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For UPSC CSE mains examination



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Features :

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Most complete coverage of major
News Papers editorials

INDEX

India needs electrification nuclear energy and hydrogen for net-zero	2
India considers revising its investment treaty model	3
Supreme Court limits Governor and President assent powers	4
India prepares response to US tariff changes	5
Strategic hamleting failed and displaced tribals remain neglected.....	6
China responds to US tariffs with strength	8
Trump uses tariffs to reshape American economy and security	9
Indian startups face innovation challenges despite growing support.....	10
Corporate board recruitment practices are rapidly evolving	11
India needs cleaner logistics for future growth.....	13
Technology diffusion decides future global power rankings	13
India must act on youth mental health crisis	15
Heatwaves are hurting health work and equity	16
India stays silent as world reacts to US tariffs	17
India faces job crisis as AI reshapes work roles	19
India and China mark 75 years of complex ties.....	20
Vice-President raises concerns about judiciary and India's constitutional balance	21
China restricts rare earth exports affecting India	22
Aadhaar voter ID link threatens free and fair elections	23
India explores Arctic opportunities balancing trade, climate and geopolitics.....	25
Legal Challenges of False Marriage Promises Under New Law	26

India needs electrification nuclear energy and hydrogen for net-zero

Source: The post India needs electrification nuclear energy and hydrogen for net-zero has been created, based on the article “**India, rising power demand and the ‘hydrogen factor’**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 16th April 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Infrastructure- Energy

Context: To achieve a net-zero economy, India must shift from fossil fuels to massive electrification and clean alternatives like hydrogen. This transition requires the expansion of low-carbon energy sources. The article discusses India’s rising electricity demand, its nuclear power strategy, and the integration of hydrogen production with electricity storage for economic and environmental benefits.

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

Electrification essential for a net-zero economy

- 1. Replacement of Fossil Fuels:** Electrification reduces the dependence on fossil fuels in homes and industries. For example, coal is used for reducing iron ore in steelmaking, and natural gas provides hydrogen for ammonia in fertilizer production.
- 2. Integration of Clean Energy:** Electrification supports the use of solar, wind, hydro, and nuclear energy. **India has set a target of 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047** to help meet clean energy goals.
- 3. Efficiency and Sustainability:** Electric systems are generally more efficient and climate-friendly. Electrification also supports **green hydrogen production**, which uses surplus clean electricity to produce hydrogen for industrial use.

How will electricity supply be balanced in a low-carbon energy future?

- 1. Rising Demand and Stable Supply:** With higher electricity demand expected, **low-carbon sources including nuclear will be critical**. Nuclear provides steady power to keep the grid stable.
- 2. Limits of Current Approach:** At present, coal plants are flexed to balance solar and wind supply. But this is **not viable in a low-carbon energy mix**.
- 3. Hydrogen Production as a Solution:** Using surplus electricity to run electrolyzers and produce hydrogen can help balance the grid without relying on coal or flexing nuclear plants.

India’s plan for nuclear energy in achieving net-zero emissions

- 1. Expansion of Nuclear Capacity:** To meet future energy needs, **India plans to install 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047**.
- 2. Development of New Reactors:** The **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)** is setting up multiple **700 MW Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs)** at sites like Kakrapar and Rajasthan. **A total of 26 such units are planned**.
- 3. Introduction of Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs):** NPCIL is also promoting **220 MW PHWRs**, named BSRs, for captive industrial use. These will strengthen India’s domestic manufacturing in the nuclear sector.
- 4. Role in Grid Balancing:** Nuclear energy will act as a **base load** power source, helping balance the **intermittent supply from solar and wind**.

Role of hydrogen and storage in managing electricity demand

- 1. Managing Supply and Demand:** Hydrogen production through electrolyzers helps absorb **excess electricity** from solar and wind.
- 2. Industrial Use of Hydrogen:** The hydrogen produced is **not used to generate electricity again**, but directly for industrial processes, making the system efficient.

3. Avoiding Flexing of Nuclear Plants: This method avoids the **technical and cost challenges of reducing nuclear output**.

4. Better Economics: Combining hydrogen production with electricity storage improves overall system economics and efficiency.

Way forward

1. Redefine Green Hydrogen as Low-Carbon Hydrogen: Hydrogen from nuclear emits less than **2 kg CO₂ per kg H₂**, like renewable hydrogen. Reclassifying it as **low-carbon hydrogen** will allow its inclusion in clean energy incentives.

2. Provide Equal Incentives for Nuclear Hydrogen: Including nuclear in government schemes will help **scale up clean hydrogen production**.

3. Synergise Hydrogen Generation and Storage: These should be integrated to **reduce costs and improve system efficiency**.

4. Use Surplus Electricity for Hydrogen Production: This avoids the **need to flex high-cost nuclear plants** and supports **stable grid operations**.

Question for practice:

Examine how electrification, nuclear energy, and hydrogen production can help India achieve a net-zero economy.

India considers revising its investment treaty model

Source: The post India considers revising its investment treaty model has been created, based on the article "**India needs a model BIT that balances investment protection with the right to regulate**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 16th April 2025

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

Context: **India plans to revise its 2015 model Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)** to make it more attractive for foreign investors. This reflects the government's recognition that the current model has failed to gain international acceptance over the past decade.

For detailed information on **Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs): India's Approach and Concerns** [read this article here](#)

Idea of Dual BIT Models

A proposal suggests adopting two distinct BIT frameworks:

1. One for situations where **India is a capital importer**, giving the host state greater regulatory control and granting fewer rights to foreign investors.
2. Another for scenarios where **India is a capital exporter**, offering stronger protections to Indian investors and limiting host state regulation.
3. This idea is based on the belief that investment relationships vary by country and should be handled accordingly.

Problems with a Dual-Model Strategy

1. Changing Investment Roles: A country's capital position is not fixed. For example, India signed a BIT with the UK in 1994 as a capital importer, but by 2021–22, India had become a major capital exporter to the UK. This dynamic nature makes it hard to apply a fixed model.

2. Mixed Investment Flows: Many relationships involve both capital inflows and outflows. This overlap makes it impractical to label countries strictly as capital exporters or importers.

3. Legal Inconsistency: Two different treaty models would lead to conflicting legal principles. For instance, one may require investors to exhaust **local remedies for five years** before arbitration, while the other allows **quicker access to ISDS**.

4. **Diplomatic Risks:** Inconsistent treaty practice could damage credibility in international negotiations. It may be used against the country in bilateral talks or in multilateral platforms like **UNCITRAL**, which is currently discussing ISDS reform.

Clarification on the MFN Clause

1. A concern was raised that the **Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause** undermines the negotiated balance of BITs. However:
2. The MFN clause originated in **bilateral commercial treaties** as early as the 17th and 18th centuries, not just in multilateral agreements.
3. It supports fairness by **ensuring equal treatment** among treaty partners. Any benefit granted to one party is extended to others, maintaining a level playing field.

Conclusion

The issue is not the number of BIT models but the **quality and balance** of the model. A single, consistent BIT framework should balance **investment protection** with the **state's right to regulate**. This would improve legal clarity, boost investor confidence, and enhance the country's global credibility.

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges and implications of adopting a dual-model Bilateral Investment Treaty framework for India.

Supreme Court limits Governor and President assent powers

Source: The post Supreme Court limits Governor and President assent powers has been created, based on the article "**A proclamation of democracy in legislative process**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 16th April 2025

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

Context: The Supreme Court's recent judgment in *State of Tamil Nadu vs Governor of Tamil Nadu* marks a **historic intervention in legislative processes**. By invoking **Article 142**, the Court imposed **time limits** on gubernatorial and presidential assent to State Bills. This challenges long-standing assumptions about **discretionary powers** and affirms **legislative supremacy**.

For detailed information on **Supreme Court defines limits of Governor's powers** [read this article here](#)

How Did the Court Interpret the Constitution?

1. **Articles 200 and 201:** The Court clarified the roles of the **Governor and President** in the State legislative process. If a Bill is **re-passed by the legislature**, the **Governor must assent**. The **President** too must respond **within a fixed time**.
2. **Use of Article 142:** The Court used this provision to **set deadlines** for gubernatorial and presidential responses, introducing the idea of "**deemed assent**" if no action is taken.
3. **Judicial Realism:** The Court adopted a **modern and dynamic interpretation** of the Constitution, similar to what it did in the **Puttaswamy (2017)** case on privacy.
4. **Precedents and Principles:** It relied on **Shamsher Singh** to restrict discretionary powers and **B.K. Pavitra (2019)** to promote **constitutional accountability**.

Constitutional Issues Addressed

1. **Discretionary Limits:** The judgment made it clear that **withholding assent must be justified**, not arbitrary.
2. **Deemed Assent Mechanism:** It introduced a provision where **assent is assumed** if a decision is not made within the time limit.
3. **Filling Constitutional Gaps:** Using **Article 142**, the Court addressed the **lack of timelines** and ensured that legislative processes **are not blocked**.

4. Use of Precedents: **Shamsher Singh** and **B.K. Pavitra** were central in affirming the **binding nature of cabinet decisions** and democratic values.

The Supreme Court's Judgment Considered Historic and Controversial

1. **Historic Nature:** The judgment is significant because it **limits the traditional discretionary powers** of the Governor and the President. It ensures that the **will of the legislature** is not stalled indefinitely.

2. **Controversial Aspect:** The **Governor of Kerala** criticised the ruling, calling it **judicial overreach**. He claimed that it **encroaches on Parliament's authority** and brings the **President under judicial review**, which he believes exceeds the Court's jurisdiction.

3. **Examples and Precedents:** The Court cited the **Shamsher Singh case (1974)** to reinforce that **Governors must act on Cabinet advice**. It also referred to the **Sarkaria Commission Report (1988)**, which advised that **policy differences with the Union are not valid grounds** to withhold assent.

4. **Impact on Governance:** The ruling requires **reasoned decisions** when assent is withheld. It removes the **perceived immunity** of high constitutional offices, promoting **accountability and transparency**.

Way Forward

1. **Quicker Judgments:** Courts should deliver **shorter and timely verdicts**, as seen in the **UK Supreme Court's 24-page Brexit judgment (2019)**.

2. **Consistency in Hearing:** **Similar cases** should be **clubbed together** and heard by the **same Bench**.

3. **Better Internal Coordination:** The judiciary should improve **internal management** to ensure **clarity, predictability, and fairness** in constitutional cases.

Conclusion: The judgment redefines **executive accountability** in the legislative process. It upholds **democratic principles** by limiting **arbitrary delay** and emphasizes that **constitutional offices are not above scrutiny**.

Question for practice:

Examine how the Supreme Court's recent judgment in the State of Tamil Nadu vs Governor of Tamil Nadu redefines the limits of gubernatorial and presidential discretion in the legislative process.

India prepares response to US tariff changes

Source: The post India prepares response to US tariff changes has been created, based on the article "**Shaping a response to the U.S.'s reciprocal tariffs**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 17th April 2025

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

Context: President Donald Trump's announcement of new reciprocal tariffs has surprised many. These tariffs combine existing commodity-wise duties with a new country-specific tariff structure. Though currently capped at 10% for most countries for 90 days, the tariffs are aimed at reducing U.S. trade imbalances and have significant implications for India.

For detailed information on **India must respond wisely to Trump's trade** [read this article here](#)

Structure and Calculation of Reciprocal Tariffs

1. The new tariff system introduces a **uniform country-wise tariff** on all goods, applied alongside existing commodity-specific tariffs.

2. The formula used is:

Discounted Tariff Rate = $(-1) \times (\frac{1}{2}) \times (\text{U.S. exports} - \text{U.S. imports}) / \text{U.S. imports}$

3. This formula **does not consider elasticity or specific duties** and can be misleading. A column titled 'charged to the US' doubles the discounted rate, giving a distorted picture.

4. For **India**, based on 2024 data (exports: \$41.8 billion, imports: \$87.4 billion), the reciprocal tariff rate is **26%**.

5. This will be added to existing tariffs, except for certain **exempted commodities** like: **Pharmaceuticals; Steel and aluminum articles; Autos and auto parts; Copper, energy, semiconductors, bullion, and select minerals**

6. For countries not on the reciprocal tariff list, a **default 10% rate** will apply.

Impact on Indian Exports to the U.S.

1. India's export dependence is **moderate**, and exports to the U.S. have been **declining**. Hence, the **economic impact** of the 26% tariff will be **limited but uneven** across sectors.

2. **Major Indian exports likely to be affected: Electrical machinery; Machinery and mechanical appliances; Made-up textiles**

3. Items like **gems and jewellery** will be less affected due to **inelastic demand**. **Pharmaceuticals remain exempt**.

4. **Competitor countries** such as **China, Vietnam, Bangladesh** face **higher reciprocal tariffs**, offering India a relative **advantage**. **South Korea** faces a similar tariff at **25%**.

Recommended Indian Response

1. India should not retaliate aggressively like China, whose reciprocal action led to a U.S. tariff hike up to 245% on some items. Instead, India should adopt a balanced, multi-pronged approach:

2. **Increase Imports from the U.S.:** Boosting imports from the U.S. could lower India's reciprocal tariff rate. For example, shifting \$25 billion of oil imports from other countries to the U.S. would reduce India's reciprocal tariff from 26% to 11.8%, just above the 10% floor.

3. **Engage in Dialogue:** India should begin trade consultations with the U.S. to work out a long-term agreement that reflects mutual interests.

4. **Monitor Dumping Risks:** India should be vigilant about possible dumping by countries like China that are more adversely affected by U.S. tariffs.

Global Trade Outlook and WTO's Role

These tariff changes indicate that global trade will face instability in the near future. The WTO must take leadership in promoting a global system based on low tariffs. While regional trade deals may offer temporary relief, they are no substitute for comprehensive multilateral solutions

Question for practice:

Examine how India can strategically respond to the United States' new reciprocal tariff policy announced by President Donald Trump.

Strategic hamleting failed and displaced tribals remain neglected

Source: The post Strategic hamleting failed and displaced tribals remain neglected has been created, based on the article "**Call for permanent settlement for tribals**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 17th April 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: In 2005, nearly 50,000 Gond tribals were displaced from Chhattisgarh under the Government of India's 'strategic hamleting' programme, aimed at curbing Maoist influence. Two decades later, most remain in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, facing neglect and denial of tribal rights. The issue highlights gaps in policy, rights recognition, and interstate coordination.

Historical Background of Strategic Hamleting

1. The idea began in **1949**, soon after Independence. To suppress **Telangana communist revolutionaries**, the government relocated forest-dwelling tribals to roadside camps. Many were recruited as **special police constables** with little training and basic weapons like **spears and axes**. One such group was the **Koya "Tiger Squad"** with around **300 members**.

2. In the **1960s**, a similar approach was used in **Mizoram** to counter insurgents. This effort proved more effective and concluded with a **peace deal**.

3. In **2005**, the strategy was applied again in **Chhattisgarh** to fight Maoists. Around **50,000 Gond tribals** were forced to relocate. However, the programme failed. Many tribals returned to their forest homes, while others joined **security forces**, indicating the strategy did not achieve its original goal.

Current Situation of Displaced Gutti Koyas

1. **Displacement:** Around **50,000 Gond tribals**, referred to as **Gutti Koyas**, were displaced in 2005 under the strategic hamleting programme.

2. **Current Residence:** Most now live in **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**, occupying **illegally held forest land**.

3. **Tribal Rights Neglected:**

- Under **Clause 3.1(m) of the Forest Rights Act**, tribals displaced before **December 13, 2005** are entitled to **alternative forest land**.
- Many Gutti Koyas have applied for land in their present states, but **Chhattisgarh** has delayed processing for over **five years**.
- Though the clause permits land in other states, Chhattisgarh has failed to coordinate with **Telangana, Andhra Pradesh**, or the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**.

4. **Denial of Tribal Status:**

- Both host states treat the Gutti Koyas as **migrants**, not tribals.
- This denies them **tribal welfare benefits** and legal recognition.
- In a **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)** meeting, it was noted that **10,000 tribals remain displaced** from Chhattisgarh, with **24,000 in Telangana** and **8,000 in Andhra Pradesh**.
- Though a survey was ordered in **2019** and repeated recently, Chhattisgarh cited **COVID-19** for inaction.

5. **Push for Return:**

- **Telangana** has taken over tribal farmland for plantations.
- **Andhra Pradesh** has destroyed newly built homes in forests, aiming to push them back to Chhattisgarh.

Denial of Tribal Status and Basic Rights

1. Both states **refuse to recognise Gutti Koyas as tribals**, denying them full support.
2. While limited **humanitarian aid** is provided, states argue that only **central intervention** can resolve the issue.
3. In contrast, under the **2019 Bru Rehabilitation Plan**, displaced Brus were given options for **permanent settlement and central aid**.

Major Challenges and Demands

1. Many **young tribals** consider **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana** home.
2. They face **discrimination, lack of recognition**, and are targeted by **locals, forest officials, and police**.
3. Their key demands include **permanent rehabilitation, land rights**, and **official tribal status** for a life of dignity.

Question for practice:

Examine the impact of the 2005 strategic hamleting programme on the displacement, rights, and current status of the Gutti Koya tribals in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

China responds to US tariffs with strength

Source: The post China responds to US tariffs with strength has been created, based on the article “How China is fighting U.S. tariffs” published in “The Hindu” on 17th April 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2

Context: In early 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump revived his “America First” trade policy by proposing “reciprocal tariffs” to reduce trade deficits. While targeting 57 countries, China was excluded from a temporary 90-day pause. The move has sparked a trade war, with significant global economic implications and rising geopolitical tensions.

Trump’s Strategy Behind Reciprocal Tariffs

1. The Trump administration claimed that “reciprocal tariffs” were necessary to eliminate “unfair trade practices.” The aim was to pressure partner countries into signing bilateral agreements that benefit U.S. interests. On April 9, the tariffs were postponed for 90 days for all except China, to allow time for negotiation.
2. Key advisers like Stephen Marin and Peter Navarro supported the use of tariffs as a strategic tool to extract better trade and security terms. Navarro even stated that Trump himself would act as the chief negotiator, sidelining the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). This centralised, personalised approach to trade talks raised concerns about the practicality of achieving meaningful deals.

Obstacles in Bilateral Trade Negotiations

Two key challenges undermine Trump’s trade negotiation plan:

1. **Centralisation of Negotiation:** By bypassing formal institutions and placing Trump at the centre of all talks, the process risks inefficiency and diplomatic confusion.
2. **Overloaded Agenda:** The 2025 USTR’s National Trade Estimate Report flagged major barriers in 57 countries, including India. These include issues like subsidies, public distribution systems, generic medicines, and data localisation. Addressing all of them within 90 days is nearly impossible.
3. Countries like India would have to accept deep changes in domestic policies, which seems unlikely under external pressure.

China’s Defiance and Strategic Response

1. Unlike 2020, when China agreed to U.S. terms, Beijing now strongly retaliates. After facing a 34% tariff from the U.S., China imposed a 125% tariff on U.S. imports. The U.S. then raised its tariff to 145%, deepening the trade war. However, critical electronics like smartphones and semiconductors were exempted, showing U.S. vulnerability in this sector.
2. China has reduced its dependency on U.S. markets. From 19.2% in 2018, U.S. now accounts for just 13.5% of Chinese exports in 2025. ASEAN, India, and Russia have become key trade partners for China. This diversification limits U.S. leverage.

China’s Economic Leverage Over U.S.

1. **Rare Earth Dominance:** China accounts for 92% of global rare earth output. It recently imposed export restrictions on seven types, affecting key U.S. industries that depend on these materials.
2. **U.S. Treasury Bonds:** In 2018, China held \$1.2 trillion in U.S. Treasury bonds, which was 22% of the total. By January 2025, it had reduced this to \$761 billion, less than 9%. This strategic drop strengthens China’s position, as further reduction or selling of these bonds could impact U.S. financial stability in case of trade escalations.

Conclusion

Trump's trade war has created global economic uncertainty. While the U.S. seeks to force concessions, countries like China are pushing back with resilience and strategy. A coordinated global response is needed to urge the U.S. to return to multilateralism.

Question for practice:

Examine how China has strategically responded to the U.S. reciprocal tariffs and what economic leverage it holds over the United States.

Trump uses tariffs to reshape American economy and security

Source: The post Trump uses tariffs to reshape American economy and security has been created, based on the article "**Trumponomics deserves to be taken seriously**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 18th April 2025

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

Context: **U.S. President Donald Trump's aggressive tariff policy marks the beginning of a global trade war not seen since World War II.** While he has paused tariffs for most countries except China, he remains committed to reshaping the U.S. economy. His economic agenda, called "**Trumponomics**," **includes four pillars: tariffs, tax cuts, deregulation, and energy expansion.**

Key Propositions of Trumponomics

1. Reviving U.S. Manufacturing: Trumponomics seeks to bring back manufacturing jobs lost due to globalization and offshoring.

- Between 2000 and 2011, around **2 million jobs** were lost (Stephen Miran).
- Robert Lighthizer estimates a loss of **5 million jobs** from 2000 to 2009.
- This job loss has **devastated industrial communities**, leading to poverty, crime, and drug abuse. Manufacturing remains a key path to **high-wage employment** for most Americans.

2. National Security: Trump argues that **manufacturing is essential for national defence**. The U.S. should not depend on imports for vital materials like **steel, aluminium, and semiconductors**. He says, "*If you don't have steel, you don't have a country.*"

3. Unfair Trade Practices: Trumponomics rejects trade with countries like **China**, which use **subsidies, slave labour, and technology theft** to give their firms an unfair advantage. These practices harm U.S. firms that follow market rules.

4. Controlling Trade Deficits: The U.S. runs a **trade deficit of \$500 billion to \$1 trillion annually**. This persists because the **U.S. dollar is a global reserve currency**, keeping it **overvalued**. A strong dollar makes **imports cheaper and exports more expensive**, worsening the deficit.

Use of Tariffs to Achieve Economic Goals

1. Tariffs as a Strategic Tool: Tariffs raise import costs and **discourage foreign goods**. This helps reduce the trade deficit and **promotes domestic manufacturing**. They also **attract foreign and American companies** to shift operations to the U.S.

2. Economic Efficiency vs Strategic Goals: Critics say tariffs hurt efficiency and cause inflation. Trumponomics counters that tariffs **reduce imports**, causing the **dollar to strengthen**. If the **currency offset** is perfect—say, a **10% tariff** balanced by a **10% appreciation** in the dollar—then **import prices remain stable** for consumers. Exporters, whose currencies weaken, **earn less** in return.

3. Cost to Consumers: If the currency offset is incomplete, U.S. consumers may see **higher prices**. Still, **Stephen Miran estimates the inflation impact at just 0.3 to 0.6 percentage points**, which is considered **manageable**.

4. **Efficiency Gains through Pressure:** As input costs rise, American manufacturers are pushed to **innovate and cut costs**. This pressure is leading to **relocation of production to the U.S.**, boosting output and **economic self-reliance**.

The Other Three Pillars of Trumponomics

1. **Tax Cuts:** Tariff revenues will help fund **tax cuts**, easing the burden of higher import costs on businesses.
2. **Deregulation:** Simplifying regulations will **reduce compliance and operational costs** for U.S. companies.
3. **Energy Expansion:** More drilling will **lower oil prices** and help **offset inflation** from tariffs.

A New Economic Model

Trumponomics challenges the idea that **efficiency alone should guide policy**. Trump prioritizes **jobs, national security, and self-reliance**. Despite criticism, he remains firm in pursuing his **"Make America Great Again"** vision, regardless of short-term global effects.

Question for practice:

Examine how Trumponomics uses tariffs as a strategic tool to achieve economic and national security goals.

Indian startups face innovation challenges despite growing support

Source: The post Indian startups face innovation challenges despite growing support has been created, based on the article **"Are Indian startups not scaling up on innovation?"** published in **"The Hindu"** on 18th April 2025

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

Context: Union Minister Piyush Goyal's remark at Startup Mahakumbh that Indian startups are not innovating enough and are limiting themselves to grocery delivery sparked a wider debate. The discussion focuses on the level of innovation in Indian startups, government support, availability of capital, and challenges in scaling technology ventures.

For detailed information on **Deep Tech Startups-Significance & Challenges** [read this article here](#)

The Startup India initiative has created a broad and growing ecosystem

1. **Dedicated Support:** Over **20 Central Ministries** now have startup-focused policies.
2. **Substantial Growth:** Around **1.65 to 1.70 lakh startups** are registered with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
3. **Diverse Funding:** Startups are receiving both **equity and debt funding**, including support from banks.
4. **Institutional Engagement:** Many **Indian states** have launched startup policies, extending support beyond the central level.
5. **Cultural Shift:** There is a notable change in mindset. More people are now choosing entrepreneurship, showing growing confidence in starting new ventures.

Venture capitalists define innovation based on user value and market need

1. **Early Investment Trends:** Initially, innovation meant enabling online services, such as those offered by e-commerce platforms.
2. **Current Focus Areas:** Now, venture capital is moving towards **deep tech**—including **AI, blockchain, and electric mobility**—signaling a shift to more complex technologies.
3. **User Benefits:** Innovations that provide **clear user benefits** or a better experience are more likely to attract investment.

4. Sustainable Competitive Advantage: Patents or long-term advantages help startups stand out and secure investor confidence.

5. Market Relevance: Even strong innovations must **solve real and growing market needs** to be commercially viable.

Deep tech startups face structural and financial barriers to scaling

1. High Capital Requirement: These startups need significant investment early on, but usually generate no revenue at first.

2. Insufficient Government Funding: The **Startup India Seed Fund** offers around ₹50 lakh, which is not enough to scale deep tech ventures.

3. Limited Private Investment: After initial support, **follow-up funding** from the private sector is lacking.

4. Dependence on Foreign Capital: Most risk capital comes from abroad, mainly from the U.S., limiting local ownership and influence.

Indian startups face several obstacles in moving up the value chain

1. Limited Domestic Spending: India's **per capita GDP** is around \$3,500, far lower than **China's \$12,000–15,000**, restricting market demand.

2. Spread-Thin Funding: Government support often goes to many startups in **small amounts**, making it hard for any to scale meaningfully.

3. Bureaucratic Hurdles: Complex regulations and approval delays **hinder startup growth and operations**.

4. Lack of Strong Domestic VCs: The absence of powerful **home-grown venture capital firms** prevents strategic long-term investment.

Startups are contributing to society, but their impact varies

1. Earlier Impact: Initial tech growth, especially in **IT and outsourcing**, created **mass employment** and broader impact.

2. Recent Trends: Today, many startups target **urban elites**, such as those offering fast delivery services, narrowing their impact.

3. Success Stories: Firms like **Freshworks**, listed on **NASDAQ**, show Indian startups can grow globally and inspire others.

4. Spreading Innovation: Successful founders often lead to a **second wave of startups** by mentoring or funding new ventures.

5. Policy Reach: The government's support across sectors reflects a broader aim to **promote inclusive startup growth**, beyond just IT.

Question for practice

Discuss the key challenges and opportunities faced by Indian startups in achieving innovation and scale.

Corporate board recruitment practices are rapidly evolving

Source: The post Corporate board recruitment practices are rapidly evolving has been created, based on the article "**Corporate board recruitment is taking a strategic turn**" published in "Live Mint" on 18th April 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper4- Corporate governance

Context: The article discusses the **shift in corporate board recruitment practices in India and globally**. Traditionally dominated by promoters and insiders, board appointments are now being reformed due to

governance failures, legal changes, rising investor activism, and the demand for transparency. A well-structured board is now essential for **corporate credibility and survival**.

For detailed information on **Enhance board effectiveness to acquire a competitive advantage** [read this article here](#)

Outdated Board Composition and Its Weaknesses

In India, board positions were often filled by **promoters, family members, and loyal executives**. In public sector firms and family-run businesses, members echoed decisions rather than questioned them. **Startups** had tight boards led by **founders and investors**. Even large corporations included **retired bureaucrats or high-profile names**, often selected for their influence rather than strategic skills.

Why Reforms Became Inevitable

1. **Governance failures** revealed major flaws in board oversight.
2. **Conflict-of-interest rules** and **director liability** increased scrutiny.
3. **Investor activism** pushed for transparency and protection of minority shareholders.
4. **Court judgments** highlighted the need for improved corporate governance.

What Modern Boards Now Look For

1. **Independence:** Preference is shifting to members who are **independent of promoters** and can protect broader stakeholder interests.
2. **DEI and ESG Awareness:** Candidates must engage with **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI)** and **Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG)** issues. Those ignoring them risk rejection.
3. **Strategic Skills:** Boards value **digital expertise**, strategic foresight, and global perspectives.

Changing Board Selection Process

1. **Multiple Interviews:** Replacing single sessions with one-on-one online interviews to assess diverse skills.
2. **In-Person Attendance:** Despite online trends, the ability to **attend physical meetings** is again a selection factor.
3. **Stricter Vetting:** Legal history, behavior (e.g. **domestic violence, substance abuse**), and digital footprints are reviewed.
4. **Credential Checks:** Academic degrees and job titles are now carefully verified to spot exaggerations.

Looking Ahead: The New Norm

1. **Reputation Matters:** Companies with ethical standards won't risk appointing individuals with questionable records.
2. **Public Sector Standards:** These boards too must meet high standards, as they handle public funds.
3. **Specialist Firms:** **Executive search firms** focused on governance, cybersecurity, and diversity are gaining importance.
4. A senior board member summed it up: "Real governance starts when independent minds replace obedient nods."

Question for practice:

Discuss how corporate board recruitment practices are changing in India and globally.

India needs cleaner logistics for future growth

Source: The post India needs cleaner logistics for future growth has been created, based on the article “**Steering the decarbonisation of India’s logistics sector**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 19th April 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Infrastructure

Context: India aims to become a developed nation by 2047 through inclusive growth. A critical component of this goal is building an efficient and future-ready logistics sector. However, the sector is highly carbon-intensive. Balancing growth with environmental responsibility is now urgent and essential.

For detailed information on **Logistics Sector in India and National Logistics Policy** [read this article here](#)

The Environmental Cost of Logistics

1. Heavy Emissions from Road Transport: Road transport dominates India's logistics, causing high carbon emissions. It makes up 88% of logistics emissions and 13.5% of the country's total greenhouse gases. Trucks alone contribute 38% of CO₂ emissions. Nearly 90% of passenger travel and 70% of freight movement happen via roads.

2. Other Transport Modes and Emissions: Domestic aviation contributes about 4% of emissions. Coastal and inland shipping have lower emissions but are expected to grow by 1.2 to 3 times by 2030. These modes offer more scalable and sustainable freight options if cleaner fuels are adopted.

3. Warehousing Adds to the Problem: Warehouses, essential to freight movement, also emit large amounts of carbon. Their high energy consumption contributes significantly to the overall logistics emissions.

Pathways to a Cleaner Logistics Sector

1. Shifting from Road to Rail: Countries like China and the U.S. have cut emissions by moving freight from road to rail. China's rail share is almost 50%. India should follow this path. Rail transport in India is already electrified and emits near-zero carbon, making it a sustainable option.

2. Electrifying Road Freight: Road freight still plays a major role and needs structural changes. India has launched a pilot project using overhead electric wires on highways to power electric trucks. The Delhi-Jaipur corridor may become a model for clean and efficient freight movement.

3. Greener Shipping Options: The shipping sector is moving towards cleaner fuels like LNG, biofuels, ammonia, and electricity. India can lead this change with LNG-powered vessels, electric boats, and biofuel barges, helping cut emissions from coastal and inland waterways.

4. Tackling Aviation Emissions: Air transport is difficult to decarbonise due to its dependence on refined fuels. Progress in sustainable aviation fuels and improvements in other transport modes can help offset emissions.

5. Sustainable Warehousing Solutions: Warehouses should switch to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and geothermal. This can significantly lower their carbon output and support overall decarbonisation.

Conclusion

Decarbonising logistics is essential not just for the environment, but for creating a strong, resilient, and globally competitive sector. With smart policies, cleaner technologies, and focused investments, India can build a high-performing logistics network that powers sustainable development.

Question for practice:

Examine how India can reduce carbon emissions in its logistics sector while pursuing inclusive economic growth.

Technology diffusion decides future global power rankings

Source: The post Technology diffusion decides future global power rankings has been created, based on the article “**Diffusion is destiny**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 19th April 2025

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

Context: Technology is shaping modern global power rivalries. The book *Technology and the Rise of Great Powers* by Jeffrey Ding challenges old beliefs about how nations gain technological dominance. It argues that power depends not on leading sector dominance but on the **widespread diffusion of transformative technologies**. For detailed information on **A global order as technology's much needed pole star** [read this article here](#)

Revisiting Conventional Wisdom

1. **Dominance in Leading Sectors:** Traditionally, nations were seen as powerful if they led in specific industries. Britain led in **textiles**, Germany in **chemicals**, and Japan in **electronics and cars**. Many now believe China may do the same with **electric vehicles**.

2. **First-Mover Advantage Theory:** This theory says that early innovators gain temporary advantages or **monopoly profits**, helping them rise in global rankings.

Ding's Core Argument

1. **Focus on General Purpose Technologies (GPTs):** Ding argues that sectoral dominance is not enough. **Real power comes from spreading General Purpose Technologies**— innovations that boost productivity across many areas.

2. **Impact of GPTs:** Technologies like **electricity, computerisation, and artificial intelligence** create broad economic gains. These differ from sector-specific tools, as they can **transform entire economies**.

Historical Case Studies

1. **Britain and the First Industrial Revolution:** Britain's strength came not from textiles alone, but from **spreading iron-based machines and engineering skills** across industries.

2. **Germany, the US, and the Second Industrial Revolution:** Germany led in many sectors, but the **US pulled ahead** by spreading GPTs like electricity and creating **institutional standards** that enabled widespread adoption.

3. **Japan and the Third Industrial Revolution:** Japan led in consumer electronics. However, it **failed to diffuse computerisation** effectively. The US succeeded again by **broadly adopting digital technologies**.

Policy and Institutional Implications

1. **Diffusion Requires Different Institutions:** Institutions built to dominate sectors differ from those needed to spread GPTs. The latter require strong **education systems, infrastructure, and technological interoperability**.

2. **Shifting Policy Priorities:** Governments often focus on headline-grabbing sectors. But long-term power requires **investments in human capital** and systems that **enable widespread technology adoption**.

Lessons for India and Other Developing Nations

1. **Wider Reform Is Essential:** India must move beyond sector-specific policies. It needs **deep institutional reforms, broad-based skilling, and stronger technology channels** across small and large firms.

2. **Beyond Innovation Clusters:** India should support **small towns, local engineers, and small-sized firms** that connect frontier innovation to the broader economy. The goal is **system-wide diffusion**, not isolated excellence.

Geopolitical Implications

1. **China vs. the United States:** While China dominates sectors like electric cars, Ding believes the **US still leads in GPT diffusion**. Unless policies change, the US may maintain its edge by **spreading transformative technologies** more effectively.

2. **Evaluating Power:** The true test is not invention alone, but the **ability to diffuse technologies widely** across society.

Conclusion

Ding's work shifts the focus from leading sectors to **technological diffusion**. His key message: **national strength depends on how broadly technologies are adopted**. For countries like India, the way forward lies in **enabling system-wide change** — because **diffusion is destiny**.

Question for practice:

Examine how Jeffrey Ding challenges traditional views on technological dominance and what lessons his argument offers for countries like India.

India must act on youth mental health crisis

Source: The post India must act on youth mental health crisis has been created, based on the article "THE ADOLESCENT AT HOME" published in "Indian Express" on 19th April 2025

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

Context: India is facing a youth mental health crisis. **Academic pressure, digital stress, and emotional isolation** are common among adolescents. The crisis is deepening, but mental health continues to receive little policy focus or investment.

For detailed information on **Issues with Mental Health and Mental Healthcare in India** [read this article here](#)
A Silent Epidemic Among Youth

1. **Neglect in Public Health Policy:** The **National Mental Health Survey (2016)** found that **1 in 10 adolescents** suffers from a mental health disorder. Yet, India allocates **less than 0.5% of its health budget** to mental health. This is concerning, especially with **over 250 million Indians under age 20**.

2. **Warning Signs Ignored:** Despite the rising emotional distress among youth, mental health remains a neglected part of India's public health agenda. **Over 40,000 student suicides in five years** point to a growing but largely unaddressed crisis.

Digital Age and Emotional Struggles

1. **Pandemic's Deep Impact:** The **Covid-19 lockdown** disrupted school routines and social interactions. Many adolescents turned to digital platforms for connection. But this often increased **feelings of comparison, anxiety, and isolation**.

2. **Persistent Digital Habits:** Digital behaviour developed during lockdown has continued. Constant exposure to social media has **deepened emotional vulnerability** and **increased performance pressure**.

Cultural Influences and Emotional Suppression

1. **Toxic Online Masculinity:** Social media influencers often promote **toxic masculinity**. Boys are encouraged to **hide emotions**, act with **aggression**, and avoid seeking help. This fosters **misogyny and emotional repression**.

2. **Redefining Masculinity:** It is vital to present **healthier male role models**. Strength must be redefined as **emotional honesty**, not suppression. A culture of **empathy, self-awareness, and resilience** should be encouraged.

Changing Attitudes at Home and in Public Life

1. **Ending Stigma at Home:** The stigma around mental health often begins within families. Parents and caregivers must be trained to **identify signs of distress** and treat **mental health with equal urgency** as physical illness.

2. **Public Figures as Mental Health Advocates:** Celebrities, influencers, and politicians play a key role. By **sharing personal experiences**, they help **normalize mental health conversations** and promote emotional openness.

Way Forward

1. **Mental Health in Schools:** Support must be integrated into school systems. This includes **preventive counselling, emotional education, and digital literacy**. Students should be equipped to handle **emotional challenges** and engage safely in **online environments**.
2. **Increased Budget and Access:** India must **significantly raise its mental health budget** to expand services and improve infrastructure, particularly in **rural and underserved areas**. Lack of funding is no longer just a technical issue—it is a **life-threatening gap** for millions of vulnerable youth.
3. **Cultural and Moral Commitment:** India must respond to this crisis with **urgency and empathy**. The **emotional weight on youth** is too heavy to ignore. This is not only a public health issue—it is a **human crisis**. The **cost of inaction** will be measured in lost lives and lost futures. India must choose **compassion, courage, and connection**—and most importantly, must **listen to its young people**.

Question for practice:

Examine the key factors contributing to the youth mental health crisis in India and suggest measures to address them.

Heatwaves are hurting health work and equity

Source: The post Heatwaves are hurting health work and equity has been created, based on the article “**Tackle heatwaves with short- and long-term measures**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 21st April 2025

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

Context: India experienced its first severe heatwave of 2025 on March 15—20 days earlier than in 2024. Rising temperatures, frequent heatwaves, and worsening heat stress are threatening public health, economic productivity, and social equity. **This growing crisis demands urgent, people-focused solutions.**

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

Rising Heatwaves and Their Impact

1. **Frequency and Intensity of Heatwaves:** Severe heatwaves are rising in India. **The year 2024 was the warmest on record globally.** December 2022 was **India's hottest December since 1901**. This shows a clear increase in the frequency and severity of heat events over the last two decades.
2. **Heat Stress and the Human Body:** Heat stress occurs when the **external temperature nears the body's 37°C**. The body fails to release internal heat, leading to stress. **It can damage organs like the brain, liver, and kidneys,** and may result in death.
3. **Impact on Agriculture and Labour:** High temperatures make **farming difficult**, reduce harvests, and harm livestock. India, with **labour-intensive sectors** like agriculture and construction, faces job losses and reduced income due to lower working capacity.
4. **Loss of Work and GDP:** About **75% of India's workforce (around 380 million people)** is exposed to heat. In 2023, **nearly 6% of work hours** were lost to heat stress. Economic losses due to heat are estimated at **3–5% of GDP** in countries like India.
5. **Energy Strain and Economic Disruption:** Rising heat increases electricity demand and causes power cuts. This disrupts industrial production and slows **national economic growth**.
6. **Equity and Social Inequality:** **The poor, migrants, elderly, women,** and informal workers are most affected. Women face extra risk due to indoor cooking, dress codes, and sleeping arrangements. **Urban poor suffer more** due to poor housing and heat-retaining surroundings.

Evolution and Gaps in Heat Action Plans (HAPs)

1. **Global Learnings Ignored Initially:** As early as the **mid-19th century**, scientists observed that **urban areas are hotter than rural ones**. But formal Heat and Health Action Plans (HHAPs) emerged only **between 2003–2008** in Europe, mainly in **non-tropical regions**.

2. **India's First Step: Ahmedabad launched Asia's first HAP in 2013.** Now, **23 states and 140 cities** in India have heat action plans. The National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCHH) also provides advisories.

3. **Plan Components:** Most HAPs include **early alerts, public awareness, health system preparedness, urban greening, and heat data tracking.**

4. **Key Gaps:** Implementation is weak in many areas. **Coordination is lacking, and data collection is poor,** limiting effectiveness.

5. **Way Forward:** Indian HAPs should adopt **global best practices**, include **humidity** in assessments, use **local vulnerability data**, and be **activated by early March.**

Recommendations for Strengthening Heat Responses

1. **Update and Localize HAPs:** States should revise plans yearly, based on **humidity and local risk mapping.** Clear roles must be assigned.

2. **Improve Data Collection:** More precise data is needed to identify **at-risk locations and people.** This allows for better targeting and saving lives.

3. **Use Better Alert Systems:** India should adopt systems like the UK's **Heat Health Alert**, using **both day and night temperatures** for issuing timely warnings.

4. **Strengthen Infrastructure:** Promote **cool building materials and better urban design.** Provide **financial support to informal workers** during heatwaves.

5. **Context-Specific Advisories:** "Stay indoors" may not help the **urban poor in dense areas.** Heat advisories must match **local geography and living conditions.**

6. **People-Centric Innovations:** Create **summer shelters** and promote **cool roof policies.** Encourage **science-backed cooling solutions.**

7. **Enable Supportive Work Environments:** Ensure **drinking water, ORS,** and flexible work hours. Outdoor work should pause during peak heat.

Conclusion

Heatwaves require a **shift from short-term relief to long-term planning.** Cities must invest in **cost-effective adaptation, better coordination,** and adopt a **people-first approach.** Recognizing heatwaves as an **equity issue** is essential to reduce the health and economic toll of rising temperatures.

Question for practice:

Examine how rising heatwaves in India are impacting public health, economic productivity, and social equity, and suggest long-term strategies to address these challenges.

India stays silent as world reacts to US tariffs

Source: The post India stays silent as world reacts to US tariffs has been created, based on the article "**Calling out American trade illegality**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 21st April 2025

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

Context: On April 2, 2025, the United States announced reciprocal tariffs, triggering global concern. These tariffs, though paused for 90 days for most nations except China, violate World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. The move has drawn varied global reactions—some nations strongly opposed it, while others, including India, stayed silent.

For detailed information on **India prepares response to US tariff changes** [read this article here](#)

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Global Responses to U.S. Tariffs

1. **Strong Criticism from Major Nations:** Countries such as **Singapore, Brazil, China, Japan, and Canada** have sharply criticised the U.S. actions as violations of WTO law.

- Singapore's Prime Minister called the tariffs a rejection of the **Most-Favoured Nation (MFN) principle**, a key pillar of the global trade system.
- Brazil and China noted the illegality of the tariffs under WTO commitments. China also imposed **retaliatory tariffs** and initiated a formal **WTO dispute**.
- Japan and Canada formally challenged the tariffs. Canada not only filed a **legal claim at the WTO** but also imposed **retaliatory tariffs** on U.S. automobiles and auto parts.

2. **Moderate Disapproval by Some Countries:** Some nations, while avoiding legal language, expressed displeasure.

- **Fiji** called the tariff hikes '**unfair**'.
- **Italy's Prime Minister** described the U.S. move as a '**mistake**'. These countries stopped short of accusing the U.S. of legal violations but made their dissatisfaction known.

3. Silence or Vague Reactions

- A few countries, including **India**, issued **muted or non-committal statements**.
- They did not formally oppose or endorse the U.S. tariffs.
- This silence reflects a cautious, observer-like stance.

Why India Remains Silent

1. **Bilateral Trade Negotiations with the U.S.:** India's silence is partly explained by ongoing bilateral trade talks with the U.S. However, this reason is weak. The U.S. has continued negotiating with India despite publicly criticising India's legal tariffs. Other nations also manage similar negotiations while still criticising the U.S. India could have asserted support for WTO rules without halting trade talks.

2. **India's Missed Opportunity:** India's silence undermines its position as a defender of multilateralism. A public statement could have reinforced its global credibility. It could have reminded the U.S. of its WTO obligations without escalating conflict. Choosing silence, instead, sends a weak signal about India's commitment to trade fairness.

The WTO Dispute System and Its Limitations

1. **Flawed Justification Based on WTO Dysfunction:** Another reason cited is the dysfunction of the WTO's dispute settlement body. Critics argue that filing a claim is pointless if no enforcement follows. But this view is too narrow. International law also helps distinguish legitimate authority from sheer power.

2. **Legal Action as a Symbol of Legitimacy:** Even without enforcement, legal claims express moral and legal authority. China and Canada filed WTO cases knowing the system's weakness. They understand that speaking up upholds principles and pressures violators. India's inaction shows a limited understanding of the power of legal norms.

India's Missed Leadership Role

1. **Absence in a Collective Global Statement:** Around 40 WTO members recently supported a joint statement backing multilateral trade and WTO rules. India, surprisingly, did not sign. This goes against its usual advocacy for a rules-based system.

2. Opportunity to Lead the Global South: India often speaks for developing nations. This was a moment to lead by defending trade rules and uniting the Global South. A public stand could have shown strength, fairness, and leadership in shaping a just global trade system.

Question for practice:

Evaluate India's response to the U.S. tariffs announced on April 2, 2025, and its implications for India's global trade leadership.

India faces job crisis as AI reshapes work roles

Source: The post India faces job crisis as AI reshapes work roles has been created, based on the article “**What do we do when machines do everything?**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 21st April 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- growth, development and employment. And GS3-Science and Technology-developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

Context: India is facing an urgent employment crisis, made worse by technological change. While youth unemployment is visible, a deeper invisible crisis is transforming the very nature of work. The rise of AI and automation is reshaping job roles, requiring new skills and approaches to education.

For detailed information on **Impact of AI on jobs and how social forces shape technology development** [read this article here](#)

Visible and Invisible Employment Crisis

1. Youth Unemployment: Over **80% of India's unemployed are youth**, despite many having secondary or higher education. **One in three young people is disconnected** from both employment and learning. This reflects a gap between education and the skills needed for work.

2. Job Creation Need: India must generate **over 90 million jobs by 2030**, many of which do not yet exist. This requires new education and skill-building strategies to prepare the future workforce.

3. Technology Disruption: Artificial intelligence, automation, and data systems are transforming all job sectors. **From blue-collar work to creative professions**, technology is changing how tasks are done.

4. Skill Replacement Risk: Jobs that are **low-skill but hard to automate** may remain secure for now. But roles that are **easily replaced by machines**, regardless of skill level, are at high risk. The only lasting advantage is the **ability to keep learning new skills**.

What Skills Are Needed?

1. Technology Literacy: People must understand how machines, digital systems, and automation tools work. This skill helps individuals adapt across industries and engage effectively with intelligent systems.

2. Data Literacy: Workers need to read, analyse, and act on data. In an algorithm-driven world, these skills are vital for decision-making. For example, a political science student might study data visualisation for public policy.

3. Human Skills: Skills like empathy, creativity, cultural understanding, and contextual reasoning remain irreplaceable by machines. These are essential for innovation and leadership.

4. Adaptability and Lifelong Learning: As job roles evolve rapidly, the ability to learn new skills quickly is critical. Micro-credentials, like short, focused certifications, support this need. A historian, for instance, may learn AI-assisted archival research.

5. Interdisciplinary Thinking: Workers must transfer knowledge across fields. This helps them lead in a world where technology impacts every profession—from healthcare to arts.

6. Education System Reform: To prepare youth, tech and data literacy must be taught early. Training educators to focus on skills, not just content, is necessary for a future-ready workforce.

Conclusion

India's future depends on a workforce that is **adaptable, tech-savvy, and human-centric**. This isn't just about creating AI experts—it's about building **innovators, thinkers, and leaders** who can shape the future in a changing global economy.

Question for practice:

Discuss how technological change is reshaping employment and skill requirements in India.

India and China mark 75 years of complex ties

Source: The post India and China mark 75 years of complex ties has been created, based on the article "**India, China at 75 — a time for strategy, not sentiment**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 22nd April 2025

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

Context: As **India and China mark 75 years of diplomatic ties**, their relationship stands at a critical juncture. Past visions of **Asian solidarity** have given way to **strategic rivalry, border tensions, and economic interdependence**—all shaped by shifting global power dynamics.

For detailed information on **India and China Strengthening Trust and Cooperation** [read this article here](#)
Geopolitical Rivalry and Border Tensions

1. **China as a Key Strategic Factor:** China is now the **central external force** shaping India's foreign policy—from defence planning to trade decisions. This "**China lens**" requires balancing **sovereignty, deterrence, and engagement**.

2. **Persistent Military Standoff:** The **1962 war** and the **2020 Galwan clash** deepened mistrust. The **Line of Actual Control** remains tense and heavily militarised. India has deployed **over 60,000 troops in Eastern Ladakh**, while both sides continue **infrastructure expansion**.

3. **South Asia as a Contest Arena:** China's growing role in India's neighbourhood—via **ports, loans, and connectivity projects**—challenges India's traditional leadership. India is responding with **aid, defence partnerships**, and crisis support, but it needs a **long-term, proactive strategy** beyond headlines.

Economic Interdependence and Strategic Coexistence

1. **Trade Paradox and Limits of Decoupling:** Despite political tensions, **China is one of India's top trading partners**, with a **\$100 billion trade imbalance** in 2024–25. India has restricted apps and investments, yet depends on China for **key components** like pharmaceuticals and electronics. **Complete decoupling is not viable in the near future**.

2. **Competitive Coexistence as a Strategy:** India engages China on **multilateral platforms** like **BRICS** and **SCO**, while strengthening ties with **Quad members**. This strategy of **calibrated competition and selective cooperation** helps maintain **strategic autonomy** and reduce direct confrontation.

Shifting Narratives and Regional Influence

1. **Narratives as Tools of Strategy:** Recent remarks by **Bangladesh's interim leader in Beijing**—describing India's northeast as landlocked—though factually correct, **raised alarms** in Delhi. This underlines how **China shapes regional narratives** and why India must focus on **infrastructure, trust-building, and communication**.

2. **Water Security and New Frontiers of Mistrust:** China's planned **dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo** (Brahmaputra) near Arunachal Pradesh has triggered concerns over **water manipulation**. There is **no water-sharing treaty**, and **transparency remains low**, making water a new domain of **strategic tension**.

Diplomatic Openings and the U.S. Factor

1. **Tentative Rapprochement:** PM **Modi's podcast remarks** in 2025 on India-China synergy were **well-received in Beijing**. Progress includes **resumed LAC patrolling, talks on hydrological data**, and potential reopening of the **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra**. These are early signs of a **measured thaw**.

2. **Managing U.S.-China Tensions:** With **Donald Trump back in the White House**, **U.S.-China rivalry** has intensified. India may face pressure to side with Washington, especially in the **Indo-Pacific**. But **strategic autonomy** remains India's guiding principle, helping it avoid becoming a **proxy player** in global rivalries.

Question for practice:

Examine how India is balancing strategic rivalry and economic interdependence in its relationship with China.

Vice-President raises concerns about judiciary and India's constitutional balance

Source: The post Vice-President raises concerns about judiciary and India's constitutional balance has been created, based on the article "**Judiciary's place atop the pyramid**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 22nd April 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Polity-Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary.

Context: Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar recently raised serious concerns about the functioning of the judiciary. He questioned its **transparency, accountability**, and the **limits of its constitutional powers**. These remarks have triggered a renewed debate on **judicial independence** and its role in a **democratic setup**.

Concerns Raised by the Vice-President

1. **Opaque Inquiry Process:** The Vice-President raised concern about the **lack of transparency** in the inquiry related to the recovery of **huge piles of cash** at a judge's residence. He pointed out that the procedure was not framed under **any law passed by Parliament**.

2. **Timelines for President and Governors:** He criticised the **Supreme Court's recent judgment** that directed the **President and Governors** to act within set timelines on **State legislations**. He objected to the court issuing **writs of Mandamus** to these **high constitutional offices**, viewing it as **judicial overreach**.

3. **Lack of Judicial Accountability:** He highlighted that the **judiciary is not accountable** to the public like the **legislature and executive**. He questioned the continued use of **Article 145(3)**, which mandates a **five-judge Bench** to test constitutional validity. This rule, framed in **1950**, may be outdated today given the **present strength of 34 judges**.

4. **Use of Article 142:** He expressed concern over the Supreme Court's use of **Article 142**, which allows the court to do "**complete justice**". He felt its use sometimes **undermines representative democracy**.

Critical Analysis of the Concerns

1. **Shared Concern About Transparency:** Public unease about the judiciary's **opaque internal inquiries** is widely shared. Experts recommend that the **Chief Justice of India** should frame a **clear and transparent** inquiry process to reinforce trust in the rule of law.

2. **Issues in Judicial Appointments:** The collegium system of appointing judges lacks transparency. A National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC), with the CJI holding a veto, could make appointments more inclusive and transparent without affecting judicial independence.

3. **Judicial Activism Has Helped Governance:** Use of Article 142 has led to landmark decisions. These include compensation for Bhopal gas tragedy victims(1989), workplace harassment guidelines(1997), coal block cancellations(2014), Permanent commission for women officers (2024), and Demolition-related directions to officials (2024)

4. **Supreme Court's Use of Timelines is Justified:** The judgment on timelines is based on earlier **Constitution Bench rulings**. Similar timelines were also mentioned in the **2016 Office Memorandum** by the **Home Ministry**. Hence, the court acted within its powers.

5. **No Urgent Need to Change Bench Size:** Given the **pending cases** and past practices, the current rule of a **five-judge Bench** for constitutional matters remains **reasonable and effective**.

Judicial Review and Constitutional Balance

1. **Judiciary's Role in Indian Democracy:** The executive is accountable to the legislature, but the judiciary independently upholds the Constitution. It is the final guardian of constitutional values.
2. **India's Hybrid Constitutional Model:** India combines the British concept of **parliamentary sovereignty** and the American idea of **judicial supremacy**. Judicial review is part of the **basic structure** of the Constitution.
3. **Need for Institutional Balance:** Each organ—**executive**, **legislature**, and **judiciary**—must **respect boundaries**. Cooperation, not confrontation, is vital for **preserving the spirit of the Constitution**.

Question for practice:

Discuss the concerns raised by the Vice-President regarding the judiciary and critically analyse their implications for constitutional balance in India.

China restricts rare earth exports affecting India

Source: The post China restricts rare earth exports affecting India has been created, based on the article “**Why did China block exports of rare earth elements?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 22nd April 2025

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

Context: The U.S.–China trade war has intensified after China imposed export controls on rare earth elements (REEs). These elements are vital for global industries, including electronics and defence. The move affects global supply chains and has prompted responses from countries like India.

For detailed information on **RARE EARTH MINERALS** [read this article here](#)

Understanding Rare Earth Elements

1. What Are Rare Earths?

REEs are 17 chemical elements found in the earth's crust. They are not rare in quantity but are hard to extract and purify. Countries like **China, India, Myanmar, Australia, and Japan** have natural reserves.

2. Targeted Elements and Their Uses

China's export restrictions target **seven REEs**:

- **Dysprosium** – used in hard disks and electric car motors.
- **Gadolinium** – used in nuclear reactor shielding and medical devices.
- **Lutetium** – found in PET scanners and petroleum refining.
- **Samarium** – powers magnets in personal electronics.
- **Scandium** – used in fighter aircraft alloys.
- **Terbium** – used in lighting systems.
- **Yttrium** – used in cancer treatment and superconductors.

China's Export Restrictions

1. **Scope and Effect:** China refines **almost all heavy REEs** used globally. The new export rules apply to all refiners exporting REEs outside China.

Though not a total ban, the **permit process** may **delay global supplies** for several weeks.

2. **Global Dependence:** China's control over REE refining gives it **strategic leverage** over vital manufacturing sectors, including **defence and electronics**.

Impact on India

1. **Limited Immediate Impact:** India may not face immediate disruptions. Advanced manufacturing often happens in **China and Japan**, and Japan has built **stockpiles** to manage supply shocks.

2. **India's Current Capacity:** India holds around **6% of global REE deposits**. However, mining and refining activities are minimal due to environmental concerns. State-owned Indian Rare Earths Ltd extracts light REEs like monazite in Kerala. In 2023–24, **India imported only 2,270 tonnes of REEs**.

India's Strategic Response

1. **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM):** India has launched the **NCMM** to secure critical mineral supply chains. Key steps include:

- **1,200 exploration projects.**
- Offering **exploratory licenses**.
- **Auctioning mineral blocks.**
- Boosting **domestic production** and **foreign sourcing**.

2. **Need for Diversification:** The government says that **China's restrictions**, the **Russia-Ukraine war**, and other issues prove the need to **diversify critical mineral sources**.

Question for practice:

Examine how China's rare earth export restrictions impact global supply chains and India's strategic response.

Aadhaar voter ID link threatens free and fair elections

Source: The post Aadhaar voter ID link threatens free and fair elections has been created, based on the article "**A move that endangers the right to vote**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 23rd April 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Polity

Context: The Election Commission of India (ECI) is pushing for Aadhaar-voter ID linkage, claiming it will clean electoral rolls and prevent fraud. However, past experience shows this move leads to mass voter exclusions, privacy violations, and undermines the right to vote.

For detailed information on **Linking of Aadhaar with Voter IDs** [read this article here](#)

Flawed Justifications for Aadhaar-Voter ID Linkage

1. **Voluntary in Name Only:** Form 6B, which claims the process is voluntary, offers no real opt-out. Citizens must submit Aadhaar or declare they don't have one. This coerces participation. By September 2023, over 66 crore Aadhaar numbers were already linked.

2. **Questionable Data Practices:** Data from other departments and the National Population Register has been repurposed without consent. The DBT Seeding Data Viewer allows third parties to access sensitive identity data, raising serious privacy concerns.

3. **Rollback of Legal Commitment:** In *G. Niranjan v. ECI* (2023), the ECI assured the Supreme Court that Aadhaar linkage was not mandatory. But the latest proposal contradicts that assurance by forcing non-Aadhaar holders to justify themselves in person.

Barriers to Universal and Equal Suffrage

1. **Unfair Burdens on Marginalised Groups:** People without Aadhaar—such as the elderly, disabled, migrant workers, and those in remote areas—must appear physically before officers. This is neither reasonable nor practical. It diminishes dignity and democratic trust.

2. No Clear Appeal Process: If a person's justification for not linking Aadhaar is rejected, they have no easy way to appeal. This violates the Supreme Court's 1995 ruling in *Lal Babu Hussein*, which mandates fairness in voter roll deletions.

Aadhaar Is Not Proof of Citizenship

1. Legal Inconsistencies: The Aadhaar Act, 2016, says Aadhaar is based on residency, not citizenship. Even non-citizens living in India for 182 days can get Aadhaar. UIDAI and multiple High Courts confirm that Aadhaar does not prove Indian citizenship.

2. Constitutional Restrictions on Aadhaar Use: In *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2018), the Supreme Court limited Aadhaar use to welfare schemes under Section 7 of the Act. Voter ID linkage falls outside this scope.

Risk of Disenfranchisement and Electoral Damage

1. Past Failures Are Well-Documented: In 2015, ECI's Aadhaar seeding under the National Electoral Roll Purification and Authentication Programme led to 55 lakh wrongful deletions in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Voters found out on polling day. The Supreme Court stayed the programme.

2. Aadhaar Database Is Unreliable: The CAG's 2022 report flagged serious flaws—4.75 lakh Aadhaar numbers were cancelled due to duplication and faulty biometrics. UIDAI lacks a process to verify whether Aadhaar holders actually meet the residency criteria.

Threats to Voter Privacy and Surveillance

1. Risk of Political Profiling: The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, gives wide exemptions to government bodies. Once Aadhaar is linked to voter IDs, parties can cross-reference databases to target voters or manipulate rolls.

2. Undermining Institutional Independence: ECI is a constitutional body, while UIDAI is a government-controlled agency. Sharing electoral data with UIDAI undermines electoral independence and violates the constitutional principle of free and fair elections.

Better Alternatives for Voter Verification

Traditional and Effective Methods

Instead of invasive data practices, the ECI should use proven systems:

- Door-to-door checks by booth-level officers
- Independent audits of electoral rolls
- Strong public grievance mechanisms
- Social audits to ensure transparency and prevent manipulation

Conclusion

The Aadhaar-voter ID linkage harms democracy. It leads to mass exclusions, violates privacy, and allows political misuse. Reliable, inclusive, and constitutionally sound alternatives already exist. The ECI must abandon this flawed scheme.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the impact of Aadhaar-voter ID linkage on electoral integrity, voter rights, and constitutional safeguards in India.

India explores Arctic opportunities balancing trade, climate and geopolitics

Source: The post India explores Arctic opportunities balancing trade, climate and geopolitics has been created, based on the article “Exploring India’s potential in the Arctic region” published in “The Hindu” on 23rd April 2025

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

Context: As global trade faces new challenges, melting Arctic ice is opening the Northern Sea Route (NSR), a shorter trade path between Europe and Asia. This development has triggered discussions about India’s strategic, economic, and climate-related interests in the Arctic region.

For detailed information on **India’s Polar Expeditions in Arctic and Antarctic** [read this article here](#)

Melting Ice and the Rise of the Northern Sea Route

1. **New Trade Possibilities: Arctic sea-ice is shrinking by 12.2% per decade** (NASA). This is opening up the **Northern Sea Route (NSR)**, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It is now **the shortest trade route between Europe and Asia**. This will **save time and reduce freight costs**.

2. **Strategic Importance for India:** India’s interest in NSR fits its long-term aim of **developing mega ports and new sea routes**. This is not only for economic gain, but also for **geopolitical advantage**. The rising number of **Observer nations at the Arctic Council**, exceeding Arctic states, shows growing concern over existing trade routes.

India’s Arctic Presence and Policy Execution

1. **Early Engagement and Scientific Roles:** India signed the **Svalbard Treaty in 1920**. It has a permanent Arctic research base, **Himadri**, and is the **only developing country besides China** with such a base. It also worked with national and international agencies to study **how Arctic ice loss may affect India’s monsoons and agriculture**.

2. **Need For Policy Implementation:** India released its **Arctic Policy in 2022**, but it now needs **focused action**. The **2025–26 Budget allocated \$3 billion** to the **Maritime Development Fund** to strengthen India’s shipping sector. It also supports the development of **shipbuilding clusters**. India must build **ice-capable fleets** for Arctic navigation.

Climate Warnings and Responsible Engagement

1. **Environmental Risks:** Cargo on the NSR rose sharply—from **41,000 tonnes in 2010 to 37.9 million tonnes in 2024**. Meanwhile, **global temperatures breached the 1.5°C mark in 2024**, exceeding the Paris Agreement threshold. According to *Nature Climate Change*, even a **single year at this level could mark long-term damage**.

2. **The balance between growth and protection:** India must act cautiously. It must protect the **fragile Arctic ecosystem** while using trade benefits wisely. This is a **critical policy dilemma**—how to avoid accelerating climate disaster while staying economically competitive.

Geopolitical Partnerships and Regional Strategy

1. **Russia as a Natural Partner:** Russia has a long Arctic coastline and strong maritime capacity. During the **Modi-Putin summit**, both countries agreed to form a **working group on the NSR**. The **Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor** can serve as a gateway to **Russian Arctic ports like Pevek, Tiksi, and Sabetta**.

2. **Risks of Aligning Too Closely:** However, close cooperation with Russia could imply support for **China’s Polar Silk Road**, part of its **Belt and Road Initiative**. This would let China bypass the **Malacca Strait** and gain greater control over Arctic routes.

3. **Balancing Global Powers:** On the other hand, aligning with the **U.S. might limit access** to Russian Arctic resources. The ideal but difficult approach is to **engage both blocs**. India should also partner with **Japan and South Korea**, who share concerns about **China-Russia dominance**. Together, they can push for a **more equitable Arctic Council**.

Looking Ahead

The **Arctic Circle India Forum on May 3–4, 2025**, in New Delhi offers a key opportunity. India can use it to **refine its Arctic policy**, build partnerships, host stakeholder talks, and perhaps **appoint a 'polar ambassador'** to represent its interests.

Question for practice:

Examine how India is balancing its economic, strategic, and environmental interests in the Arctic region amid the opening of the Northern Sea Route.

Legal Challenges of False Marriage Promises Under New Law

Source: The post Legal Challenges of False Marriage Promises Under New Law has been created, based on the article **"Section 69 of the BNS is redundant"** published in **"The Hindu"** on 23rd April 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Parliament (Law and Justice)

Context: The legal treatment of sexual relationships based on a false promise of marriage has sparked debate. Critics argue the law sometimes undermines women's consent and is misused. Despite expectations of reform, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 introduced a new Section 69 addressing this issue separately from the definition of rape.

For detailed information on **On the crime of 'false promise to marry'** [read this article here](#)

Judicial Limits on False Promise Cases

1. Intent to Marry Must Be Absent from the Start: The **Supreme Court** has clarified that not all unfulfilled marriage promises amount to rape. In *Anurag Soni v. The State of Chhattisgarh (2019)*, the Court ruled that **rape is only established if the man had no intention to marry right from the beginning**. If circumstances changed later, it does not constitute rape.

2. Consent Must Be Directly Tied to Deceit: Courts have stated that when a woman continues a long-term relationship, the **physical intimacy must be clearly caused by the false promise**. In *Rajnish Singh @ Soni v. State of U.P. (2025)*, a 15-year relationship was found **consensual and not induced by deception**, especially as the woman often portrayed herself as the man's wife.

3. Married Woman's Consent Not Based on Misconception: In *Abhishek Arjariya v. The State of Madhya Pradesh (2025)*, the High Court ruled that if a woman is **already married**, then her consent on the basis of a false promise of marriage does **not fall under "misconception of fact"**. The FIR was quashed accordingly.

Understanding Section 69 of the BNS

1. New Standalone Offence Introduced: **Section 69 punishes sexual intercourse by deceit**, including false promises of marriage, identity suppression, or false job offers. The punishment may extend to **10 years in prison and a fine**. This offence **did not exist in the Indian Penal Code (IPC)**.

2. Consent and Rape Definitions Remain Unchanged: Despite introducing Section 69, the **BNS retains the previous definitions**. Section 63 defines rape, while Section 28 explains that **consent obtained through "misconception of fact"**—which includes false promises—**vitiates valid consent**.

Overlap and Legal Concerns

1. Redundancy of Section 69: Since false promise of marriage is already covered under **"rape" via misconception of fact**, **Section 69 becomes redundant**. It introduces a **lesser punishment for the same act**, leading to legal confusion.

2. Violation of Article 14 Likely: Section 69 lacks a **non-obstante clause** or exception under Section 63. This creates **legal overlap**, which could violate **Article 14 of the Constitution** (equality before law).

Need for Procedural Caution

1. **Preliminary Inquiry Advised:** As courts increasingly quash such FIRs, it is advised that **police conduct preliminary inquiries**. This would **prevent hardship**, reduce misuse, and save **judicial resources**.

Question for practice:

Examine the judicial and legal challenges associated with Section 69 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 in cases of false promise of marriage.

