's higher judiciary

Source: The post low representation of women in India's higher judiciary has been created, based on the article "**Closing the gender gap in the higher judiciary**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 10th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Judiciary
Context: The article highlights gender inequality in India's higher judiciary, with few women judges in High Courts and the Supreme Court. It advocates for transparent appointments, gender diversity, and merit-based selections to ensure equal representation of women on the Bench.
For detailed information on **Lack of women in the judiciary** read this article here
How has women's representation in the Indian judiciary evolved?
1. Women's representation in the Indian judiciary has grown over the past 100 years.
2. In 1924, Cornelia Sorabji became the first woman lawyer to practice in India.
3. Today, women make up 14.27% of High Court judges, with 109 out of 764 being women.
4. However, some High Courts, like those in Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, and Tripura, have no women judges.
5. The Allahabad High Court has only 3 women judges out of 79, making it just 2%.
6. Women are also appointed later than men, with their average age of appointment being 53 years compared to 51.8 years for men.
7. Only the Gujarat High Court has a woman Chief Justice.
How are women represented in the Supreme Court?
1. The situation is worse in the Supreme Court, which currently has only two women judges: Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Justice Bela Trivedi.

2. After Justice Bela Trivedi's retirement in June 2025, only one woman judge will remain.

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3. Since 2021, 28 judges have been appointed, none of them women.

4. In 75 years, only one woman has been directly elevated from the Bar to the Supreme Court, while nine men have been.

What are the challenges faced by women in higher judiciary appointments?

1. **Systemic Inequality:** Women are often seen as inferior within the legal profession, facing deep-rooted biases.
2. **Merit Scrutiny:** Women nominated for judgeship face tougher scrutiny and must prove merit more than men.
3. **Biased Justifications:** Arguments like insufficient eligible women candidates hide the real issue of bias.
4. **Opaque Collegium System:** Lack of clear criteria for eligibility and merit in the collegium process obstructs women's appointments.
5. **Government Rejections:** Since 2020, nine women recommended for High Courts were not confirmed by the government; five were the only names rejected.

What steps can improve gender equality in the judiciary?

1. **Implement Transparent Processes:** Establish a clear and transparent process for judicial appointments. Specify the criteria for eligibility and merit. Ensure that selections are based on qualifications and integrity.

2. **Prioritize Gender Diversity:** Aim to have at least one-third of judges in higher judiciary as women. This would reflect societal composition better. It would also enhance the court's legitimacy and public trust.

3. **Address Systemic Bias:** Combat deep-rooted biases against women in law. Normalize the appointment of women judges without additional scrutiny. Ensure that women do not face tougher standards than men.

4. **Increase Government Accountability:** Make the government accountable for rejecting women recommended by the collegium. Since 2020, nine women's names were recommended but not confirmed. Of these, five were the only names to be rejected.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors contributing to the low representation of women in India's higher judiciary.

Issue of Duplicate EPIC Numbers and Election Commission's Explanation

Source: The post Issue of Duplicate EPIC Numbers and Election Commission's Explanation Evaluation has been created, based on the article "**Are unique electoral ID numbers being duplicated?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 10th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Polity- Election
Context: The article discusses allegations by West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee that the BJP, with EC's support, included out-of-state voters in West Bengal's voter list. The EC explained duplicate EPIC numbers were due to past manual systems and promised to fix them.
What are the allegations made by Mamata Banerjee about the voters' list in West Bengal?
1. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee accused the BJP of including voters from other states in the West Bengal voter list.

2. She claimed this was done with the support of the Election Commission (EC).

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3. Banerjee cited cases of multiple voters having the same Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers as proof. The Trinamool Congress called the EC's response a "cover-up."

What is an EPIC card, and how does it work?

1. **EPIC (Electors Photo Identity Card)** is a 10-digit voter ID card issued by the Election Commission of India.
2. It was introduced in **1993** under the *Registration of Electors Rules, 1960* to enhance electoral transparency.
3. The **EPIC number** is a unique alphanumeric code assigned to each registered voter .
4. It is generated via the **ERONET platform**, a web-based system for managing voter registration, migration, and deletion.
5. The **ERONET** links the EPIC to state and constituency data, ensuring regional uniqueness.
6. For example, **duplicate EPIC numbers** arose from past manual systems before ERONET's implementation.
For detailed information on **Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC)** read this article here

How did the Election Commission respond to the allegations?

1. The EC admitted that identical EPIC numbers were issued due to a past decentralized and manual system before the ERONET platform was used.

2. However, it clarified that voters with the same EPIC number have different demographic details, constituencies, and polling booths.

3. The EC promised to fix the issue by updating to ERONET 2.0, which will ensure unique EPIC numbers.

What are the concerns raised by the Trinamool Congress about duplicate EPIC numbers?

1. The Trinamool Congress argued that duplicate EPIC numbers could lead to voters being denied their right to vote due to photo mismatches.

2. Trinamool MP Saket Gokhale claimed that the same EPIC number in different states could cause rejection if photos did not match.

3. He accused the EC of helping the BJP by targeting non-BJP voters with these duplicate numbers.

4. Gokhale insisted that EC rules require software to track EPIC numbers to prevent duplicates and called the issue a conspiracy for voter suppression.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the Election Commission's explanation for the issue of duplicate EPIC numbers in West Bengal's voter list.

Rising Obesity Rates Challenge Health and Economy

Source: The post Rising Obesity Rates Challenge Health and Economy has been created, based on the article "**India's obesity problem**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 10th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

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Context: The article discusses rising obesity rates globally and in India, highlighting the role of unhealthy diets. It emphasizes the need for better policies, local food systems, and treatment options, and mentions new drugs that might help but remain costly.

For detailed information on **Obesity in India** read this article here

What is the current state of obesity globally and in India?

1. In 2021, there were 211 crore overweight or obese people globally, making up 45% of the population.

2. Half of them lived in eight countries, including China (40.2 crore), India (18 crore), and the U.S. (17.2 crore).

3. By 2050, India could have 44 crore obese people, possibly surpassing China in some categories. 4. Obesity among children is rising rapidly, increasing by 244% in the last 30 years and predicted to rise by 121% in the next 30 years.

How is obesity defined and diagnosed?

1. **Body Mass Index (BMI):** Obesity is defined using BMI, which is a person's weight divided by height squared.
2. **Categories:** A BMI above 30 is obese, while 25-30 is overweight.
3. **Children's Criteria:** For ages 5 to 17, weight-for-age and gender standards are used.
4. **New Definitions:** The Lancet suggests "clinical obesity" and "preclinical obesity," using BMI, waist circumference, waist-to-hip ratio, and waist-to-height ratio. A high BMI with no symptoms is "preclinical obesity."

What are the health and economic impacts of rising obesity?

1. Health Impacts:

• Obesity increases the risk of chronic diseases like type-2 diabetes, heart diseases, and certain cancers.
• Obese individuals face higher risks of severe infections, highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic.
• Early onset of lifestyle diseases among obese children is a growing concern.

2. Economic Impacts:

• Treating obesity-related conditions is costly, especially in aging populations with lower birth rates.
• Obese patients often require more elective surgeries and have suboptimal outcomes, leading to higher healthcare costs.
• Managing chronic conditions related to obesity in older adults demands significant financial resources, increasing healthcare spending.

What is causing the obesity epidemic?

1. **Unhealthy Diets:** Shift to calorie-dense foods high in sugar, salt, and fats is a key cause.
2. **Corporate Influence:** Multinational companies target low and middle-income countries with lax regulations.
3. **Rising Processed Food Sales:** Between 2009 and 2019, India, Cameroon, and Vietnam saw the highest growth in ultra-processed food sales.
4. **Local Food Systems Affected:** Traditional food supply systems are being replaced by "big food distribution" networks.
5. **Economic Factors:** Growing populations and rising per-capita incomes in low-income countries attract more processed food sales.

What can be done to combat obesity?

1. Solutions include protecting local food systems, taxing unhealthy products like sweetened drinks, and investing in obesity treatment.

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2. National policies are needed, but only 40% of countries, and just 10% of low and middle-income nations, have them.

3. New drugs like semaglutide and terzapatide show promise but are expensive. Cheaper generic versions might improve access in the future.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors contributing to the rising obesity rates globally and in India, as discussed in the article.

India US trade agreement and WTO rules compliance

Source: The post India US trade agreement and WTO rules compliance has been created, based on the article "**An India-U.S. trade agreement and the test of WTO laws**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 11th 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: The article discusses the proposed India-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) and its legal implications under WTO rules. It explains how trade agreements must follow WTO laws, the MFN principle, and possible exceptions like interim agreements or FTAs while ensuring legal compliance.
For detailed information on **Significance of diplomatic resolution of India US trade dispute** read this article here
What is the India-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)?
1. India and the U.S. agreed to negotiate a **multi-sector BTA** by fall 2025.
2. The **February 13, 2025, Joint Leaders Statement** mentioned the BTA but did not provide details.
3. It is not labeled as a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**, but its content matters more than terminology.
4. Both countries are **WTO members**, so the agreement must follow **WTO trade laws**.
5. The **Most Favoured Nation (MFN) principle** restricts preferential treatment unless done under specific WTO conditions.
6. The agreement could impact **tariff rates, market access, and trade volumes** between India and the U.S.
How do Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) work under WTO law?
1. FTAs allow countries to reduce tariffs for each other, but they must eliminate duties on "substantially all the trade" between them (GATT Article XXIV.8(b)). This ensures that FTAs remain exceptions to the MFN rule.

2. If India and the U.S. lower tariffs on select products without a full FTA, it may violate WTO law. The agreement must also be reported to the WTO.

Can India and the U.S. sign an interim agreement?

1. An interim agreement is allowed under Article XXIV.5 of GATT to help countries create an FTA over time.

2. It must include a plan to establish an FTA within 10 years. India and the U.S. can use this approach only if they genuinely plan to sign an FTA.

3. Misusing it to bypass WTO rules would be legally incorrect.

Does the 'enabling clause 'allow this agreement?

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1. The enabling clause lets WTO members give better market access to developing countries.

2. Since India is lowering tariffs on U.S. products, this agreement does not fit under the enabling clause.

3. The U.S. benefits more, which is against the purpose of this WTO exception.

Why is WTO law important for India?

1. The U.S. has previously pushed for "reciprocal tariffs," which go against WTO principles like MFN and Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) for developing countries.

2. India, as a supporter of a rules-based trading system, must ensure that the BTA follows WTO laws.

3. This agreement will test India's ability to resist unfair U.S. pressure while protecting its trade interests.

Question for practice:

Examine how the proposed India-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) aligns with WTO rules and its possible legal implications.

Weak food regulations increase obesity in India

Source: The post Weak food regulations increase obesity in India has been created, based on the article "**Flawed food regulations fuel the obesity crisis**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 11th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health
Context: The article discusses India's obesity crisis and how weak food regulations allow misleading marketing of unhealthy foods. It criticizes the Indian Nutrition Rating system and urges stronger labeling and advertising rules. It suggests warning labels, clear fat/sugar limits, and stricter laws.
For detailed information **Rising Obesity Rates Challenge Health and Economy** read this article here
Why is obesity a serious problem in India?
1. **High Obesity Rates**: One in four Indian adults is obese (NFHS-5).
2. **Diabetes Prevalence**: Similarly, one in four adults is either diabetic or pre-diabetic, according to the National Family Health Survey-5. Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) and high-fat, sugar, and salt (HFSS) foods contribute to this crisis.
3. **Ineffective Regulations**:The government plans a 'health tax 'on UPFs, but weak regulations may reduce its impact.
What are the issues with food labeling in India?
1. **No Front-of-Pack Warning Labels:** India has not implemented clear warning labels for unhealthy foods despite earlier proposals.
2. **Misleading Indian Nutrition Rating (INR):** The INR system gives star ratings, which create a false health perception. For example:
• A high-sugar soft drink gets **two stars** instead of a clear warning.
• Cornflakes with high sugar and sodium get **three stars**, creating a false healthy image.
3. **Ignored Effective Models:** The FSSAI ignored its 2021 draft proposing a 'traffic light 'color-coded system. In contrast, Chile's 'high in 'black labels reduced UPF consumption by 24%.
Why is food advertising regulation weak in India?

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1. **Multiple laws but no effectiveness**: India has **four laws** to regulate misleading food ads, but none work properly.
2. **Lack of nutritional disclosure**: The **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, does not mandate revealing sugar, salt, or fat content in ads. For **Example,** Cola brands can advertise to children without mentioning **9-10 teaspoons of sugar per bottle**.
3. **No defined limits**: **FSSAI has not set clear thresholds** for HFSS or UPFs.
Policy inaction: The **2017 National Multisectoral Action Plan** suggested HFSS ad restrictions, but no action followed.

What should India do to improve food regulations?
1. Replace the **Indian Nutrition Rating system** with **clear warning labels**.
2. Set strict **sugar, salt, and fat limits** for HFSS foods using WHO and ICMR guidelines.
3. Close advertising loopholes by amending laws or **introducing a new law** for HFSS food ads.
4. Start a **nationwide awareness campaign** on UPF risks in all languages.

Conclusion
India's obesity crisis is driven by policy failures, not just public choices. Weak labeling and advertising laws allow unhealthy foods to be marketed misleadingly. The 2025 Economic Survey suggests strict regulations, but implementation is slow. Urgent action is needed, including warning labels, sugar/fat limits, and advertising bans, to protect public health, especially children.

Question for practice:
Examine how weak food regulations in India contribute to the rising obesity crisis.

How Technology Impacts Women in Agriculture and Fisheries

Source: The post How Technology Impacts Women in Agriculture and Fisheries has been created, based on the article "**Technologies that give women a say on farms**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 11th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Social Justice- mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.
Context: The article talks about how women in agriculture and fisheries face many challenges due to gender inequality. It highlights how technology can help women by reducing workload, improving productivity, and increasing decision-making power. It also stresses the need for systemic support and accountability.

How Do Women Contribute to India's Agri-Food Systems?
1. Women play a major role in agriculture, livestock rearing, agroforestry, and fisheries. They do both paid and unpaid work.

2. However, their productivity is affected by barriers such as limited access to resources, knowledge, and decision-making power.

3. Gender, caste, and class influence the division of labour. Women are assigned physically demanding, low-paying, and invisible tasks.

How Has Technology Affected Women in Agriculture?

1. Most farm technologies are designed for men, ignoring the needs of women, which results in reduced paid work for women due to mechanization.
2. In small millet farming in Koraput, Odisha, men make almost all decisions regarding the division of work, resources, access to technology, and finances.

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3. Women are tasked with labor-intensive jobs such as manual weeding, threshing, de-hulling, and pulverizing.

4. Tractors are seen as symbols of masculine power, reinforcing male dominance over farm machinery.

5. The M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) is working to provide women with access to appropriate technology, information, and training to empower them in agricultural settings.

What Challenges Do Women Face in the Fisheries Sector?

1. **Loss of Opportunities Due to Mechanisation** – Large fishing vessels and trawlers benefit men, while women struggle with processing, drying, and vending.

2. **Limited Market Access** – Centralised harbours are far from villages, making it difficult for women to access fish.

3. **Low Earnings** – Women vendors earn around ₹800 per day, most of which goes toward transport and debts.

4. **Lack of Market Information** – Poor knowledge about fish availability and market trends affects their business.

5. **Marginalisation by Large Buyers** – Export traders dominate, pushing small women vendors aside.

How Has Digital Technology Helped Women in Fisheries?

1. MSSRF has provided digital tools to low-income women fish workers in Tamil Nadu's coastal districts (Nagapattinam, Mayiladuthurai, Cuddalore, and Ramanathapuram).

2. Women now have access to mobile phones, tablets, helplines, and audio advisories.

3. Training in internet use, digital payments, inventory management, and online business has improved their work.

4. Digital access helps them navigate market barriers, gain information on fish availability, and build resilience against economic and ecological challenges.

Conclusion:

Technology alone cannot solve gender inequality. Women need an ecosystem where men, families, communities, markets, and the state support their empowerment. Patriarchy is resilient, so accountability is needed to ensure women benefit from these interventions.

Question for practice:

Examine how technology has impacted women's roles and challenges in India's agriculture and fisheries sectors.

Delimitation threatens India's unity and federal balance

Source: The post Delimitation threatens India's unity and federal balance has been created, based on the article "**Delimitation debate: Let the current distribution of Lok Sabha be cast in stone**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 11th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Polity-issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure

Context: The article argues against delimitation, which would change the number of parliamentary seats based on population. It warns that this could increase political dominance by Hindi-speaking states, weaken national unity, and create new divisions. It suggests permanently freezing seat allocation to maintain balance.

For detailed information on **Delimitation Exercise in India: Balancing Democracy and Federalism** read this article here

What is the main issue with delimitation?

1. **Unequal Representation:** A voter in Kerala represents 18 lakh people, while a voter in Uttar Pradesh represents 32 lakh people. This creates an imbalance in vote value.

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2. **Loss of Seats for Southern States:** Tamil Nadu (-8), Kerala (-8), Andhra Pradesh & Telangana (-8), Karnataka (-2). This weakens their political influence.

3. **Increase in Hindi Belt Seats:** Uttar Pradesh (+11), Bihar (+10), Rajasthan (+6), Madhya Pradesh (+4). This gives northern states more power.

4. **Threat to Federal Balance**: The Hindi heartland would gain 259 seats, nearly a majority in the Lok Sabha, weakening the influence of southern and eastern states.

5. **Risk of Deepening Divisions**: Delimitation could reinforce existing cultural, economic, and political fault lines between the north and south.

6. **Federal Contract Argument**: Some argue that India's unity is based on an implicit agreement, ensuring no region dominates others.

Why was seat allocation frozen in the first place?

1. The Indian Constitution originally supported "one person, one vote, one value."

2. However, a freeze was introduced to prevent states that controlled population growth from losing seats. This was based on fairness.

3. Some small states, like Goa and Arunachal Pradesh, already receive more seats than their population size justifies. This is called "asymmetrical federalism."

Why do some states oppose delimitation?

1. The opposition is not just about population control. It is also about national unity. India has three major regional fault lines:

• **Cultural fault line:** Hindi-speaking states vs. non-Hindi states.
• **Economic fault line:** South and West India are wealthier than North and East India.
• **Political fault line:** The BJP dominates the North but faces resistance in the South.

2. Delimitation would increase the **Hindi heartland's** Lok Sabha seats to **259** out of **543**, weakening the South (currently **132 seats**) and removing its power to **veto constitutional amendments**.

What is the proposed solution?

1. **Permanent Freeze on Delimitation:** The proposed solution is to permanently freeze the current allocation of parliamentary seats. This approach aims to avoid the redistribution of seats based on population changes.

2. It proposes a federal contract where:

• Representation is **not** based only on population.
• Revenue-sharing between states is **not** based only on tax contributions.

3. This balance would respect India's **"unity in diversity"** and prevent regional tensions.

Question for practice:

Discuss the reasons why some states oppose delimitation and its potential impact on national unity.

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Compassion improves health care for everyone

Source: The post Compassion improves health care for everyone has been created, based on the article "**Building compassion into the health-care structure**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 12th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health
Context: The article highlights the importance of compassion in health care. It explains how compassion benefits both patients and medical professionals. It calls for training in compassionate care and urges global efforts to make health care more patient-centered and inclusive.

Why is compassion important in health care?
1. **Faster Recovery:** Stanford University's CCARE found that patients treated with compassion recover quickly and have shorter hospital stays.
2. **Reduced Anxiety:** A Johns Hopkins study found that when doctors spend 40 extra seconds with patients and express solidarity, it significantly reduces anxiety and improves recovery.
3. **Improves job satisfaction**: Doctors and nurses who practice compassion feel more fulfilled in their work. They build stronger relationships with patients, leading to better treatment outcomes.
4. **Reduces stress and burnout**: Compassion helps health-care professionals manage emotional stress. Unlike empathy, which can cause exhaustion, compassion allows them to help patients without feeling overwhelmed.
5. Promotes sustainable health care: Compassion creates a balanced approach, ensuring both patients and professionals benefit in the long term.

What is the difference between compassion, empathy, and sympathy?

Aspect	Sympathy	Empathy	Compassion
Definition	Feeling pity for someone's suffering.	Deeply feeling someone's pain as your own.	Understanding suffering and taking action to help.
Emotional Impact	Momentary response, no deep connection.	Can lead to emotional exhaustion and stress.	Maintains emotional stability while helping.
Effect on Health-care Workers	No significant impact.	Can cause burnout due to internalizing others' pain.	Reduces stress and improves job satisfaction.
Example	Feeling bad for a sick patient but doing nothing.	A doctor feeling overwhelmed by a patient's pain.	A doctor spending 40 extra seconds expressing solidarity, reducing patient anxiety (Johns Hopkins study).

How can compassion be integrated into health care?

1. Hospitals and medical institutions must train staff in compassionate care.

2. Industry leaders should make it a priority.

3. Training should focus on practical methods and the difference between empathy and compassion.

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4. Compassionate health care must also be accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic status.

Why is compassion important in mental health?

1. **Mental health crisis**: Experts warn that depression could become the "next pandemic." It has long-term effects on individuals and society.

2. **Compassion aids recovery:** The story of Pradeep, a rescued child, shows how compassionate care helped him recover from severe trauma. Trained caregivers at Bal Ashram helped him regain his confidence without forcing him to relive his past. This example proves that compassionate care transforms lives.

3. **Sustainable mental health care**: Compassion makes mental health care more effective and long-lasting.
Question for practice:

Discuss the importance of compassion in health care and how it benefits both patients and medical professionals.

India must tackle corruption, reduce red tape to boost business

Source: The post India must tackle corruption, reduce red tape to boost business has been created, based on the article "**More signs of overhauling the compliance framework**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 12th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability.
Context: The article highlights corruption and red-tapism as major barriers to business growth in India. It discusses frequent compliance changes, bribery, and slow reforms. It suggests digital solutions, simplified regulations, and bold government action to attract investment and boost economic growth.
How does corruption and red-tapism affect businesses in India?
1. Corruption and red-tapism slow down business growth and create uncertainty.
2. The *India Business Corruption Survey 2024* found that **66% of businesses paid bribes**, and **54% were coerced** for approvals, compliance, and licences.
3. Sectors most affected include **GST, income tax, pollution control, labour, and health departments**.
4. *EY-FICCI* survey states that **four out of five businesses believe corruption discourages FDI (Foreign Direct Investment)**.
What are the challenges with compliance rules?
1. Compliance is **complex and frequently changing**, making it hard for businesses to operate smoothly.
2. There were **9,420 compliance updates in the past year**—an **average of 36 daily changes**, adding confusion.
3. Officials misuse compliance laws to **demand bribes**, threatening businesses with **penalties or shutdowns**.
4. Labour laws were modernised into four labour codes, but **they remain unimplemented**, causing regulatory uncertainty.
What are the key government reforms to improve compliance?
1. The *Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023* decriminalised **180 provisions**, reducing penalties on businesses.
2. The *Jan Vishwas 2.0* (announced in *Budget 2025*) aims to decriminalise **100 more provisions**.

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3. However, **20,000+ provisions with imprisonment clauses** remain untouched, keeping businesses under regulatory pressure.

4. The *Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)* introduced **yearly compliance updates** to improve predictability.

How can digital solutions help reduce corruption and delays?

1. Establishing a factory in India requires **hundreds of notarised documents** across **40+ government departments**.

2. A **'digi locker 'system** could store and share verified business documents digitally, cutting **approval times from months to days**.

3. India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) has improved governance, but **business compliance remains fragmented**.

4. Entrepreneurs must manage **23 different identity numbers** (e.g., PAN, GSTIN, CIN), increasing inefficiency.

5. A **'One Nation, One Business 'Identity system** could simplify compliance, reduce bureaucratic friction, and curb corruption.

Why must India act fast to improve its business environment?

1. **India faces global competition:** The **U.S. ($27 trillion GDP)** is making business easier with the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

2. **Investors seek a predictable environment:** Without fast-tracked reforms in compliance and transparency, India risks losing investment and talent.

3.The government must act decisively to modernise regulations and attract global businesses.

Question for practice:

Examine how corruption, red-tapism, and complex compliance rules impact business growth in India and the reforms needed to improve the business environment.

Naming diseases after places causes serious problems

Source: The post Naming diseases after places causes serious problems has been created, based on the article "**What's in a (disease's) name?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 12th March 2025

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

Context: The article explains how naming diseases after places causes misinformation and stigma. The WHO opposes this practice and promotes scientific names. It discusses past and recent cases, including Trichophyton indotineae. The article urges global cooperation in disease prevention without stereotypes.

Why is naming diseases after places problematic?

1. Naming diseases after places leads to misinformation; for example, the "Spanish flu" did not originate in Spain, but Spain's neutral status in World War I meant it reported the flu when others did not.

2. This practice can cause stigma and harm to regions unfairly blamed for diseases. The recent objection to the name "Trichophyton indotineae" highlights this, as the fungus was named after India and Nepal despite its presence in over 40 countries.

3. Misnaming undermines scientific accuracy and can politicize public health, distracting from the essential focus on prevention and treatment.

What steps has the WHO taken to stop this practice?

1. **Guidelines (2015):** The WHO directed scientists to avoid geographic names and use scientific characteristics instead.

2. **Renaming Zika-related disease (2016):** Doctors renamed the fetal disease caused by the Zika virus as **congenital Zika syndrome** to reflect its broader effects beyond microcephaly.

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3. **Renaming Monkeypox (2022):** The WHO replaced "monkeypox" with **mpox** to prevent racist and stigmatizing language.

4. **Historical Corrections:** The WHO renamed **Reiter's Syndrome** to **reactive arthritis** after discovering the physician's Nazi links.

5. **International Naming Rules:** The WHO follows strict naming guidelines to avoid misinformation and discrimination.

What should scientists and the WHO focus on?

1. Scientists and the WHO should focus on finding causes of diseases and better treatments.

2. The COVID-19 pandemic showed that diseases affect everyone globally.

3. Stereotypes divide people, but microbes do not follow borders. The world needs cooperation, not blame.

Question for practice:

Discuss why naming diseases after places is problematic and how the WHO has addressed this issue.

Rising household debt in India and its economic impact

Source: The post Rising household debt in India and its economic impact has been created, based on the article "**What's in a (disease's) name?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 12th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Indian economy – Mobilisation of resource
Context: The article discusses the rise in household debt in India, which has increased to 42.9% of GDP. More borrowing is for consumption, not asset creation. Lower-income households rely on unsecured loans, increasing financial stress. This may weaken economic growth and policy effectiveness.
For detailed information on **Status of household savings in India: On the fall in household savings** read this article here
What is the Current Status of Household Debt in India?
1. Household debt has increased from **36.6% of GDP in June 2021** to **42.9% in June 2024**.
Though lower than in most emerging markets, this **rise is a concern**.
2. Household assets have declined from **110.4% of GDP in June 2021** to **108.3% in March 2024**.
3. **More borrowing is used for consumption** rather than asset creation, indicating **weaker financial health**.
Is the borrowing pattern healthy?
1. RBI data shows that **borrowing is rising due to an increase in borrowers, not because of higher individual debt levels**.
2. **Two-thirds of household debt belongs to prime or super-prime borrowers**, which suggests overall credit quality is improving.
3. **Super-prime borrowers use most of their loans (64%) for asset creation**, while **sub-prime borrowers use nearly half of their loans for consumption**.
4. **Since September 2023, credit growth has slowed**, leading to a reduction in sub-prime borrowing.
Why is borrowing for consumption a concern?
1. More loans are being taken for **daily expenses, not assets like houses or vehicles**.
2. **Lower-income households (earning less than ₹5 lakh) mostly take unsecured loans**, such as credit card debt.

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3. **Super-prime borrowers use 64% of loans for assets, while sub-prime borrowers use nearly half for consumption.**

4. Delinquencies in personal and credit card loans have risen in **September 2024 compared to September 2023**.

5. Many borrowers have multiple loans, increasing financial risk.

How does this impact economic growth?

1. Lower-income households spend a large share of their income, boosting demand in the economy.

2. If they take on **more debt, they must repay loans instead of spending**, reducing economic growth.

3. **The income multiplier weakens**, meaning economic output grows less for the same investment.

4. **Macroeconomic policies like tax cuts may not work well** if many households are repaying debt instead of spending.

What are the long-term risks?

1. Rising unsecured loans increase financial stress, especially for lower-income groups.

2. **If borrowers default on small loans, their bigger loans (like housing loans) also become non-performing.**

3. **Financial innovations like easy credit access may worsen debt problems**, leading to instability.

4. Even though **prime borrowers dominate the loan market, policymakers must monitor risks** from rising consumption loans.

Question for practice:

Examine the impact of rising household debt in India on economic growth and financial stability.

HDI ignores environmental costs and sustainability issues

Source: The post HDI ignores environmental costs and sustainability issues has been created, based on the article "**The dangerous illusion cast by development rankings**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 13th March 2025

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

Context: The article criticizes the Human Development Index (HDI) for ignoring environmental costs. It argues that rich countries consume too many resources, making their development unsustainable. Instead, middle-income countries like Costa Rica offer better models. India must adopt an eco-friendly, just development path.

For detailed information on **The wide disparities in human development** read this article here

Why are wildfires in California a warning about unsustainable development?

The recent California wildfires caused damage estimated at $250 billion, similar to Greece's GDP in 2023. These disasters highlight the environmental cost of high-consumption economies like the U.S. and Europe. If all countries consumed resources at their level, multiple Earths would be needed.

What are the flaws in the Human Development Index (HDI)?

1. **Ignores Environmental Impact**: The HDI overlooks the environmental damage caused by high-resource consumption in developed countries. For example, countries like Ireland and Norway, which score high on HDI, also have large carbon footprints and resource use per capita.

2. **Misleading Sustainability Indicator**: Even the Planetary Pressures-adjusted HDI (PHDI), introduced to account for environmental impacts, falls short. It only compares countries relative to each other rather than against absolute ecological thresholds, allowing high-consuming nations to still rank well.

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3. **Promotes Unsustainable Models**: The HDI champions development patterns of rich nations, which if globally adopted, would require multiple Earths' worth of resources, far exceeding planetary limits.

Which countries offer a more sustainable development model?

Middle-income countries like **Costa Rica and Sri Lanka** balance human development with environmental sustainability.

• **Costa Rica** has universal healthcare, high literacy, and low resource use. It invests in **renewable energy and forest conservation**.
• **Sri Lanka** has an HDI of **0.78**, high literacy, and life expectancy. However, its **2022 economic crisis** and political instability show that sustainability also needs social justice and stability.
Why should India avoid copying high-income countries?

1. India's **1.4 billion** people cannot follow the consumption patterns of the West. The **Nordic model** is unsustainable at a global level.

2. Instead, India must create its own path, focusing on **ecological limits, social justice, and sustainable progress**.

How should we redefine progress?

GDP growth and HDI rankings alone do not mean true progress. Development should ensure **dignity for all** while staying within ecological limits. This is not just an ideal but a **survival strategy** for the 21st century.

Question for practice:

Examine the flaws in the Human Development Index (HDI) and its limitations in measuring sustainable development.

India's GDP growth trends and investment impact

Source: The post India's GDP growth trends and investment impact has been created, based on the article "**What the recent GDP data revisions reveal**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 13th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy- Growth and Development
Context: The article discusses India's GDP growth trends based on NSO data. It explains quarterly growth variations, reasons for fluctuations, and investment impact. It highlights revised annual growth figures, challenges in achieving targets, and the importance of investment for long-term economic growth.
For detailed information on **India's Real Growth Rate and Forecast** read this article here
How has India's GDP growth performed in 2024-25?
1. India's GDP growth rates for 2024-25 across four quarters were: **6.5%, 5.6%, 6.2%, and 7.6%**.
2. The third-quarter GDP growth of **6.2%** was an improvement from **5.6%** in the second quarter.
3. Agriculture grew by 5.6%, while **manufacturing remained weak at 3.5%** despite slight improvement.
4. **Services, including trade and hospitality, grew by 6.7%**, up from **6.1% in Q2**.
Why did GDP growth slow down in the second quarter?
1. The fall in GDP growth from **6.5% to 5.6%** in Q2 was due to lower private consumption.

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2. The contribution of **Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) fell from 4.3 to 3.3 percentage points**.

3. **Investment growth also declined**, contributing only **2.0 percentage points**, compared to **2.3 in Q1**.

Is the fourth-quarter growth target of 7.6% achievable?

1. To achieve **7.6% GDP growth in Q4**, **PFCE must grow by 9.9%**, which is historically high and unlikely.

2. Investment growth needs to contribute 2.1 percentage points, mainly from government spending.

3. The government has spent ₹**7.57 lakh crore in capital expenditure up to January 2025**.

4. To reach its **revised estimate of** ₹**10.18 lakh crore**, it needs to **spend** ₹**2.61 lakh crore in February-March 2025**.

5. **Past data (2021-22 to 2023-24) shows an average expenditure of** ₹**1.81 lakh crore in these months**, making the target difficult.

What do annual revisions say about India's economy?

1. Real GDP growth was revised upwards for 2022-23 (**7.6%**), 2023-24 (**9.2% (up from 8.2%)**), and 2024-25 (**6.5%**).

2. GVA growth in 2023-24 was revised from 7.2% to 8.6%.

3. The biggest **upward revisions were in manufacturing (+2.4 percentage points) and financial, real estate services (+1.9 percentage points).**

4. The **Gross Capital Formation (investment) fell from 10.5% in 2023-24 to 5.8% in 2024-25**, affecting growth.

5. The **Incremental Capital-Output Ratio (ICOR)** for 2024-25 is **5.5**, meaning more investment is needed for growth.

What are the growth prospects for 2025-26?

1. The Economic Survey estimates real GDP growth for 2025-26 in the range of 6.3%-6.8%, with a midpoint of 6.55%.

2. A 6.5% real GDP growth in 2025-26 is feasible if government investment remains strong.

3. Private investment needs more time to recover due to global uncertainties.

4. The overall nominal saving rate in 2023-24 was 30.7%, below the pre-COVID average of 31.2% (2015-16 to 2019-20).

5. The real investment rate (Gross Fixed Capital Formation to GDP) for 2024-25 is 33.4%.

6. Investment-led growth remains the best long-term strategy.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the impact of investment trends on India's GDP growth in 2024-25 and its implications for 2025-26.

India's Peacekeeping Role in Ukraine Strengthens Influence

Source: The post India's Peacekeeping Role in Ukraine Strengthens Influence has been created, based on the article "**Vishwaguru India: A to-do list**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 13th 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: The article suggests India should take a bold peacekeeping role in Ukraine after a ceasefire. It argues that this would boost India's global influence, strengthen its leadership, and position it as a major power. It calls this strategy "Gaga diplomacy"—confident and transformative.

For detailed information on **India's role in Russia-Ukraine Crisis** read this article here

How Can India Use the Ukraine Conflict to Strengthen Its Global Role?

1. **Strategic Opportunity:** India can utilize the Ukraine conflict as a pivotal moment to transition from a regional power to a global leader.

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2. **Peacekeeping Mission:** Proposing to deploy 5,000 troops to stabilize the region, reflecting a significant increase from the 1,000 troops sent to Korea in 1953.

3. **Supporting Peace:** Echoing Vijayalakshmi Pandit's advice, India aims to turn peace efforts into tangible actions, boosting its reputation as a peace guarantor.

What Is the Idea of "Gaga Diplomacy"?

1. **Gaga Diplomacy Concept:** Described as bold, confident, and unapologetic, akin to the style of Lady Gaga.

2. **Strategic Neutrality:** India maintains connections with both sides in global conflicts, aligning its strategies for global good.

How Can India's Peacekeeping Mission Be Structured?

1. India should position itself as a stabilizing force in Ukraine under a UN or coalition mandate.

2. The proposed peacekeeping force could start with 3,000 troops in August and scale up to 5,000 by fall.

3. Indian troops, including Gorkhas and Rajput Regiments, are experienced in UN peace missions (e.g., Congo, Sudan).

4.,The mission would focus on civilian protection, ceasefire monitoring, and using modern technology (drones, surveillance).

What Role Would Global Powers Play in This Plan?

1. **United States:** If Donald Trump returns, he may push for peace in Ukraine. India could leverage its trade ties (e.g., $10 billion in LNG imports) to gain US support.

2. **Europe:** Leaders like Emmanuel Macron and Keir Starmer may be willing to fund India's peacekeeping mission ($1 billion estimated).

3. **Russia:** India must reassure Russia that this is a neutral effort, not a NATO-backed mission.

4. **Ukraine:** India already has goodwill in Ukraine and can use diplomatic ties to gain acceptance.

How Would This Benefit India?

1. **Global Recognition:** India would move from being a bystander to a leader in world affairs.

2. **Diplomatic Leverage:** A successful mission would strengthen India's case for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

3. **Economic Gains:** Stronger ties with Europe and the US could increase investment and trade.

4. **Strategic Positioning:** It would enhance India's standing as a leader in the Global South, bridging the gap between Western and non-Western nations.

Question for practice:

Examine how India can leverage a peacekeeping role in Ukraine to enhance its global influence and strategic positioning.

India's electoral process faces transparency and trust issues

Source: The post India's electoral process faces transparency and trust issues has been created, based on the article "**Election Commission needs to address questions – not dismiss them**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 13th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Polity- powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

Context: The article discusses concerns about India's electoral process. It highlights issues with duplicate voter IDs, unexplained voter roll changes, delays in voter turnout data, and doubts about EVMs. It urges the Election Commission to improve transparency, technology, and accountability to restore trust.

For detailed information on **Election Commission is Losing Its Neutrality in India** read this article here

Why is the issue of duplicate voter IDs a problem?

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The Election Commission (EC) has acknowledged that some voters have the same EPIC number. This issue has existed for a long time but is now being addressed. Political parties, including the TMC, have raised concerns. The EC plans to fix this problem within three months using advanced technology.

Why is the accuracy of electoral rolls questioned?

1. **Unusual Additions and Deletions:** In Maharashtra, voter numbers increased significantly between May 2024 (general elections) and November 2024 (assembly elections). Delhi also saw unexplained changes.
2. **Historical Standards:** Sukumar Sen delayed India's first election until voter rolls were verified. Today, despite a three-member EC, errors persist.
3. **Suggested Reform:** The EC should publish polling stations with over 2-3% voter list changes for transparency.

Why is Form 17C controversial?

1. **Records Vote Count**: Form 17C records the number of votes polled at a booth. Polling agents of candidates receive attested copies.
2. **Delayed Data Disclosure**: The Election Commission (EC) does not upload Form 17C data immediately. This causes suspicion.
3. **Example from 2024 Elections**: The EC faced criticism for not revealing voter turnout data quickly. This led to trust issues.
4. **Proposed Solution**: Upload polling station-wise vote counts online. Transparency can prevent doubts.

Why do people doubt EVMs?

1. **Supreme Court Clearance:** Despite rulings that Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are reliable, public skepticism persists.
2. **Manipulation Concerns:** People question whether EVMs can be tampered with, differentiating between actual manipulation and potential vulnerabilities.
3. **Transparency Issues:** The Election Commission (EC) has been criticized for not being open about EVM processes, including the source code and administrative procedures.
4. **Public Confidence:** Counting 100% of VVPAT slips in random constituencies can help verify accuracy.

Conclusion

The EC should proactively fix flaws in electoral rolls, Form 17C transparency, and EVM credibility. Instead of just reacting to criticism, it should challenge its own systems. Strengthening accountability will help democracy function better.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors that have raised concerns about the accuracy and transparency of India's electoral process.

India's Health Policies Need Better Primary Care

Source: The post India's Health Policies Need Better Primary Care has been created, based on the article "**From insurance-driven private health care to equity**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 17th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

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Context: The article discusses India's health policies and budget. It highlights how Ayushman Bharat focuses on hospital care but neglects primary health care. It warns against over-reliance on private insurance and suggests investing in community health services to reduce costs and improve accessibility.

For detailed information on Public Health Sector read this article here

How does Ayushman Bharat impact health care in India?

1. Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) helps reduce **out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE)** by covering hospitalisation, surgeries, and procedures.

2. However, it **focuses on tertiary care** while **neglecting primary health care (PHC)**, which is essential for cost-effective health care.

3. PHC reduces long-term costs and prevents diseases, but **AB-PMJAY shifts attention away from preventive and community-based health care**, increasing reliance on private hospitals.

4. This contradicts the **Bhore Committee's vision** of a **pyramid-shaped health system**, with PHC as the foundation tapering to secondary and tertiary care.

How is the health budget allocated, and what are its challenges?

1. The **2025 Budget allocates ₹9,406 crore** to AB-PMJAY, which is ₹**2,000 crore more than the previous year**.

2. The total health budget includes ₹**95,957.87 crore for the Department of Health and Family Welfare** and ₹**3,900.69 crore for the Department of Health Research**.

3. The **National Health Mission (NHM)**, which supports **grassroot health care**, receives a **declining share**, indicating the government's reduced focus on universal health care.

4. The Budget prioritises **medical digital infrastructure and medical education expansion** rather than strengthening **primary health care**.

How does the increase in foreign direct investment (FDI) affect health care?

1. The **government increased the FDI cap in the insurance sector from 74% to 100%**, following a previous increase from **49% to 74% in 2021**.

2. The goal is to **increase insurance penetration**, especially in **rural areas**, and support the vision of **"Insurance for All" by 2047**.

3. The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** expects more capital and expanded coverage.

4. However, **informal workers and marginalised urban populations** may struggle with **insurance literacy** and **access to insurance benefits**.

5. **Without strict regulations, private insurance could lead to rising OOPE due to inflated medical costs and uncovered consumables.**

What are the risks of relying on private insurance for health care?

1. The **U.S. model** of private insurance-driven health care has led to **high treatment costs, inequalities, and limited access** for uninsured individuals.

2. **Claim denials** and **corporate control over health care** have sparked public criticism.

3. India risks **similar issues** if it **relies too much on private insurance** without strong government oversight.

4. **ASHA workers** and **grassroots health-care providers** may not receive sufficient coverage under current insurance models.

What can India learn from global health care models?

1. Thailand provides **universal health coverage** using **tax revenue** and **strong public health investments**.

2. **Costa Rica's system** mandates insurance (Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social) while **prioritising PHC and community-based services**.

3. These models show that **public investment in PHC reduces long-term health costs** and ensures better access to care.

4. India needs to **reassess its priorities**, ensuring health policies focus on **preventive and community-based health care** instead of **tertiary private care**.

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5. The government must **implement safeguards** to prevent **private insurance from inflating costs** and ensure that **UHC (Universal Health Coverage) remains a reality, not just a slogan**.

Question for practice:

Examine how India's reliance on private insurance impacts health care accessibility and affordability.

India faces challenges in public health education

Source: The post India faces challenges in public health education has been created, based on the article "**The challenges of public health education in India**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 17th March 2025

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

Context: The article discusses challenges in India's public health education and job market. It highlights job shortages, poor training quality, and lack of regulation. It suggests creating more public health jobs, improving training, and setting quality standards to strengthen India's health system.

How has the U.S. decision to cut global health aid affected India?

1. The **U.S. withdrew from the WHO** and reduced **USAID funding**, impacting many low- and middle-income countries.

2. **India was largely unaffected** because international aid makes up just **1% of its total health expenditure**.

3. However, this decision **reduced funding for public health development** in India.

4. It also **shrunk job opportunities** for **MPH graduates** and public health professionals.

How has public health education evolved in India?

1. **Public health education** in India dates back to the **colonial era**.

2. The **All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Kolkata** was established in **1932**.

3. Preventive and social medicine, now called **community medicine**, became part of medical education.

4. Earlier, **most students pursued MPH abroad** due to the lack of institutions in India.

5. The number of MPH institutions **grew from just one in 2000 to over 100 today**.

6. The **National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) (2005)** increased demand for public health roles.

7. However, after an initial rise, **government recruitment slowed down**, making jobs scarce.

What challenges do public health graduates face?

1. Mismatch between supply and demand – many MPH graduates, but **few job openings**.

2. Entry-level jobs (e.g., **research/programme assistants**) attract a **large number of applicants**, making competition tough.

3. The **private sector favors hospital and business management graduates** over public health professionals.

4. **Public sector job opportunities are shrinking**, limiting options for graduates.

5. **Research and development (R&D) jobs depend on foreign grants**, but **India is no longer a priority country** for global funders.

6. The **development sector is underfunded**, and the situation is worsening due to the **U.S. funding cuts**.

Why is the quality of public health education a concern?

1. MPH courses lack mandatory regulation from bodies like **NMC or UGC**.

2. **No uniform curriculum or quality standards** despite the Health Ministry's model course framework.

3. Public health schools compete for students, often lowering admission standards.

4. Many students **join without clear knowledge or passion for the field**.

5. **Public health faculty lack proper training and real-world experience**.

6. Some **large and populous states like Bihar, Jharkhand, and Assam have few or no MPH institutions**.

What steps can improve public health jobs and education?

1. Create **public health jobs** in **primary care, state, and national health systems**.

2. Develop a **dedicated public health workforce** at the state level.

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3. Set up a **regulatory body** under **NMC or UGC** to improve education standards.

4. Ensure **practical learning** is integrated into all public health programs.

5. Expand **public health institutions in states with low availability** of courses.

6. India must strengthen its **own health development funding** instead of depending on global aid.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges faced by public health graduates in India and their impact on employment opportunities.

Starlink faces challenges launching satellite internet in India

Source: The post Starlink faces challenges launching satellite internet in India has been created, based on the article "**What is Elon Musk's Starlink all about?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 17th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology

Context: The article discusses Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio's partnership with SpaceX's Starlink to introduce satellite internet in India. Starlink uses low-earth orbit satellites for internet access. It faces challenges in India, such as licensing, security clearances, and spectrum allocation. Pricing and availability details are still uncertain.

For detailed information on **Satellite Internet: Working, Advantages and Challenges** read this article here

What is Starlink and how does it work?

1. Starlink is a satellite internet service by SpaceX.

2. It uses over **7,000 low-earth orbit satellites** to provide internet.

3. Users need a **ground terminal** to connect.

4. Speeds are around **100 Mbps**, but latency is higher than wired broadband.

5. It works best in remote areas where fiber or 5G is unavailable.

For detailed information on **Space internet (Starlink project)** read this article here

Why is Starlink important for India?

1. It is **not very useful in cities** where 5G and broadband are strong.

2. It is **helpful for rural and remote areas** with poor internet access.

3. It can provide **instant connectivity** without the need for extensive infrastructure.

How much does Starlink cost?

1. A **residential kit** costs **$149** in the U.S. (₹17,000–₹40,000 in India, including taxes).

2.,A **portable "roaming" kit** costs **$349**.

3. Monthly plans in the U.S. range from **$120 to $165**.

4. In Bhutan, prices are ₹**4,200–₹8,400** per month, which may be similar in India.

A **"mobile priority" plan** costs ₹**21,000 per month** for premium users.

What are the regulatory hurdles in India?

1. SpaceX needs a **GMPCS license** under the **Telecommunications Act, 2023**.

2. The government requires **corporate ownership details** for approval.

3. A **security clearance** from the **Ministry of Home Affairs** is pending.

4. Ground stations in India need **lawful interception systems** for security.

5. Satellite spectrum allocation remains unclear, as telecom companies want it **auctioned**.

When will Starlink be available in India?

1. There is **no official launch date** due to pending approvals.

2. Regulatory delays include **spectrum allocation and security clearances**.

3. **Airtel and Jio have signed deals**, but final approvals are awaited.

4. Political and trade factors, including **U.S. pressure**, may speed up approvals.

Question for practice:

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Examine the regulatory challenges that SpaceX's Starlink faces in launching its satellite internet services in India.

Ambedkar drives social transformation using pragmatic force and energy

Source: The post Ambedkar drives social transformation using pragmatic force and energy has been created, based on the article "**What is Elon Musk's Starlink all about?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 17th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper4-Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and the world.

Context: The article discusses Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's philosophy through the ideas of force and energy. It highlights his engagement with John Dewey's pragmatism and its influence on his fight against caste and inequality. It explains Ambedkar's rhetorical strategies and his reconstruction of Buddhism.

How did Ambedkar's philosophy reflect force and energy?

1. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideas were driven by the principles of **force and energy**, which he applied to his fight for social justice.

2. He believed in action and change, not just theory.

3. His philosophy combined pragmatism, social reform, and intellectual rigor to challenge caste and inequality.

What was Ambedkar's connection with John Dewey's pragmatism?

1. Ambedkar studied under **John Dewey** at Columbia University.

2. He deeply engaged with Dewey's ideas, especially **pragmatism** and ethics.

3. His copies of Dewey's books had markings, showing careful reading.

4. Dewey's concept of **moral laws based on consequences** influenced Ambedkar's approach to social reform.

How did Ambedkar use pragmatism to analyze caste oppression?

1. In **Annihilation of Caste**, Ambedkar argued that caste destroys **individual agency**.

2. He saw caste as a system that denies people the freedom to make choices.

3. Inspired by **Deweyan pragmatism**, he explained how caste laws are rigid and based on outdated customs, preventing progress.

How did Ambedkar use rhetoric for social reconstruction?

1. Ambedkar used **rhetoric** (persuasive communication) to challenge caste and gender discrimination.

2. He turned the **1818 Battle of Bhima Koregaon** into a symbol of **Dalit resistance**.

3. His **1943 lecture on Ranade, Gandhi, and Jinnah** used dialectical debate to challenge dominant narratives.

4. He strategically used history and logic to empower the oppressed.

How did Ambedkar redefine Buddhism through pragmatism?

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1. Ambedkar rejected traditional, **theological Buddhism** and reinterpreted it to focus on **social justice**.

2. In **The Buddha and His Dhamma**, he argued that Buddha left his palace to **prevent war**, not for enlightenment.

3. His **Navayana Buddhism** promoted **liberty, equality, and fraternity**, challenging caste and gender oppression.

What was the broader impact of Ambedkar's ideas?

1. Ambedkar's philosophy was influenced by **Buddha, Kabir, Phule**, and many others.

2. Scholars like **Sharmila Rege and Gail Omvedt** explored his role in class and gender struggles.

3. His ideas remain crucial for modern debates on **social justice, caste, and democracy**.

Question for practice:

Discuss how Dr. B.R. Ambedkar applied pragmatism to his fight against caste oppression and social justice.

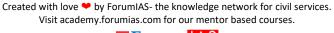## India's migration crisis needs better opportunities at home

Source: The post India's migration crisis needs better opportunities at home has been created, based on the article "**A land where ambition grows minus an outbound ticket**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 18th March 2025

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

Context: The U.S. recently deported Indian migrants who entered illegally. Many were handcuffed and flown back on military aircraft, sparking outrage. Migration is not just about policy; it is about human lives. While it has shaped economies and societies, stricter global policies now make it harder.

Reasons for Rising Migration
1. Success of Indian Migrants in the IT Industry: India has the world's largest emigrant population, with many achieving global success. Leaders like Sundar Pichai (Google) and Satya Nadella (Microsoft) exemplify India's influence in the IT sector. While migration has driven economic growth, increasing global restrictions now pose challenges for aspiring professionals seeking opportunities abroad.

2. **The Paradox of India's Growth and Outmigration:** Remittances exceeded $120 billion in 2023, highlighting India's reliance on migration. Despite economic growth, youth unemployment, declining agricultural incomes, and limited career opportunities continue to drive people abroad. Even prosperous states like Gujarat and Punjab face significant outmigration. While India celebrates global success stories, it struggles to provide dignified work and stability at home.

3. **The Exploitative Industry of Illegal Migration**: Smuggling networks prey on desperation, convincing even middle-class families to risk everything for migration. The **Gujarati family that froze to death at the Canada-U.S. border in 2022** highlights the dangers. Some deported individuals had paid ₹**1 crore** for illegal routes, raising questions about why people with such resources still seek uncertain futures abroad.

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4. The Harsh Reality of the American Dream: For many migrants, the American Dream is an illusion. An estimated 7,25,000 undocumented Indians live in the U.S., often in precarious jobs with constant fear of deportation. The Biden administration deported 1,100 Indians last year, and 1,70,000 Indian migrants have been detained since 2020 while attempting to cross illegally. The recent deportations—conducted with shackles and military transport—have drawn criticism, echoing similar protests by Colombia and Mexico against such treatment of their citizens.

Key Issues

1. **Rise of Smuggling Networks:** The lack of domestic opportunities fuels illegal migration, creating a dangerous cycle.
2. **Human Rights Concerns in Deportation:** Deportation should be an administrative process, not a punitive spectacle.
3. **Disillusionment with Migration:** Many migrants end up in exploitative jobs, challenging the idea of foreign prosperity.
Way Forward

1. **Creating More Domestic Opportunities:** India must invest in **education, infrastructure, and entrepreneurship** to ensure migration remains a choice, not a necessity.
2. **Combating Smuggling Networks:** Stronger enforcement and public awareness can deter illegal migration.
3. **Ensuring Dignified Deportation Processes:** India must demand fair treatment for its citizens abroad.
4. **Building India as an Economic Magnet:** Instead of exporting talent, India should create an environment where ambition flourishes domestically.
Conclusion

Illegal migration stems from deeper structural challenges. While it must be addressed, the response should **ensure dignity and focus on long-term economic solutions** rather than reactionary deportation debates. India must work towards **a future where people stay by choice, not out of necessity**.

Question for practice:

Examine the key reasons behind India's migration crisis and the challenges faced by Indian migrants abroad.

India's engagement with the Taliban and its impact

Source: The post India's engagement with the Taliban and its impact has been created, based on the article "**New Delhi's perilous recalibration with the Taliban**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 18th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations-India and its neighbourhood- relations.
Context: India is moving toward formal engagement with the Taliban, with reports that the Modi government may allow the regime to appoint an envoy in New Delhi. This follows a high-level meeting between India's Foreign Secretary and the Taliban's 'Foreign Minister 'in Dubai. The move reflects India's strategic interests despite concerns over human rights violations.

For detailed information on **India strengthens ties with Taliban amidst challenges** read this article here

India's Evolving Relationship with the Taliban

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1. Reopening of the Indian Embassy in Kabul (June 2022): Marked India's re-engagement with Afghanistan.

2. Humanitarian Aid & Economic Cooperation: India has provided food and medical aid while exploring trade opportunities.

3. Political Engagement: The January 2024 meeting in Dubai was the first official high-level dialogue, indicating India's willingness to deepen ties.

Geopolitical Motivations for India's Engagement

1. Countering China's Influence: China was the first country to accept a Taliban envoy in 2023. Beijing is funding key infrastructure projects in Afghanistan and is considering including the country in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). If India does not engage, it risks being left behind.

2. Weakening Pakistan's Influence: Pakistan-Taliban relations have worsened, giving India an opportunity to build strategic ties in Afghanistan. The Taliban is increasingly distancing itself from Islamabad and is engaging with other regional powers, including Russia and several Central Asian states.

3. Strategic Access to Central Asia: Afghanistan serves as a critical gateway to Central Asia, a region rich in energy resources and vital to India's economic and security interests. Strengthening ties with Kabul could significantly enhance India's regional connectivity.

Security Risks & Challenges

1. Terrorism Threats from Afghanistan: The Islamic State (IS) is expanding its influence in Afghanistan, targeting both the Taliban and foreign entities. Major attacks include the **assassination of Taliban leader Khalil Ur-Rahman Haqqani (December 2023), threats against the Chinese embassy (2023),** and the **Moscow terror attack (March 2024), which killed 140 people.**

2. Taliban's Links to Terror Groups: The Taliban has been accused of supporting **Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP),** which has escalated attacks in Pakistan. In **February 2024, the TTP carried out 147 attacks, killing 180 soldiers.** Pakistan retaliated with **airstrikes on terror camps inside Afghanistan.**

3. India's Own Terrorism Concerns: IS has previously targeted India, including a **December 2023 attack on the Indian consulate in Jalalabad.** A **2023 UN report warned that IS is recruiting operatives** for large-scale attacks in India. Strengthening ties with the Taliban without securing counter-terrorism assurances could put India at greater risk.

4. De Facto Recognition of the Taliban: Accepting a Taliban envoy would imply **recognition of the regime,** a stance most countries refuse to take. The **UN has condemned Taliban policies as "gender apartheid"** due to severe restrictions on women's rights. Aligning with a globally isolated regime could damage India's international reputation.

Way Forward for India

1. Demanding Counter-Terrorism Commitments:

• India must ensure that the Taliban actively counters IS and severs ties with terror groups like the TTP.

• Afghanistan should not become a safe haven for anti-India terror groups.

2. Balancing Engagement with Caution:

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• India must weigh economic and strategic benefits against security risks.

• It should avoid full recognition of the Taliban while keeping diplomatic channels open.

3. Learning from China & Pakistan's Mistakes:

• China's investments in Afghanistan have made it a target of IS attacks.

• Pakistan's past support for the Taliban has backfired, leading to increased terror attacks on its own soil.

• India should engage cautiously, ensuring its interests are protected.

Question for practice:
Examine the geopolitical and security implications of India's growing engagement with the Taliban.

Challenges faced by migrant workers and ways to improve welfare access

Source: The post Challenges faced by migrant workers and ways to improve welfare access has been created, based on the article "**The barriers faced by construction workers**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 18th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Infrastructures

Context: India's construction sector contributes about 9% to the national GDP and is projected to reach $1.4 trillion by 2025. However, concerns over labour shortages have emerged, with some attributing this to welfare schemes discouraging relocation. This overlooks deeper structural challenges faced by construction workers, especially migrants.
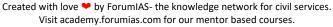
Current Status of India's construction sector

1. Around **3 crore workers** are expected to be employed in the construction sector by **2030**.
2. The The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 (BOCW Act), provides welfare provisions, but access remains difficult.
3. **5.65 crore workers** are registered with State construction boards, which have collected around ₹**70,000 crore** in welfare cess.
4. A **2023 Parliamentary Standing Committee report** found that **75% of the collected cess remains unutilized** due to fragmented databases and administrative hurdles.

Challenges Faced by migrant workers in India's construction sector

1. Documentation Barriers:

• Many workers **lack permanent addresses**, making it difficult to obtain birth certificates, residence proof, and other essential documents.
• The requirement for an **employment certificate proving 90 days of work** creates obstacles. While some States allow self-certification or trade union verification, most rely on employer-issued certificates, which contractors often refuse to provide.

2. Delayed and Inaccessible Welfare Benefits:

• Workers affected by **seasonal employment disruptions**, such as **heat waves** or **pollution-related construction bans**, struggle to access financial aid.
• The **lack of a digital public infrastructure** delays **direct benefit transfers** and creates **administrative challenges** during crises.

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3. **Inter-State Welfare Inaccessibility:**

• Migrant workers registered in one State **cannot access benefits in another** due to **non-interoperable systems**.
• For example, a worker registered with the **Haryana BOCW Board loses access upon relocating to Delhi**, leading to **welfare discontinuity**.
Way forward

1. **National Labour Identification System:** A system **similar to One Nation One Ration Card**, linking **BOCW registrations to UAN on e-Shram**, would enable **inter-State portability** of welfare benefits.

2. **Digitized Welfare Access**: **A central digital platform** with Aadhaar-based verification and **real-time tracking** can improve accessibility. **Standardized workflows** would reduce administrative delays and improve transparency.
3. **Simplified Documentation and Registration:**
• **Alternative proofs** should be accepted to ease the verification process.
• **On-site registration camps** at construction sites can reduce dependence on employer-issued certificates.

3. **Skill Development and Workplace Improvements:**

• **Industry-specific skilling programs** can help address labour shortages and improve productivity.

• **Safe and dignified work environments** are necessary to retain workers and enhance efficiency.
Conclusion

Labour shortages in the construction sector cannot be resolved without addressing systemic barriers to welfare access. **Ensuring inter-State benefit portability, simplifying registration processes, and improving workplace conditions** will help build a stable, skilled, and resilient workforce.

Question for practice:

Discuss the structural challenges faced by migrant workers in India's construction sector and suggest measures to improve their welfare access and job stability.

Challenges and Solutions for Hindi as Rajbhasha

Source: The post Challenges and Solutions for Hindi as Rajbhasha has been created, based on the article "**Yogendra Yadav writes: We need Hindi as a lokbhasha, not a rajbhasha**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 18th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper
Context: The debate on Hindi's *Rajbhasha* role is back. It highlights its failure over 75 years to unite India's diverse languages. Despite official status, Hindi hasn't empowered itself or bridged linguistic divides. Meanwhile, English's dominance continues, sidelining Hindi and other languages. This raises concerns about linguistic fairness.
For detailed information on **Hindi as a Common Language** read this article here
Challenges in Hindi's *Rajbhasha* Role

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1. **Lack of Integration:** Hindi is spoken by 42% of India's population. Yet, its *Rajbhasha* status hasn't united different linguistic groups. Instead, it has caused resentment among non-Hindi speakers due to perceived imposition.

2. **Tokenism in Promotion:** The use of Hindi on official signs and in government communications often feels superficial. It fails to integrate the language effectively into everyday life or governance.

3. **Cultural Division:** Hindi seems disconnected from other Indian languages. This weakens rather than strengthens national unity.

4. **Educational Inefficacy:** Surveys like ASER show that Hindi-speaking students in rural areas struggle with basic literacy in their own language. This indicates a failure in educational policy for Hindi.

5. **Elite Disconnection:** The Hindi-speaking elite prefer English for media and communication. This cultural shift away from Hindi undermines its status and influence.

Way Forward

1. **Equal Status for All Scheduled Languages:** Give all 22 languages in the Eighth Schedule equal official status. Remove special preference for Hindi.

2. **From Hindi Diwas to Bhasha Diwas:** Change September 14 from Hindi Diwas to Bhasha Diwas. This day should celebrate all Indian languages.

3. **Ending Government Promotion of Hindi:** Stop government efforts to impose Hindi. Let states and voluntary initiatives promote it. Cinema and sports have naturally expanded Hindi's influence more than state efforts.

4. **A National Language Mission:** Focus this mission on all Indian languages. It should develop educational and literary resources in each language, including unscheduled ones.

5. **Primary Education in Mother Tongue:** Ensure primary education in a child's mother tongue. This is vital for early linguistic and cultural development.

6. **Building Linguistic Resources:** Create and translate textbooks, children's books, and scientific materials in all Indian languages. This supports academic growth and intellectual development across linguistic backgrounds.

7. **Encouraging Linguistic Exchange:** Let Hindi embrace influences from other Indian languages. This promotes a diverse linguistic culture rather than a purified, isolated version.

Conclusion

Hindi's *Rajbhasha* status has mostly been symbolic. It has not countered English's dominance or promoted true linguistic unity. A shift in policy is crucial to uplift all Indian languages and achieve real linguistic equity.

Question for practice:

Examine how the Rajbhasha status of Hindi has impacted linguistic unity and equity in India.

How the Gig Economy Exploits Urban Workers

Source: The post How the Gig Economy Exploits Urban Workers has been created, based on the article "**The dystopian side of Insta-commerce**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 19th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

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Context: In urban areas, daily wage laborers gather in labor markets, waiting for work. Contractors (thekedaars) exploit their desperation by bargaining for the lowest wages. The gig economy has extended this exploitation through digital platforms, where workers compete for jobs in a system designed to maximize profits for aggregators while stripping workers of rights and security.

For detailed information on **Gig Economy in India and the Issues faced by Gig Workers** read this article here

How the Labour Market is Being Exploited

1. **Auction-Based Hiring in Traditional Labour Markets:** In urban areas, daily wage laborers gather at labor chowks, hoping for work. Contractors bargain for the lowest wages in an **auction-like system**, where workers **compete against each other**, and the lowest bidder gets hired, leaving them powerless.

2. **Gig Economy Replicating Exploitation** – Digital platforms function as virtual thekedaars, eliminating direct employer responsibility. Workers must accept **low pay, no benefits, and poor working conditions** to stay employed. For example, **Insta Maids offers house help for just ₹49 an hour**, devaluing domestic work.

3. **Algorithm-Driven Labour Control** – Platforms use **hidden algorithms** to set wages, control job distribution, and manipulate incentives. Workers have no say in pricing or conditions. They are **forced to accept jobs instantly**, similar to traditional labor chowks but with **greater opacity and reduced bargaining power**.

4. **Absence of Worker Rights** – Gig workers lack **social security, protection from arbitrary termination, and grievance redress mechanisms**. Rajasthan passed a gig worker law to address these issues, but the government has stalled its implementation.

5. **Corporate Influence and Government Inaction:** NASSCOM and CII oppose laws that recognize gig workers as employees. Karnataka has put the proposed gig worker law in cold storage under corporate pressure.

Initiatives taken to Overcome Labour Market Exploitation

1. **Legislative Efforts**: Rajasthan passed a law to protect gig workers by ensuring social security, data access, and grievance redress. However, it remains unimplemented due to government inaction.

2. **State Promises**: The Congress-led governments in Karnataka and Telangana drafted progressive laws for gig workers, but corporate lobbying stalled them.

3. **Worker Protests**: Gig workers are resisting exploitation with slogans like *"We want rights, not ratings!"* and *"We are humans, not slaves!"*

Way Forward

1. **Enforce Legal Frameworks:** The government must implement the laws already passed and introduce stronger protections for gig workers.
2. **Transparency and Data Access:** Workers should have access to their data and earnings breakdown to prevent exploitation.
3. **Worker Representation:** Establish tripartite boards where workers, employers, and the government can negotiate fair working conditions.
4. **Public Awareness:** Consumers must be made aware of the exploitation behind these services and push for ethical labor practices.
Question for practice:

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Examine how the gig economy has replicated and intensified labor market exploitation through digital platforms, reducing worker rights and bargaining power.

Public sector reliance on consultancy firms raises accountability concerns

Source: The post Public sector reliance on consultancy firms raises accountability concerns has been created, based on the article "**BSNL has been dialling the wrong consultant**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 19th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability.
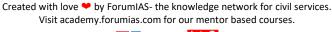
Context: In May 2024, reports surfaced that Boston Consulting Group (BCG) was hired to assist in Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited's (BSNL) revival strategy for ₹132 crore. BCG's recommendations, including workforce reduction, triggered widespread debate. This case highlights the growing reliance of public sector enterprises on external consultancy firms, raising concerns about accountability, governance, and effectiveness.

Reasons for Growing Dependence on Consultancy Firms

1. **Lack of Internal Expertise:** Public sector enterprises often lack in-house capabilities for complex challenges. BSNL hired BCG for ₹132 crore to develop a revival plan, highlighting its dependence on external expertise for strategic restructuring.

2. **Objectivity and Impartiality:** Consultants provide unbiased advice, free from internal influences. Their fresh perspective helps in strategic decision-making, as seen in BSNL's case, where BCG offers neutral planning insights.

3. **Resource Allocation:** Outsourcing to consultants allows businesses to focus on core functions. BSNL relies on BCG's strategy while government agencies handle regulatory matters, preventing internal teams from being overburdened.

4. **Access to Best Practices:** Consultancy firms work across industries and share proven strategies. BCG, with its global experience, brings tested solutions, helping BSNL implement innovative and effective restructuring approaches.

Impacts of Growing Dependence on Consultancy Firms

1. **High Costs with No Accountability**: Governments pay massive fees (e.g., France: €1 billion in 2021, Australia: A$21 billion in 2021-22) while consultancies bear no responsibility for failures. In BSNL's case, BCG was paid ₹132 crore but is not accountable for results.

2. **Erosion of State Capacity**: Dependence on consultants weakens internal expertise. Public officials do not gain the skills needed for future projects, creating long-term reliance.

3. **Conflicts of Interest**: Consultancies serve multiple clients, including competitors and regulators, which can lead to biased recommendations.

4. **Mismatch with Public Sector Goals**: Cost-cutting measures may harm essential services. For instance, aggressive restructuring in BSNL could reduce telecom access in rural India, undermining its public service role.

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5. **Parallel Bureaucracy**: Consultants influence policymaking without democratic oversight, weakening institutional legitimacy.

Way Forward

1. **Invest in Internal Capabilities**: Strengthening in-house expertise by recruiting and training talent.
2. **Reduce Dependency on Consultants**: Develop long-term strategic autonomy to minimize reliance on external expertise.
3. **Ensure Knowledge Transfer**: Policies should mandate that consultancies transfer skills to public sector employees.
4. **Enhance Accountability**: Introduce mechanisms to hold consultancy firms responsible for the impact of their recommendations.
5. **Align Strategies with Public Interest**: Ensure that public sector enterprises retain their social responsibility while pursuing efficiency.
Question for practice

Examine the reasons behind the growing dependence of public sector enterprises on consultancy firms and its impact on governance and accountability.
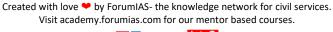
Women vote more but lack real political power in India

Source: The post Women vote more but lack real political power in India has been created, based on the article "**What factors influence women's political participation?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 19th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Polity- voting pattern
Context: Women's voter turnout in India has increased significantly since 2010, but their overall political engagement remains low. Despite political parties targeting them through welfare schemes, women are still viewed as beneficiaries rather than active agents. Rajeshwari Deshpande's study analyzes National Election Studies (NES) data to assess whether women's rising turnout translates into real political power.
For detailed information on Political Empowerment of Women **read this article here**
The Paradox of Women's Political Participation in India

1. **Influential Leaders but Low Political Engagement**: India has produced strong women leaders, yet most women remain politically underrepresented.

2. **Delayed Gender Gap Reduction:** While many countries saw rising female political participation in the 1990s, India experienced this shift only in the 2010s.

3. **Homogenization of Women Voters**: Parties treat women as a single bloc, ignoring caste, class, and regional differences.

4. **Recognition Without Real Agency**: Women voters are seen as welfare beneficiaries rather than independent decision-makers.

5. **Complex and Contradictory Participation**: Despite high turnout, political agency remains limited. Women's support for Trump (2016) and India's 1990s riots shows their engagement is shaped by broader influences.

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Factors Influencing Women's Voter Turnout

1. **Increased Voter Registration Efforts** – The Election Commission has actively worked to improve women's voter registration, contributing to higher turnout. However, the proportion of registered female voters remains lower than male voters.

2. **Self-Empowerment Hypothesis** – Rising literacy rates and employment opportunities have empowered women to vote independently. Yet, women's workforce participation remains low, challenging this argument.

3. **Welfare Schemes and Targeted Policies** – Political parties have introduced schemes like *Ujjwala*, *PM Awas Yojana*, and *Ladli Behna* to attract women voters. These programs played a key role in BJP's 2019 and Madhya Pradesh victories.

4. **Impact of Male Migration** – Large-scale male migration in economically backward states has led to increased voter turnout among women.

5. **Caste, Class, and Regional Identities** – Women's voting behavior is shaped by social identities rather than gender alone. In Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal, regional politics influence their choices more than national trends.

Women's Support for Different Political Parties

1. **Congress's Gender Advantage** – Congress has historically received more female than male votes, except in 2014 when its support declined.
2. **BJP's Narrowing Gender Gap** – BJP has historically had fewer female voters, but the gap reduced from over 20% to 7% in 2024 due to targeted outreach.
3. **Influence of Welfare Schemes** – BJP's female support base has grown, mainly from welfare beneficiaries.
4. **Decline of Left Parties** – Left parties once had a gender advantage, but their influence has weakened.
5. **Regional Variations** – In some non-BJP states, more women than men voted BJP, while in others, women supported opposition parties.

Conclusion

Women's voter turnout has increased, but their overall political engagement remains weak. Social identities, not gender alone, shape their voting behavior. While BJP has reduced its gender gap, a distinct women's political constituency has not yet formed in India.

Question for practice:
Examine whether the increasing voter turnout among women in India has translated into real political power and independent political agency.

India must strengthen its Indian Ocean strategy

Source: The post India must strengthen its Indian Ocean strategy has been created, based on the article "**The ocean front**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 19th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
Context: India has not fully recognized the Indian Ocean's strategic importance beyond the Navy. The region lacks strong security institutions due to diversity and self-interest. The rise of the Indo-Pacific concept has

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further diverted attention from IOR-focused initiatives. This article highlights the need to strengthen India's maritime strategy.

For detailed information on India's Growing Influence in the Indian Ocean read this article here

India's Approach to the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

1. **Strategic Importance**: The Indian Ocean is crucial for India, unlike for other nations where it is just another oceanic area.

2. **Institutional Efforts**: India participates in IORA, BIMSTEC, IPOI, CSC, and IONS, but these efforts lack momentum. Since 2016, the Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) has gained traction in advancing SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region).

3. **Security and Stability**: At the 8th IOC (Muscat, 2024), S. Jaishankar highlighted security concerns, including Middle East instability, Houthi threats, and South China Sea tensions. He stressed the importance of respecting agreements for stability.

4. **Maritime Diplomacy**: The Indian Navy plays a key role in foreign policy. It has led humanitarian efforts, including the 2004 tsunami response and multiple evacuation operations.

5. **Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)**: India shares real-time maritime surveillance with Seychelles, Mauritius, Maldives, and Sri Lanka, assisting in securing their exclusive economic zones.
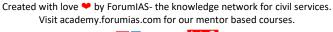
Challenges in Building an Indian Ocean Identity

1. **Lack of Strong Institutions**: Unlike other regions, the IOR has no effective security framework due to national self-interest and diversity.

2. **Failure of Regional Organizations**: IORA, SAARC, BIMSTEC, IPOI, and CSC have failed to gain traction. Only the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) has made progress.

3. **Competition from the Indo-Pacific Concept**: The US-led Indo-Pacific strategy has diverted attention from an IOR-focused approach.

4. **Weak Coordination**: Delays in MoD-MEA coordination slow maritime security and humanitarian responses.

5. **Limited Use of Military Power**: India's reluctance to use military power in foreign policy has weakened its strategic influence in the region.

Way Forward

1. **Strengthen Regional Institutions**: India should actively lead IOR organizations like IORA and BIMSTEC, ensuring sustained engagement.

2. **Expand Maritime Diplomacy**: The Navy should play a larger role, moving beyond disaster relief to strategic influence.

3. **Improve Crisis Response**: A fully funded security and HADR program should include amphibious heavy-lift capability and hospital ships.

4. **Enhance Maritime Coordination**: MoD and MEA must improve coordination for timely security and humanitarian actions.

5. **Develop a National Maritime Strategy**: A whole-of-government approach should integrate maritime diplomacy into India's foreign policy.

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges India faces in building a strong strategic identity in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and the steps it can take to strengthen its maritime strategy.

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Strengthening TDSAT for data protection dispute resolution

Source: The post Strengthening TDSAT for data protection dispute resolution has been created, based on the article "**Telecom tribunal reforms to handle data protection pleas**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 20th March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

Context: In January 2025, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released the draft **Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025** under the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**. One of the major concerns regarding the draft rules is the **government's control over appointments** to the **Data Protection Board (DPB)**, which could compromise its independence. Another issue is the **feasibility of the dispute resolution mechanism**, as appeals from the DPB will be handled by the **Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT)**. The article highlights key institutional reforms needed to equip the TDSAT for this role.

About TDSAT

1. Telecom Disputes Settlement & Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) was established in **2000** by the **Government of India** under the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997** (TRAI Act)

2. **Objective:** To adjudicate disputes and hear appeals related to telecom, broadcasting, and information technology services in India.
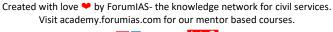
For detailed information on **TDSAT read this article here**

Evolution of the Appellate Mechanism

1. The **Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee (2018)** recommended establishing a **separate tribunal** for data protection disputes, recognizing the need for **specialized adjudication**.

2. In line with this, the **2018 Personal Data Protection Bill** proposed setting up a **dedicated tribunal**.

3. However, the **2022 draft Bill** shifted appeals to **High Courts**, possibly to ensure stronger judicial oversight.

4. The final **2023 Act designated TDSAT** as the appellate body, raising concerns about **its lack of data protection expertise and existing backlog**.

Key Issues with TDSAT

1. Lack of Data Protection Expertise: TDSAT members are required to have expertise in **technology, telecom, industry, commerce, or administration** (Section 14C, TRAI Act, 1997), but **not in data protection**. Data protection issues, like **consent, storage, and unauthorized use of data**, are distinct from telecom matters.

2. **Heavy Case Backlog**: As of **February 2025, 3,448 cases are pending**. Additional cases under the **Telecommunications Act, 2023**, and **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**, will further burden TDSAT.

3. **Judicial Member Shortage**: In **January 2025, TDSAT had only one technical member** on its sole bench, lacking a **judicial member**, which the **Supreme Court recommends for tribunals**.

4. **Weak Digital Infrastructure**: Digital appeals are mandated, but **TDSAT's website is inefficient**. The **Legal Cases Management System's** impact is unclear (TRAI Annual Report, 2023).

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5. Lack of Transparency: TDSAT does not publish **detailed annual reports** on **appeals, decisions, and case categories**.

Needed Reforms

1. **Appoint a Data Protection Expert in TDSAT**: Amend **Section 14C of the TRAI Act, 1997** to include **data protection expertise** in member qualifications. This is necessary as **data protection cases** differ from telecom disputes.

2. **Increase TDSAT's Capacity**: **3,448 cases were pending (Feb 2020–Feb 2025)**. The **Telecommunications Act, 2023** will add more cases. Expand **benches and budget** to meet the **six-month deadline**.

3. **Upgrade Digital Infrastructure**: The **Legal Cases Management System's impact is unclear**. Improve **website navigation, case tracking, and digital filings**.

4. **Ensure Transparency**: Publish **annual reports** detailing **appeals, outcomes, and case types** (telecom, broadcasting, data protection).

Question for practice:

Examine the key institutional reforms needed to equip the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) for handling data protection appeals under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

India's Extradition Challenges and Anti-Torture Law Absence

Source: The post India's Extradition Challenges and Anti-Torture Law Absence has been created, based on the article "**Torture shadows India's justice system**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 20th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance- criminal Justice system
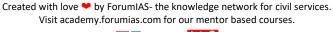**Context**: The King's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice in London recently denied India's extradition request for Sanjay Bhandari, citing the risk of custodial torture. Similarly, in the U.S., Tahawwur Rana has appealed to the Supreme Court against his extradition, using similar arguments. These cases highlight India's failure to enact an anti-torture law, impacting its international reputation and legal credibility.
Extradition Cases and the Issue of Torture

1. **Sanjay Bhandari**, wanted in India for **tax evasion and money laundering**, successfully defended against extradition in the U.K. due to concerns over custodial torture in Indian prisons.
2. **Tahawwur Rana**, accused of **involvement in the 26/11 Mumbai attacks**, has used the U.K. judgment to challenge his extradition in the U.S.
3. Several other fugitives have used similar arguments, revealing a legal gap that weakens India's ability to prosecute criminals.
India's International and Constitutional Obligations

1. **International Treaties**: India played a key role in **UN General Assembly's Resolution 32/64** against torture but has not ratified the **United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT)**.
2. **Human Rights Commitments**: India has ratified the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** and the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976)**.
3. **Constitutional Mandates**: Articles **51(c) and 253** mandate respect for international treaties.

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4. **Judicial Interpretations**: Supreme Court rulings (e.g., **D.K. Basu (1997), Puttaswamy (2017)**) uphold protection against torture as part of **Article 21** (Right to Life and Dignity).

Judicial and Legislative Inaction

1. A **Select Committee of the Rajya Sabha (2010)** and the **Law Commission (273rd Report, 2017)** recommended an anti-torture law.
2. The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** has also advocated for standalone legislation against torture.
3. The **Supreme Court**, despite recognizing custodial torture as unconstitutional, has not pushed the government to enact an anti-torture law (Ashwani Kumar case, 2019).
4. The failure to legislate goes against principles of legal certainty and judicial responsibility, as recognized by international judicial bodies.
For detailed information on **India's baby step to prevent custodial tortures** read this article here
Implications of the Absence of an Anti-Torture Law

1. **Weakens Extradition Requests**: India's failure to address torture weakens its legal system and affects its ability to bring fugitives to justice.
2. **Harms Democracy's Soft Power:** The **Guantanamo Bay case** showed how torture damages a democracy's global standing and soft power.
3. **Damages India's Global Image**: India's failure to enact an anti-torture law undermines its credibility as a democracy and places it alongside countries that do not uphold human rights, such as Sudan and Angola.,
4. Inaction on torture laws reflects the **failure of Indian politics** to prioritize fundamental human rights.
Conclusion

The extradition rulings expose India's weak legal framework on custodial torture, affecting its credibility in international courts. To uphold its democratic values, India must ratify UNCAT and enact a strong anti-torture law. Otherwise, its position as a moral leader and defender of human rights will remain compromised.
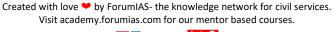
Question for practice:

Evaluate how the absence of an anti-torture law in India impacts its extradition requests and international legal credibility.

Challenges in reporting subsidies and fiscal transparency

Source: The post Challenges in reporting subsidies and fiscal transparency has been created, based on the article "**Fiscal subsidies should be easy to monitor at every level**" published in "**Live Mint**" on 20th March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Polity-Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes;
Context: Election campaigns in India continue to focus heavily on freebies, cash transfers, and subsidies despite fiscal constraints and rising opportunity costs. This makes transparency in subsidy spending crucial. However, the lack of high-quality, timely data on state subsidy expenditures hampers accountability and prevents differentiation between necessary welfare measures and politically motivated giveaways. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has repeatedly stressed the need for clear classification, but major challenges persist in India's subsidy reporting.

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For detailed information on **Subsidy Rationalization in Indian States** read this article here

Key Challenges in Subsidy Reporting

1. Definitional Ambiguity: There is no standard definition of 'subsidy, 'leading to inconsistent reporting. For example, Tamil Nadu's *Vidiyal Payanam* scheme (free bus rides for women) is classified as a subsidy, while a similar scheme in Punjab is not. Odisha is the only state consistently reporting implicit subsidies since 2009-10. This lack of uniformity leads to misclassification and opacity.

2. Off-Budget Financing: States often use off-budget mechanisms to fund subsidies, concealing actual liabilities. Andhra Pradesh reported a subsidy expenditure of just 0.5% of its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) in 2022-23, but its real burden was much higher due to liabilities incurred by state enterprises managing food and power subsidies. This practice distorts fiscal sustainability and transparency.

3. Deferred Payments: India's cash-based accounting system enables states to defer subsidy payments, shifting financial burdens to future budgets. A key example is the power sector, where unpaid subsidy reimbursements across states amounted to ₹74,000 crore between 2009-10 and 2020-21, with ₹27,000 crore cleared in the next two years. This practice masks the true cost of subsidies and complicates financial planning.

Impact on Fiscal Governance

1. **Lack of Fiscal Transparency**: Different welfare schemes are reported inconsistently, making financial comparisons unreliable.
2. **Hidden Debt Risks**: Off-budget financing masks actual liabilities, increasing debt risks.
3. **Distorted Fiscal Data**: Deferred payments create fiscal imbalances, making long-term planning difficult.
4. **Non-Compliance with Global Standards**: These challenges prevent India from meeting G20 Data Gaps Initiative requirements, limiting fiscal credibility.

Emerging Reforms in Fiscal Transparency

The central government has taken steps to improve fiscal reporting:

1. Since 2019-20, the Centre has published off-budget borrowings, enhancing fiscal transparency.
2. **In 2023-24, a consolidated document on state borrowings was released**, providing better insights into liabilities.
3. **The Centre has discontinued off-budget financing**, using bond issuances instead of direct cash subsidies.
Way Forward
India needs a standardized, technology-driven, and internationally accepted subsidy reporting system. Odisha's approach to implicit subsidy reporting and the Centre's fiscal reforms provide useful models. A transparent subsidy framework will improve fiscal discipline, ensure efficient public spending, and enhance public trust in government finances. Given increasing fiscal pressures and public scrutiny, this shift is now essential.
Question for practice:
Discuss the key challenges in subsidy reporting in India and their impact on fiscal governance.

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CCI's Action Against Meta Exposes India's Digital Challenges

Source: The post CCI's Action Against Meta Exposes India's Digital Challenges has been created, based on the article "**The challenge of policing digital giants**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 21st March 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Context: On November 18, 2024, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) fined Meta ₹213.14 crore and banned WhatsApp from sharing user data for five years. This action followed concerns over WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy, which allegedly abused Meta's dominant market position in India's digital ecosystem.
For detailed information on **Committee Report on Digital Competition Law** read this article here

The importance of data in the 21st century
1. **Foundational Role in Dominance:** Data drives market power in digital economies by refining algorithms and enabling targeted advertising.
2. **Unlimited Utility:** Unlike traditional resources, data can be continuously reused and analyzed, enhancing product offerings and consumer engagement.
3. **Data-driven Network Effects:** More users generate more data, which in turn increases a platform's value, as seen with Meta's use of WhatsApp data.
4. **Barrier to Competition:** Large data sets create high entry barriers for new competitors, consolidating market dominance for companies like Google and Meta.
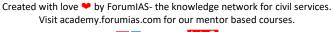
Reason for penalising meta in 2024 by CCI
1. **Privacy Policy Abuse**: Meta's subsidiary, WhatsApp, introduced a privacy policy in 2021 that forced users to share data with Meta platforms like Facebook and Instagram, under a "take-it-or-leave-it" condition.
2. **Dominant Market Position**: The policy exploited WhatsApp's dominant position in the Over-The-Top (OTT) messaging and online advertising markets.
3. **Harming Competition**: This mandatory data-sharing allowed Meta to strengthen its market power unfairly, thus limiting competition from other messaging platforms.
4. **Fine and Initial Ban**: Meta was fined ₹213.14 crore and initially banned from data sharing for five years, demonstrating the CCI's stance against unfair market practices.
5. **NCLAT's Intervention**: In January 2025, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) stayed the penalty and the ban, requiring Meta to deposit 50% of the fine.

Global Regulatory Actions
1. **U.S. Actions:** The U.S. Subcommittee on Antitrust highlighted the need to reform antitrust laws against tech giants. Meta faces antitrust litigation over its acquisitions of Instagram and WhatsApp.

2. **EU Regulations:** The Bundeskartellamt found Meta guilty of abusing its dominant position by merging user data without consent, violating EU competition law and GDPR.
3. **Australian Measures:** Australia is taking steps to regulate digital platforms to curb their market dominance.
4. **Google in Europe:** Google was fined over €8 billion in the EU for anti-competitive practices in mobile operating systems and app markets.
5. **Indian Enforcement:** Google was fined ₹1,337.76 crore by India's Competition Commission for mandating the pre-installation of its apps on Android devices

Limitations in India's Legal Framework
1. **Lack of Specific Provisions**: The Competition Act, 2002, does not address data monopolies directly.

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2. **Data-Driven Dominance**: Traditional competition law, focusing on price-based dominance, fails to regulate markets where data is the primary source of power.

3. **Coordination Gaps**: The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, although addressing consent and data use, lacks explicit coordination mechanisms with the CCI, limiting effective regulation.

4. **Outdated Definitions**: Terms such as "market power" and "dominant position" need updates to better represent digital economy dynamics.

5. **Need for Modern Regulations**: Current laws do not include necessary provisions for interoperability and the separation of integrated services, which are essential to prevent monopolistic behaviors.

Way Forward

1. India can learn from the **EU's Digital Markets Act (DMA)** and **GDPR**, which work together to handle both **competition** and **data concerns**.

2. The **Economic Survey 2024-25** highlights the role of **AI and digital transformation**, making regulatory reform more urgent.

3. India needs **forward-looking laws** to manage the growing power of tech giants and ensure **fair digital growth**.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the effectiveness of India's current legal framework in managing data-driven market power, as illustrated by the CCI's 2024 action against Meta.

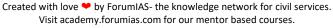## US Shift From Multilateralism Impacts Global Order and India's Role

Source: The post US Shift From Multilateralism Impacts Global Order and India's Role has been created, based on the article "**The assault on multilateralism and international law**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 21st 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 Trump administration's "America First" policy has initiated a series of withdrawals from major international organizations and agreements, including the World Health Organization, the UN Human Rights Council, and the Paris Climate Agreement. This shift is part of a broader move away from multilateralism, highlighted by proposed legislation like the DEFUND Act which aims to sever U.S. ties with the United Nations.

Change in US approach, toward international legal institution

1. The U.S. has **moved from supporting to opposing** international legal institutions under the Trump administration.

2. It **imposed sanctions on the International Criminal Court (ICC)**, claiming it targeted the U.S. and Israel unfairly.

3. This shift is in contrast to the **U.S.'s earlier role in creating the Nuremberg Trials** after World War II to ensure accountability for war crimes.

4. The executive order **challenges the ICC's mission** to punish genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

5. These actions mark a **clear break from multilateral legal cooperation**, weakening global efforts to uphold international law and justice.

Potential Consequences of Change in US approach

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1. **Undermining of Multilateral Institutions**: Withdrawal from institutions such as the WHO, UNHRC, and the Paris Agreement erodes the legitimacy and effectiveness of global governance frameworks developed after World War II.

2. **Economic Instability**: The administration's protectionist policies, including aggressive tariffs, echo the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of the 1930s, which worsened the Great Depression. Such economic nationalism threatens to disrupt global trade and long-standing multilateral trading systems like the WTO.

3. **Legal and Human Rights Implications**: The sanctions against the ICC weaken international mechanisms for ensuring accountability for atrocities, undermining the very legal principles the U.S. once championed through the Nuremberg Trials.

Opportunities created for other nations like India

1. **Global Leadership Opportunity**: The U.S.'s retreat from multilateralism provides space for countries like India to take on leadership roles in shaping global cooperation.

2. **Influencing Global Governance**: During the G-20 Foreign Ministers 'Meeting in Johannesburg (February 2025), External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar reinforced the call for inclusive and law-based solutions to global challenges.

3. **Push for UNSC Reform**: The shifting global order presents India with a timely opportunity to push forward its longstanding demand for reforms in the United Nations Security Council.

Question for practice:

Examine how the Trump administration's shift away from multilateralism has impacted global legal institutions and created opportunities for countries like India.

Habitual Offender Laws and Their Impact in India

Source: The post Habitual Offender Laws and Their Impact in India has been created, based on the article "**How do habitual offender laws discriminate?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 21st March 2025
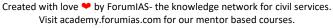
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context: The Supreme Court of India recently questioned the constitutionality of "habitual offender" laws, citing their misuse against denotified tribes. Despite this, the Union government revealed in March 2025 that such laws still exist in 14 States and Union Territories, prompting fresh debate on their relevance.

Historical Background of Habitual Offender Laws

1. **Colonial Roots**: The practice of criminalizing certain communities in India began with British Regulation XXII in 1793, allowing detention of tribes based solely on suspicion.

2. **Legal Developments**: This led to the Indian Penal Code (1860) and the Criminal Procedure Code (1861), which facilitated the registration of "dacoits and thugs."

3. **Institutionalization**: The Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871 labeled specific tribes as criminal, affecting numerous communities.

4. **Post-Independence Changes**: Following the 1949-50 Criminal Tribes Act Enquiry Committee's recommendations, the CTA was repealed in 1952.

5. **State Laws**: States then introduced habitual offender laws that shifted focus to individuals' convictions but continued to harbor biases against denotified tribes.

Nature and Use of the Habitual Offender Laws

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1. **Definition and Impact**: Defined by past criminal convictions, these laws include crimes such as dacoity, earning from prostitution, and lurking, perpetuating stigma against denotified tribes.
2. **Bias and Misuse**: Often equating former "criminal tribes" with habitual offenders, these laws enable police and societal discrimination, highlighted by the death of Budhan Sabar in 1998.

Current Status of HO Laws in States

1. **Repeals and Non-Use**: Haryana has repealed its law; Punjab and Odisha report no recent use.
2. **Continued Application**: Gujarat and Goa defend the law, citing non-malicious intent and lack of denotified tribes, respectively.
3. **Alternative Legislation**: Uttar Pradesh has incorporated habitual offender provisions into its Goondas Act.
4. According to 2022 National Crime Records Bureau data, **Delhi** has the highest proportion of convicts classified as habitual offenders at 21.5%.

Committee Observations and Recommendations
Several committees and commissions have studied the impact of HO laws:

1. **Criminal Tribes Act Enquiry Committee (1949–50):** Recommended repealing the CTA and called for a new law not based on caste or birth.
2. **Lokur Committee (1965):** Described DNTs as having "anti-social heritage," reinforcing stigma.
3. **B.S. Renke Commission (2008):** Highlighted the negative effects of HO laws on DNT, NT, and SNT communities.
4. **Virginius Xaxa Committee (2014):** Noted that the stigma of criminality still persists because CTA was replaced by similar HO laws.
5. **Bhiku Ramji Idate Commission (2017):** Traced the colonial origins of these laws and criticised their continued misuse.

Supreme Court's Observations
In October 2024, the Supreme Court, while hearing a case on caste-based discrimination in prisons, observed that HO laws have been used to unfairly target DNTs. It declared such classification "constitutionally suspect" and urged States to reconsider their continuation.

Conclusion
Despite long-standing concerns and critical observations from both the judiciary and various committees, habitual offender laws remain in force across several Indian states. This ongoing issue underscores the urgent need for legal reform to eliminate systemic bias against denotified and nomadic tribes.
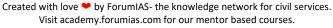
Question for practice
Examine how habitual offender laws have evolved over time and their multifaceted impact on denotified tribes in India.

India's Parliament needs a stronger role in budgeting

Source: The post India's Parliament needs a stronger role in budgeting has been created, based on the article "**India's marginalised Parliament in budgetary affairs**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 22nd March 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Polity-Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Context: The article examines India's Parliament's limited role in shaping the budget. It compares this with other democracies where legislatures significantly influence economic policy. The article emphasizes reforms needed to boost parliamentary involvement in budgeting.

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For detailed information on **Declining Role of Parliament in Ensuring Accountability of Executive** read this article here

Parliamentary Influence on Budgets Globally:

1. **Historical Struggle:** Historically, legislatures fought hard to control public finances to prevent executive overreach.

2. **British Example:** In the 19th century, British Parliament gained significant financial control.

3. **Active Role Today:** Today, some parliaments actively draft and modify budget proposals, ensuring thorough scrutiny.

4. **Limited Role in Some Cases:** Others play a limited role, merely approving budgets without detailed oversight.

5. **Committee-Based Scrutiny:** Certain legislatures have specialized committees for in-depth budget discussions, while others rely on centralized finance committees.

6. **Positive Outcomes:** Across democracies, higher parliamentary engagement and budget transparency lead to better social outcomes and economic stability. Examples include active legislative roles in budget processes in countries like the U.S., Australia, Canada, and the U.K.
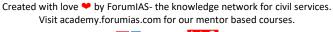
Current State of India's Parliamentary Involvement:

1. **Executive Dominance:** The Finance Ministry primarily drafts the budget, excluding even Cabinet Ministers from the process until its presentation in the Lok Sabha.

2. **Lack of Legislative Scrutiny:** Unlike other legislative bills, the budget proposal bypasses in-depth cabinet discussions, limiting Parliament's role to superficial scrutiny.

3. **Minimal Debate Quality:** The dominance of the executive results in fragmented debates and limited oversight in Parliament, weakening the core principles of democracy.

4. **Ceremonial Role of Rajya Sabha:** Despite its democratic credentials, the Rajya Sabha has no significant role in budget discussions, mirroring a lack of bicameral influence in budgetary matters.

5. **Passive Legislative Role:** Legislators have minimal power to amend or influence budget proposals, reducing their role to merely approving the government's financial plans.

Consequences of Limited Parliamentary Role:

1. **Ineffective Oversight:** Parliament has little role in making the budget. This leads to weak checking of government spending and policies. The executive takes decisions without proper control.

2. **Reduced Accountability:** The executive controls the budget process. Parliament cannot question or correct it. This increases the risk of misuse of public money.

3. **Democratic Deficits:** Parliament's small role weakens democracy. There is less public and legislative checking of financial decisions. This is not the case in stronger democracies.

Reforms for Enhanced Parliamentary Role:

1. **Pre-Budget Discussions:** Institutionalise a 5–7 day discussion during the monsoon session. It will help legislators assess fiscal health and suggest budget priorities. This will also improve coordination among subject committees and ensure public concerns are raised early.

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2. **Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO):** Create an independent office to provide MPs with data-based analysis. Model it on the U.S. Congressional Budget Office or similar bodies in the UK, Canada, and Australia. A PBO can offer policy briefs, forecast trends, and assess the fiscal impact of government policies, boosting informed and accountable decision-making.

Conclusion

Many parliaments shape budgets actively, but India's role remains weak. The executive controls the process, limiting legislative input. This reduces transparency and accountability. Stronger parliamentary involvement, like in the U.S. or U.K., leads to better outcomes. India needs reforms to fix this imbalance.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons for the limited role of India's Parliament in the budget-making process and suggest reforms to strengthen its involvement.

India plans to make IORA stronger and effective

Source: The post India plans to make IORA stronger and effective has been created, based on the article "**Charting a route for IORA under India's chairship**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 22nd March 2025

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

Context: India is set to chair the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) from November 2025. As the current Vice-Chair, India plans to strengthen IORA's governance. This article discusses the region's strategic significance, IORA's challenges, and the steps India can take to enhance its effectiveness and impact.

For detailed information on **India must strengthen its Indian Ocean strategy** read this article here

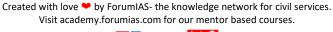**Geostrategic Importance of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**

1. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is strategically vital, encompassing **two-thirds of the world's population.**

2. It is critical for global trade, **facilitating 75% of the world's trade and 50% of daily oil transport**.

3. The IOR generated **$1 trillion in goods and services**, with **intra-IORA trade valued at $800 billion in 2023.**

4. The region faces significant **challenges including political instability, environmental issues, and security threats like piracy and trafficking.**

5. These dynamics necessitate enhanced regional cooperation to address supranational problems effectively.

Role of IORA

1. IORA is one of the oldest intergovernmental organisations in the Indian Ocean Region.

2. It promotes cooperation in areas such as disaster risk management, cultural and academic exchanges.

3. It provides a platform for middle and small powers to collaborate on regional issues.

4. Dialogue partners include the U.S., European Union, and China.

Challenges Faced by IORA

1. **Funding Constraints:** IORA's budget depends on member contributions. Most members are developing nations, except Singapore, France, and the UAE. The current budget is only a few million dollars. In comparison, the Indian Ocean Commission, with just five members, has a $1.3 billion budget for 2020–2025. IORA's expanding agenda in maritime safety, blue economy, and innovation requires more funds.

2. **Limited Institutional Capacity:** IORA has a small Secretariat based in Mauritius with limited staff. Its operations, including data handling and policy analysis, are slow and prone to errors. There is an urgent need for digitised data systems and technological integration to improve governance and efficiency.

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India's Priorities as Upcoming Chair

1. **Enhancing Funding:** India aims to increase IORA's budget by creating new funding opportunities. IORA's budget is just a few million dollars, while the Indian Ocean Commission has $1.3 billion for 2020–25. India plans to involve private players like shipping, oil and gas, and tourism industries.

2. **Technology Integration:** India plans to use digital tools for better data handling and faster policy analysis. The IORA Secretariat, with limited staff in Mauritius, faces slow and error-prone data work.

3. **Educational Collaboration:** India will develop maritime-ready courses with research institutions. This supports the growing marine economy. Courses like marine accounting can help build skills for blue economy jobs.

Way forward

1. India should align its SAGAR vision with IORA's goals to strengthen regional cooperation.

2. It should leverage the strengths of IORA members—Australia in marine science, France and Singapore in marine technology, and UAE and Oman in investments.

3. Traditional marine knowledge from island nations like Sri Lanka and Mauritius should be integrated for sustainable practices.

Question for practice:

Discuss how India can enhance the effectiveness of IORA during its upcoming chairmanship.

Covid taught us five lessons for future

Source: The post Covid taught us five lessons for future has been created, based on the article "**Five years on, five lessons from Covid lockdowns**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 22nd March 2025

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

Context: March 2025 marks five years since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. The global health crisis exposed serious vulnerabilities in how the world manages large-scale disasters. As new threats loom, the article reflects on five key lessons from the pandemic to better prepare for future emergencies.

For detailed information on **7 Lessons From The Pandemic** read this article here

Five Covid Lessons

1. **Global Problems Need Global Solutions**

• Many disasters, like pandemics or tsunamis, transcend borders. Isolating a country is not a viable strategy. Instead, there is a need for global systems to monitor and manage risks.

• However, the pandemic weakened international cooperation. For instance, the U.S. withdrew from WHO and closed down the USAID-funded Famine Early Warning System.

• Despite these setbacks, new efforts like India's genomic dataset offer hope for stronger global collaborations, with India well-positioned to lead.

2. **Solutions Must Be Locally Relevant**

• During global emergencies, countries prioritize their own citizens. For example, during vaccine shortages, countries without local manufacturing suffered. India was better prepared due to its own vaccine production. Local conditions also matter.

• Social distancing worked in open spaces but failed in densely populated slums. In Dharavi, 50% of residents had antibodies within five months, compared to 15% in non-slum areas.

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• Hence, resources like masks and ventilators should be targeted to high-prevalence areas.

3. Build Systems Before Disaster Strikes

• India avoided mass starvation due to its strong Public Distribution System. However, emergency cash transfers were limited to those with existing accounts like PM-KISAN or Jan Dhan.

• The lockdown could have been used to strengthen health systems. For example, a centralised oxygen database could have helped in better coordination.

• Planning and system readiness across all government levels are critical to effective disaster response.

4. Data Is Crucial for Governance

• During the migrant crisis, visuals showed people fleeing cities, but there was no data on how many were affected. The absence of a recent census worsens the problem.

• Globally, distrust in data grew during the pandemic, as seen in the U.S. shutting vaccine hesitancy studies. Governments need to treat data as a governance tool, not a threat.

5. Trust in Government Is Essential

• Emergency decisions often involve uncertainty. Successful implementation depends on public trust.

• During the lockdown, 85% in Delhi-NCR supported it just because the government said it was necessary. Even years later, nearly 80% across India agreed it was the right decision.

• Yet, global trends show that such trust is fragile and must be nurtured for unity during future crises.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed global, national, and local gaps in disaster response. Learning from these five lessons—global cooperation, local relevance, preemptive planning, data-driven governance, and public trust—is crucial for future resilience.

Question for practice:

Discuss the key lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic that can help improve future disaster preparedness and response.

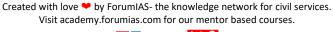## India is strengthening TB care through equity

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.

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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.
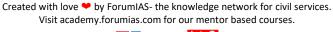
Integration and Decentralisation of TB Services

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.

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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

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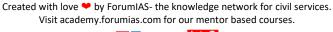
Context: The Covid-19 pandemic exposed deep vulnerabilities in India's migration system. It caused large-scale disruptions in internal and international migration, revealed governance gaps, and altered migration patterns. Five years later, many pre-Covid trends have resumed, but new dynamics and challenges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

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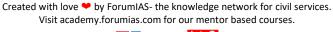
Context: India has recently adopted a more conciliatory tone towards China, evident from Prime Minister Modi's remarks in a March podcast. This apparent shift in policy comes after heightened border tensions since 2020 and explores the strategic, diplomatic, and military dimensions of these evolving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

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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.
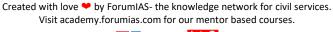
For detailed information on **Causes of Food Loss and Waste (FLW) in India** read this article here

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.

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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.
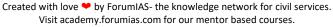
Lohia's ideas are misused in today's politics

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

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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
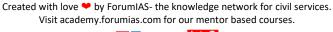**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2-International Relations-India and its neighbourhood- relations.
Context: The article analyzes India's evolving engagement with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan following the U.S. withdrawal. It examines the shift from support for democratic Afghan governments to reluctant 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.

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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.
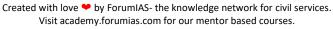
Reasons for India's Outreach

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.

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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 exparte 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.

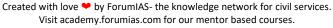**Steps Needed to Ensure Informed Consent and Public Safety**

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.

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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:

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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.
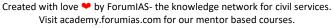For detailed information on **India's Achievements in Research Output** read this article here
International Comparison of Research Output and Investment

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

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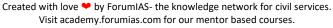
Context: On World Water Day (March 22), Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for collective water conservation efforts. The Ministry of Jal Shakti launched the *Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain 2025*. This occasion highlights the need to revisit India's rural water policies in light of environmental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

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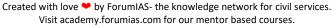**Context**: **Since Donald Trump began his second term as U.S. President in January 2025,** several foreign policy decisions under the "America First" agenda have drawn global attention. These moves, though aimed at asserting power, are **weakening key pillars of U.S. soft power**, which relies on attraction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

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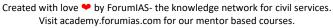**Context**: The article discusses the Indian Air Force's (IAF) concerns over delays in indigenous aircraft production amid the Aatmanirbhar Bharat push. Triggered by the IAF chief's critical remarks at Aero India 2025, it examines India's growing defence dependence on the U.S. and the risks to strategic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

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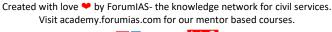
Question for practice:
Examine how delays in indigenous aircraft production and overdependence on foreign defence partners, especially the U.S., impact India's strategic autonomy.

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.

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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.
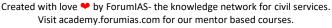
2. State-Level Performance:

• 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:

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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.

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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.
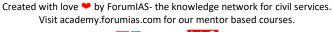
India seeks greater global role with caution

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

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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**.

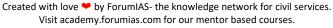7. These examples show that India has historically taken **bold and active roles** in regional peace and security.

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

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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
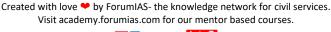**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2-International Relations-Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.
Context: The Russia-Ukraine war exposed Europe's energy vulnerability, prompting a global rethink on energy security. Although Africa is geographically 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.

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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.

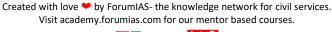## AI literacy is essential for India's growth and innovation

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.

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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.

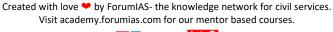For detailed information on **India lagging behind in AI innovation** read this article here

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 **Wadhwani 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:

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• 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.

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