

9 PM Current Affairs Weekly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination



सत्यमेव जयते

UPSC

4th Week

July. 2025

Features :

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

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Streamlining adoption in India while ensuring every child's safety

Source: The post Streamlining adoption in India while ensuring every child's safety has been created, based on the article “Should India relax its adoption procedures?” published in “**The Hindu**” on 25th July 2025

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

Context: India faces a deep mismatch in adoption: for every child legally available, **13 prospective parents** wait. The Supreme Court has urged CARA to accelerate the process. Experts Aloma Lobo and Smriti Gupta examine if procedural reforms are needed or if deeper systemic changes are necessary for ethical, effective adoption.

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

Understanding the Real Cause of Delays

1. **More Demand Than Supply:** The core issue is that the **number of parents far exceeds** the number of children available for adoption, especially **infants in normal health**, which causes long waiting periods.
2. **Children with Special Needs Overlooked:** Children who are **older or have special needs** are available but often not chosen, despite being ready for immediate adoption.
3. **Procedures Are Not the Bottleneck:** CARA's procedures are essential to **prevent trafficking**. Delays arise from the lack of adoptable children, not from bureaucratic hurdles.

Gaps in Identifying Adoptable Children

1. **Limited Screening of Shelter Children:** Only children in adoption agencies are considered for adoption. **Thousands in child shelters** are never evaluated due to **apathy, poor training**, or lack of resources.
2. **Technology-Driven Identification:** Some NGOs digitise records using **22 criteria** to flag potentially adoptable children. Then, **social workers verify each case** and forward eligible ones to the **Child Welfare Committee**.
3. **District-Level Action Needed:** Efforts to bring children into the legal adoption system must be **localised at district level**, where shelters operate and decisions can be made quickly.

Clarifying the Orphan Misconception

1. **Overstated Orphan Statistics:** While the **World Orphan Report (2020)** estimates **3.1 crore orphans** in India, many of these children have **extended families** or guardians.
2. **Street Children Are Not Always Orphaned:** Children seen on the streets often **belong to families**. They can't be adopted unless they are **legally relinquished or abandoned**.
3. **Legal Evaluation is Crucial:** Each child's background must be carefully studied before declaring them **legally free for adoption**. This ensures ethical placement and avoids family separation.

Need for Strong Safeguards Against Trafficking

1. **Risk of Black Markets:** High demand for babies has led to cases where children are **informally given away**, bypassing legal adoption routes.
2. **Checks and Balances Must Stay:** To protect children, **rigorous screening of adoptive parents** and children must remain. These safeguards ensure genuine and safe placements.
3. **Legal Route is the Only Safe Option:** Regardless of age, all children must be routed through the **legal adoption system** to prevent trafficking and unethical placements.

Challenges in Special Needs and Older Child Adoption

1. **Unprepared Parents Returning Children:** Some parents choose from the **immediate placement list**, often including special needs children, but **lack preparedness**, leading to **child returns**.
2. **Shifting Attitudes Among Parents:** There is growing acceptance of **older and differently-abled children**, but many adoptive parents still need proper support and understanding.
3. **Training and Counseling Are Lacking:** Unlike international practices, India lacks **mandatory training**. Home studies are often **basic intake forms**, not deep assessments of motivation or readiness.

Reforms for an Ethical and Inclusive Adoption System

1. **Retain Essential Safeguards:** Experts agree that **procedures must not be diluted**. They are vital to protect children and ensure ethical adoption.
2. **Widen the Adoption Pool:** Focus must shift to **identifying more adoptable children**, especially in shelters, through structured screening at local levels.
3. **Strengthen Parent Preparedness:** Mandatory **training and motivation checks** for prospective parents are crucial to ensure committed, long-term care for adopted children.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons behind delays in India's adoption process despite high demand from prospective parents.

India UK trade deal raises major public health concerns

Source: The post India UK trade deal raises major public health concerns has been created, based on the article "The India-U.K. FTA spells a poor deal for public health" published in "The Hindu" on 25th July 2025

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

Context: India and the United Kingdom signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on July 24, 2025, during PM Modi's U.K. visit. While this move promises economic benefits, it has raised public health concerns in India due to the expected influx of cheap, unhealthy food products from the U.K.

For detailed information on **India-UK Free Trade Agreement 2025** [read this article here](#)

Health Risks of Imported HFSS Products

1. **Increased Access to Unhealthy Food:** The FTA allows tariff-free entry of U.K.-made products like chocolates, biscuits, and soft drinks. These fall under High Fat, Sugar, and Salt (HFSS) categories, which pose long-term health threats. Cheaper prices and aggressive marketing may worsen consumption patterns.
2. **Mexico's Cautionary Example:** Mexico's experience after the NAFTA deal showed a surge in HFSS consumption, leading to obesity and diabetes. It was only after introducing policies like soda taxes and warning labels in 2014 that the trend reversed. India risks repeating the same mistake.
3. **Poor Regulation in India:** Unlike the U.K., India lacks effective regulation of HFSS marketing. The U.K. has already announced a full ban on paid online ads for HFSS products starting October 2025 and uses a traffic light labelling system to guide healthy choices. India's regulatory mechanisms are weaker and poorly enforced.

Weaknesses in India's Food Advertising and Labelling

1. **Ineffective Industry Self-Regulation:** In India, self-regulation by the Advertising Standards Council is not effective. Government codes exist but are poorly implemented, and penalties for violations are rare. Use of cartoon mascots and celebrity endorsements normalise unhealthy consumption, despite celebrities admitting they don't use the products.
2. **Pending Mandatory Warning Labels:** India has delayed implementing warning labels on HFSS products. Though proposed in 2022, amendments remain on paper. After a Public Interest Litigation in April 2025, the Supreme Court ordered time-bound action. However, the preference for 'star ratings' over clear warnings persists, likely due to industry pressure.
3. **Expert Support for Strong Labelling:** A position statement by 29 organisations in June 2025 demanded mandatory warning labels for HFSS and Ultra Processed Food (UPF), citing their adverse health effects. The Chilean model using black octagonal labels is considered more effective than India's current proposals.

Lifestyle Diseases on the Rise

1. **Growing Obesity and NCD Burden:** The Lancet's March 2025 study revealed rising obesity globally. In India, HFSS and UPF consumption grew at 13.3% CAGR from 2011–21. Consequently, obesity, diabetes, and hypertension are increasing among all age groups, especially children and adolescents.
2. **Link Between Trade and Health:** Trade and treaties are economically significant but can indirectly fuel non-communicable diseases. The concept of *Commercial Determinants of Health* highlights how commercial actions affect public health. Without checks, FTAs could worsen the NCD crisis.

Future Trade Deals and Public Health Safeguards

1. **Upcoming FTAs Pose Similar Risks:** India may sign the India-European FTA (TEPA) in October 2025, with more trade deals expected. These could bring economic benefits but also enable entry of harmful food products. Without safeguards, FTAs could become Trojan horses for lifestyle diseases.
2. **Need for Balanced Policy:** Economic gains must be balanced with strong public health protections. Restrictions on food marketing and mandatory labelling should be part of all FTAs. Regulatory mechanisms must be incorporated during legal drafting stages of such agreements.

Call for Immediate Action

1. **Policy Interventions Required:** India should act swiftly to mitigate the health impact of the India-U.K. FTA. The Economic Survey 2024-25 and Dietary Guidelines 2024 advocate for strong measures. Mandatory warning labels and regulation of HFSS ads are urgently needed.
2. **Role of Schools and Public Awareness:** Initiatives like sugar and oil boards in schools are useful but should be expanded to include broader HFSS awareness. Unhealthy packaged foods must be banned in school and college canteens.
3. **Urgency of Public Health Engagement:** Public health authorities must actively engage in trade policy discussions. With lifestyle diseases affecting all age groups, the time to act is now to protect the health of future generations.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the India UK Free Trade Agreement could impact public health in India.

International Court declares climate action a legal global obligation

Source: The post International Court declares climate action a legal global obligation has been created, based on the article “ICJ’s climate ruling” published in “Indian Express” on 25th July 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Environment and GS Paper 2- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Context: In response to a 2022 UN General Assembly resolution, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has delivered an *advisory opinion* stating that climate action is a legal obligation under international law. This landmark interpretation may reshape global climate governance and trigger legal challenges against countries failing to mitigate emissions.

Legal Foundations and Scope of the Ruling

1. **Climate treaties as legal obligations:** The ICJ examined major climate treaties — the UNFCCC (1994), Kyoto Protocol (1997), and Paris Agreement (2015) — and affirmed that climate action is not optional. Countries are legally bound to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under these frameworks.

2. **Additional environmental treaties considered:** The court also reviewed treaties like UNCLOS, the Montreal Protocol, the Convention on Biodiversity, and the Convention to Combat Desertification, asserting that they reinforce climate-related obligations.

3. **Specific obligations for developed countries:** Annex I countries of the UNFCCC must lead emission reductions and support developing countries through financial and technological transfers. Their responsibilities are more stringent due to their historical emissions.

4. **Accountability for private sector actions:** The ruling extends liability to governments for failing to regulate private actors. If states neglect to prevent environmentally harmful corporate behavior, they could be held responsible.

Clarifying Legal Consequences for Non-Compliance

1. **Internationally wrongful acts and reparations:** The ICJ stated that failing climate obligations constitutes an internationally wrongful act. Affected nations, referred to as “injured states,” may claim full reparation, not just compensation.

2. **Broadening liability beyond borders:** Countries could face legal consequences for actions causing cross-border climate damage, even if these actions stem from private businesses under their jurisdiction.

3. **Recognition of loss and damage:** The court endorsed the concept of “loss and damage,” bolstering the claim that developed nations must help vulnerable countries recover from climate impacts.

4. **Rejection of symbolic compliance:** The ICJ clarified that initiating limited climate action is insufficient. The scale and seriousness of efforts can be scrutinized to judge actual compliance.

Potential Global Impact and Precedents

1. **Strengthening climate justice narratives:** The opinion strengthens the case of developing nations seeking accountability and action from industrialized countries. It transforms climate responsibility into a legal, not just policy, demand.

2. **Influencing national and global courts:** Though advisory and non-binding, this opinion is the most authoritative legal interpretation yet. It will likely influence decisions in domestic and international climate-related cases.

3. **Triggering litigation against polluters:** The ruling is expected to fuel lawsuits against both countries and corporations. Courts may now admit climate-related liability claims grounded in this ICJ opinion.

4. **Pressure on global climate negotiations:** By highlighting the failure of countries to meet their obligations, the opinion adds urgency to global climate talks, especially where credibility has declined due to unmet targets.

Limitations and Legal Tensions

1. **Non-binding nature of the opinion:** The ruling is advisory and does not itself enforce penalties. Other courts and states must choose how to apply or interpret it in practice.

2. **Conflict with existing frameworks:** Under the Paris Agreement, countries are free to determine their climate actions. The ICJ's emphasis on the *sufficiency* of action could contradict this flexibility.

3. **Likely legal pushback from developed nations:** The assertion of liability and reparation may be challenged by industrialized countries, which have historically resisted binding financial responsibilities for climate impacts.

4. **Unclear future implementation:** The practical impact will depend on how courts, governments, and litigants use the opinion. It sets a legal foundation, but enforcement is not guaranteed.

Implications for the Future of Climate Accountability

1. **Recognition of legal responsibility:** For the first time, a top international court has declared that climate action is a legal obligation with enforceable consequences.

2. **Reinforcement of developing countries' demands:** The ruling validates long-standing demands from vulnerable nations for financial and technological support, and possibly reparations, from richer polluters.

3. **Legal transformation of climate diplomacy:** The decision may shift climate discussions from political negotiations to legal obligations, enhancing the potential for meaningful global action.

Question for practice:

Examine how the ICJ's advisory opinion strengthens legal accountability for climate action under international law.

From Kargil to Pahalgam India Reinvents Its Security Doctrine

Source: The post From Kargil to Pahalgam India Reinvents Its Security Doctrine has been created, based on the article "Kargil, Pahalgam and a revamp of the security strategy" published in "The Hindu" on 26th July 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Security challenges.

Context: Marking the 26th anniversary of the Kargil War, the article reflects on India's evolving military and counter-terrorism strategies. Recent events, including the 2025 Pahalgam terror attack and India's swift retaliation through Operation Sindoor, demonstrate how lessons from Kargil have shaped a stronger, more assertive national security posture.

Kargil War: A Turning Point in Indian Defence Strategy

1. **War Amid Nuclear Tensions:** The 1999 Kargil war was fought in a complex backdrop—India had just declared itself a nuclear state, followed by Pakistan's nuclear tests. The presence of nuclear weapons raised fears of escalation, making it the first war under a nuclear overhang.

2. Political and Military Vulnerability: At the time, India faced economic sanctions, political instability, and neglected defence modernisation. Military preparedness was weak due to prolonged focus on insurgencies in Kashmir and the North-East.

3. Lessons from Tactical Gaps: Kargil revealed severe intelligence lapses and operational unpreparedness. Lack of real-time aerial surveillance, inadequate artillery, poor logistical support, and absence of high-altitude gear caused early setbacks and highlighted urgent needs for reform.

4. Wake-Up Call for Policy Reforms: The war became a foundational event for change, leading to institutional reforms, a push for military modernisation, and deeper focus on joint operational capability.

Structural and Strategic Reforms Post-Kargil

1. Strengthening Intelligence Architecture: Post-Kargil, new agencies like the Defence Intelligence Agency (2002) and NTRO (2004) were created. Intelligence coordination between RAW, IB, and military wings improved, and the NSA became central to strategic decision-making.

2. Military Modernisation and Doctrinal Shift: The war catalysed reforms in equipment, strategy, and readiness. The “Cold Start Doctrine” enabled quick and limited mobilisations. Mountain warfare capabilities were enhanced, including the creation of a dedicated Mountain Corps.

3. Integrated Defence Command and Leadership: The shortcomings prompted greater synergy among armed forces, resulting in the appointment of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in 2019 and steps toward integrated theatre commands for unified warfighting.

4. Focus on Indigenous Defence Capabilities: India emphasised self-reliance and acquisition of cutting-edge platforms: Rafale jets, Apache and Chinook helicopters, S-400 systems, and indigenous weapons like BrahMos missiles and advanced artillery systems.

India's Long Battle Against Terrorism

1. Initial Years of Restraint: Despite Kargil's impact, India showed restraint during major terror events like the IC-814 hijacking (1999), Parliament attack (2001), and 26/11 Mumbai attacks (2008), where no significant counteraction was taken.

2. Turning Point: Surgical and Air Strikes: The 2016 Uri attack prompted surgical strikes across the LoC, marking a strategic shift. This was reinforced after the 2019 Pulwama attack, when the IAF struck a JeM camp in Balakot—India's first cross-border air strike since 1971.

3. New Threshold After Pahalgam: The 2025 Pahalgam attack, which killed 26 tourists, led to Operation Sindoor. Over four days, India struck 9 terror bases and 11 military airfields in Pakistan, including a key nuclear facility. Pakistan quickly requested a ceasefire.

From Restraint to Deterrence: India's New Security Posture

1. Assertive Response as a New Norm: India's shift from restraint to proactive deterrence is now evident. The rapid and effective execution of Operation Sindoor showcased its upgraded conventional and strategic capabilities.

2. Clarity in Strategic Messaging: India's recent actions send a firm signal to Pakistan and the global community: terrorism will meet decisive retaliation. Future misadventures will face overwhelming force.

3. Preparedness and Vigilance Going Forward: Despite major gains, the article warns that India must remain alert. The transformation from Kargil to Pahalgam proves progress, but also underscores that complacency is not an option.

Question for practice:

Examine how the lessons from the Kargil War have shaped India's current military and counter-terrorism strategy.

M.S. Swaminathan's Vision Transformed Mangrove Conservation Globally

Source: The post M.S. Swaminathan's Vision Transformed Mangrove Conservation Globally has been created, based on the article "The scientist who made 'mangroves' a buzzword" published in "The Hindu" on 26th July 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Environment (Mangrove Conservation)

Context: Mangroves, once valued mainly by coastal communities, are now recognised globally for their role in climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and biodiversity conservation. This shift began in the late 1980s, driven largely by the efforts of M.S. Swaminathan, who highlighted their importance in addressing climate change.

Pioneering Climate Advocacy

- 1. Swaminathan's Tokyo Address (1989):** At a 1989 Tokyo conference, Swaminathan stressed how climate change would cause rising sea levels and salinisation of coastal lands, leading to food and livelihood loss. He called for sustainable mangrove management as a key solution.
- 2. Three-Pillar Framework:** His advocacy was rooted in ecology, economics, and equity. He promoted using mangrove genes to develop salt-tolerant crops, aiming for food security amid rising sea levels.
- 3. Institutional Efforts and Leadership:** He played a key role in establishing the International Society for Mangrove Ecosystems (ISME) in 1990, serving as its Founding President until 1993, thereby laying the groundwork for global mangrove advocacy.

Global Momentum and Conservation Tools

- 1. Charter for Mangroves:** Swaminathan co-authored the Charter for Mangroves, incorporated into the World Charter for Nature (1992), which remains foundational for mangrove conservation worldwide.
- 2. ISME's Transformational Work:** ISME redefined perceptions of mangroves by documenting their ecological and economic value. It organised workshops, published restoration manuals, and developed the World Mangrove Atlas.
- 3. Role of Applied Research:** ISME encouraged applied research, trained diverse stakeholders, and emerged as a hub for mangrove-related knowledge products.

Scientific Infrastructure and International Outreach

- 1. GLOMIS Database:** Swaminathan also contributed to building the Global Mangrove Database and Information System (GLOMIS), which documented mangrove research, experts, and genetic data.
- 2. Regional Genetic Resource Centres:** A 1992 study across nine countries identified 23 mangrove sites to form a global network of Mangrove Genetic Resource Centres, which are now government-managed protected areas.

India's Shift in Mangrove Management

- 1. Colonial Legacy and Clear-Felling:** Although India has managed mangroves since 1783, the colonial practice of clear-felling persisted until the 1980 Forest Conservation Act. Restoration efforts under this system yielded poor results.
- 2. Scientific Breakthroughs by MSSRF:** Swaminathan's foundation showed that biophysical changes, not community use, caused mangrove degradation. It led to developing the hydro-ecological "fishbone canal method" of restoration.
- 3. Government Adoption and Scaling:** The success of this method led to its adoption across multiple states. In 2000, a Ministry evaluation recommended the approach nationally, resulting in greater public investment.
- 4. Disaster Mitigation Validation:** Mangroves' protective role during the 1999 Odisha super cyclone and 2004 tsunami further reinforced their importance and accelerated global restoration efforts.

Measurable Gains and Recognition

- 1. Increase in Mangrove Cover:** According to the *India State of Forest Report 2023*, mangrove cover reached 4,991.68 sq. km, or 0.15% of India's total geographical area. This marks a 16.68 sq. km increase since 2019.
- 2. World Mangrove Day Reflection:** Observed on July 26, the day underscores progress in mangrove conservation and highlights the impact of sustained efforts pioneered by Swaminathan and institutional partners.

Question for practice:

Discuss the role of M.S. Swaminathan in transforming mangrove conservation at national and global levels.

India simplifies recovering unclaimed money across multiple financial assets

Source: The post India simplifies recovering unclaimed money across multiple financial assets has been created, based on the article "Stumbling through the unclaimed assets maze" published in "Businessline" on 26th July 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Indian Economy

Context: The article highlights the growing burden of unclaimed financial assets in India, triggered by forgetfulness, red tape, and the complex process of transmission after an investor's death. It discusses the magnitude of the problem, the regulatory steps taken, and the need for empathetic reforms to ease the claiming process.

Magnitude and Spread of Unclaimed Balances

- 1. Unclaimed Bank Deposits:** Bank deposits remain the largest pool of unclaimed assets. As of March 2025, the Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund held ₹97,545 crore, up 24% from ₹78,212 crore the previous year.
- 2. Equity and Mutual Fund Assets:** Equity investments show rising unclaimed balances. SEBI's Investor Education and Protection Fund held ₹8,108 crore in unclaimed dividends by March 2024. Shares in unclaimed suspense accounts were worth ₹12,000 crore. Mutual funds had ₹918 crore in unclaimed dividends and ₹402.8 crore in redemptions by FY24.
- 3. Insurance and Provident Fund Contributions:** As of March 2024, unclaimed insurance amounts stood at ₹20,062 crore. The Employees' Provident Fund reported unclaimed balances of ₹8,505.23 crore in FY24, a sharp rise from ₹1,638.37 crore in FY19.

4. Other Investment Vehicles: Apart from these, unknown sums lie in REITs, InVITs, company fixed deposits, and small savings. Collectively, unclaimed balances have crossed ₹1.47 lakh crore and are still growing.

Regulatory Measures to Reclaim Assets

1. Steps by the RBI and SEBI: RBI has mandated all bank branches to support KYC updates, video identification, and allow business correspondents to activate dormant accounts. The UDGM portal helps investors view DEA-transferred funds. Banks must disclose unclaimed deposits on their websites.

2. Equity and Insurance Regulations: SEBI transfers unclaimed shares/dividends after seven years to IEPF, accessible via its website. IRDAI requires insurers to shift policy dues pending over 10 years to the Senior Citizens Welfare Fund, claimable for 25 years.

3. Mutual Fund and EPF Norms: While mutual funds and EPF accounts also allow claims, the documentation process remains cumbersome, especially for heirs of deceased investors.

Root Causes of Persisting Problem

1. Investor Negligence: Dormant accounts often result from investors failing to close accounts or update addresses. These can be addressed through digital tracking and portals.

2. Transmission After Death: A major cause of unclaimed assets is the complex process of transferring assets of deceased individuals. Heirs are often deterred by documentation demands.

3. Documentation and KYC Mismatches: Discrepancies in names and signatures across KYC documents add to heirs' difficulties. Physical shareholding further complicates the dematerialization and claim process.

Reforming the Claiming Process

1. Empathy in Customer Service: Banks and financial institutions must handle transmission requests with empathy. Spelling or signature mismatches should be treated leniently and not as fraud risks.

2. Simplification and Risk Categorisation: Accounts can be classified into high-, medium-, and low-risk categories. Low-risk accounts can follow lighter claim protocols. This reduces unnecessary burden.

3. Centralised Claim Portal: A unified digital portal should be created to handle all claims for the deceased. It should allow document uploads and notify all relevant financial bodies.

4. Regulatory Focus on User Hardship: To reduce unclaimed balances, regulators must first understand and simplify the practical challenges faced by legal heirs and elderly investors.

Question for practice:

Examine the key reasons behind the growing volume of unclaimed financial assets in India and suggest measures to simplify the process of reclaiming them.

Russia officially recognises Taliban government after policy shift

Source: The post Russia officially recognises Taliban government after policy shift has been created, based on the article "Understanding Russia's Taliban gauntlet" published in "The Hindu" on 28th July 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations

Context: On July 3, 2025, Russia officially recognised the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), marking a dramatic shift from its earlier stance. This follows the accreditation of the Taliban's ambassador in Moscow and reflects changing geopolitical calculations, despite unresolved concerns over terrorism and regional stability.

Historical Hostility and Policy Shift

- 1. Russia's Past Opposition to the Taliban:** From 1996 to 2001, Russia viewed the Taliban as hostile. It withdrew its diplomatic mission and supported the Northern Alliance against Taliban forces. The Taliban's support for Chechen separatists further deepened animosity.
- 2. Post-9/11 Alignment with the West:** Russia aligned with the U.S. after the 9/11 attacks, supporting UN sanctions and Operation Enduring Freedom. The Taliban was added to Russia's list of terrorist organisations in 2003.
- 3. Gradual Rapprochement through Pakistan:** In the early 2010s, Russia initiated informal contact with the Taliban via Pakistan. This helped protect Russian interests, especially in countering the Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-K) and drug trafficking.

Emerging Engagement and Diplomatic Calculations

- 1. Diplomatic Involvement Before 2021 Takeover:** Russia hosted Taliban representatives in multilateral talks, balancing relations between the Afghan government and the Taliban. This strengthened its regional influence amid U.S. withdrawal.
- 2. Continued Presence After Taliban Takeover:** Unlike many countries, Russia kept its embassy operational after August 2021. It expressed confidence in the Taliban's ability to govern, despite mounting security risks.
- 3. Security Challenges Despite Cooperation:** IS-K attacks, including one on the Russian Embassy in Kabul (2022) and the Moscow concert hall (2024), have compromised Russian interests. Yet Russia hopes Afghanistan can facilitate its exports to South and Southeast Asia.

Recognition Based on Realpolitik

- 1. Recognition Driven by Strategic Assessment:** Russia views the Taliban as the only viable political force in Afghanistan. This perception led to their partial de-listing as a terrorist organisation in April 2025, although legal ambiguity remains.
- 2. Lack of Immediate Gains:** The recognition is largely symbolic, with no major strategic benefits yet. Despite internal support for further engagement, Moscow's future actions depend on tangible counter-terrorism outcomes.
- 3. Potential Regional Impact:** Russia's move could influence other nations, including China and Central Asian states. Its leniency on governance standards may set a new precedent for pragmatic diplomacy in the region.

Implications for India

- 1. India's Measured Diplomatic Approach:** India has also initiated dialogue with the Taliban, focusing on terrorism concerns, including Kashmir. However, it remains cautious and avoids formal recognition.
- 2. Continued Engagement Without Recognition:** New Delhi is likely to maintain humanitarian and trade cooperation with the IEA. Its Afghanistan policy remains rooted in strategic engagement without legitimising the Taliban regime.

Question for practice:

Discuss the factors that led Russia to officially recognise the Taliban-led Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in 2025 despite its historical opposition.

Doctors Must Lead the Way in Medical Innovation

Source: The post Doctors Must Lead the Way in Medical Innovation has been created, based on the article “**The need for doctor-led innovation**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 28th July 2025

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

Context: Despite rapid advancements in AI and digital health, **doctors remain sidelined** in healthcare innovation. Entrepreneurs and engineers dominate this space, while medical professionals are often limited to service roles. To meet current healthcare challenges, doctors must be **empowered as innovators**, not just caregivers, to shape meaningful and clinically relevant solutions.

The Need for Doctor-Led Innovation

1. **Clinical Expertise as a Foundation:** Doctors deeply understand patient care and clinical systems. This **insight is essential** for creating practical medical solutions.
2. **Systemic Challenges in Healthcare:** Rising **chronic diseases**, ageing populations, and limited resources demand new approaches. Doctors can **design targeted solutions** for these problems.
3. **Ensuring Practical Applicability:** When led by doctors, innovation aligns better with clinical workflows, ensuring **effective integration** in real healthcare settings.

Barriers Hindering Medical Entrepreneurship

1. **Time Constraints and Workload:** Medical duties leave **little room for innovation**. Heavy workloads and administrative tasks dominate doctors' schedules.
2. **Culture of Caution:** Medicine emphasises safety and predictability. This **conflicts with the risk-taking** and uncertainty often required in entrepreneurship.
3. **Lack of Entrepreneurial Training:** Doctors receive **no formal education** in finance, product design, or commercialisation, which limits their ability to build innovations.
4. **Perception of Innovation:** Many believe innovation is solely for engineers. This **misconception discourages** doctors from entering the field.

Rethinking the Meaning of Entrepreneurship

1. **Conventional Roles in Healthcare:** Opening a clinic is entrepreneurial but **does not disrupt existing systems** or advance medical science.
2. **True Medical Innovation:** Real progress means creating **new therapies, devices, or digital tools** that transform healthcare delivery and outcomes.

Reforming Medical Education and Ecosystems

1. **Curriculum Integration:** Entrepreneurship, digital health, and **bio-design** should be taught in medical schools, alongside clinical subjects.

2. **Exposure to Innovation:** Doctors need internships in biotech incubators and hospital **innovation hubs** to understand product development.

3. **Support Systems and Mentorship:** Mentorship and **government support** are essential for navigating regulation and financing. Dedicated platforms should connect doctors to experts.

India's Growing Support Ecosystem

1. **Policy and Institutional Aid:** BIRAC, **Startup India**, and Atal Innovation Mission offer funding and regulatory help for medical startups.

2. **Incubation and R&D Facilities:** C-CAMP, Venture Center, and Bangalore Bioinnovation Centre provide **lab support, mentorship, and seed funding**.

3. **Academic and Industrial Collaboration:** IITs, IISc, and the **India Health Fund** enable doctors to partner on research targeting infectious and chronic diseases.

Shaping the Future of Healthcare

1. **Redefining the Doctor's Role:** Doctors should lead innovation. Short-term **product development courses** can aid this transition.

2. **Normalising Failure: Failure must be de-stigmatised.** It offers lessons that fuel future breakthroughs.

3. **Leadership in Innovation:** Doctors must own the future of healthcare. The **white coat should symbolise** both care and creativity.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons why doctors remain on the periphery of healthcare innovation and suggest measures to empower them as medical entrepreneurs.

Oh

GLOF threaten Himalayan region and demand action

Source: The post GLOF threaten Himalayan region and demand action has been created, based on the article "**How is India preparing against GLOF events?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 28th July 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1- Important Geophysical phenomena.

Context: On July 8, Nepal faced a major Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) triggered by a burst in a supra-glacial lake in Tibet. This event destroyed a China-built bridge and disrupted power supply in Nepal. With rising temperatures and increasing GLOFs, the need for early warning systems and regional collaboration is urgent.

Rising GLOF Incidents and Their Impact on Nepal

1. **Recent GLOFs and Infrastructure Damage:** A GLOF event on July 8 caused a flash flood along the Lende river, destroying a China-built bridge and damaging Nepal's inland port at Rasuwagadhi. Four hydropower plants were rendered unusable, cutting off 8% of Nepal's power.

2. **Lack of Early Warning and Coordination:** Nepalese officials reported no prior warning from Chinese authorities. Despite visible surface shrinkage of the Tibetan lake, no alert system exists across the border.

3. **Recurring GLOF Events Across Nepal:** Another GLOF occurred in Mustang district the same day. Earlier events were recorded in Humla (two GLOFs in 2024) and Solukhumbu (destruction of Thame village), highlighting the recurring nature of these disasters.

4. Past Events and Mitigation Measures: GLOFs in 1981, 1985, and 1998 showed the region's long-standing vulnerability. Nepal has worked to reduce water levels in high-risk lakes like Imja Tsho and Tsho Rolpa, though these efforts are extremely challenging due to terrain and altitude.

India's GLOF Risk Landscape

1. Types of High-Risk Lakes in the IHR: India's Himalayan region hosts 28,000 glacial lakes, mainly supraglacial and moraine-dammed types. These are vulnerable to meltwater pressure, avalanches, landslides, and earthquakes.

2. Environmental Conditions Raising Risk: With 2023 and 2024 being the hottest years, glacial melt has intensified. Over 7,500 Indian glacial lakes lie above 4,500 m, limiting monitoring to short summer periods.

3. Challenges in Monitoring and Early Detection: Due to inaccessibility and cost, weather and water stations are mostly absent. Remote sensing gives only surface change data, offering limited predictive value.

4. Impacts of Past GLOFs in India: The 2023 South Lhonak GLOF destroyed the Chungthang dam and caused silting, raising the Teesta riverbed. The 2013 Chorabari GLOF in Kedarnath led to massive fatalities and infrastructure loss.

India's Strategic Response to GLOF Threat

1. Shift to Risk Reduction Strategy: India's NDMA shifted from reactive response to proactive risk mitigation under the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction (CoDRR), involving central and state agencies.

2. National Programme and Scaling Plans: A \$20 million national programme identified 56 high-risk lakes, now expanded to 195. Scaling is planned post-16th Finance Commission's award (FY2027-31).

3. Five-Fold Programme Objectives: The strategy includes: risk assessment, installing AWWs, building early warning systems, drawing down water levels, and ensuring local community involvement.

4. Use of Advanced Technologies: Indian technologies like SAR interferometry (detecting micro slope changes) were promoted, but their broader application remains limited and urgently needed.

Implementation and Ground-Level Challenges

1. Successes and Challenges in Field Expeditions: Expeditions across Himalayan states conducted lake depth mapping, ice-core detection, and UAV-based surveys. Incidents of weather delays and cultural sensitivity highlighted local integration needs.

2. Installation of Monitoring Systems: Lakes in Sikkim now have stations sending 10-minute interval data and daily lake images. More such systems are planned, aiming to bridge critical data gaps.

3. Community Engagement and Manual Alert Systems: Community involvement proved essential for access and credibility. In the absence of automated alerts, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police have been tasked with manual early warnings.

4. Future Roadmap for GLOF Management: States are preparing for further expeditions post-monsoon, with a focus on sustained monitoring, enhanced technology deployment, and stronger inter-agency coordination.

Question for practice:

Discuss the growing threat of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) in the Himalayan region and the measures taken by Nepal and India to mitigate their impact.

Ayurvedic practitioners seeking modern medical powers threaten public health

Source: The post Ayurvedic practitioners seeking modern medical powers threaten public health has been created, based on the article “**The medical boundaries for AYUSH practitioners**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 29th July 2025

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

For detailed information on **Integrating modern and AYUSH System of Medicine** [read this article here](#)

Context: A social media debate between a hepatologist and a chess Grand Master reignited discussions on whether traditional medicine practitioners like Ayurvedic doctors should be called “doctors.” The core issue lies not in the title but in the legal scope of their medical practice and its consequences for public health.

Evolution of the Legal Framework

1. Early Committees and Differing Views: The 1946 Bhore Committee supported modern evidence-based medicine and recommended limiting traditional medicine. In contrast, the 1948 Committee on Indigenous Systems used Hindu nationalist rhetoric to defend Ayurveda, claiming its decline was due to foreign domination.

2. Governmental Recognition and Laws: While the Nehru era ignored formal recognition, the 1970 Indira Gandhi government enacted the Indian Medicine Central Council Act. It recognized Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani. This was replaced in 2020 by the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act.

3. Ayurvedic Curriculum Contradictions: The Ayurveda syllabus includes both metaphysical concepts like doshas and atmas and scientific ideas like anatomy and cell physiology. These frameworks clash fundamentally—making integrative medicine unfeasible due to irreconcilable foundations.

Prescription Rights and Rule 2(ee)

1. Legal Ambiguity and State Orders: Rule 2(ee) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules empowers states to allow non-MBBS practitioners to prescribe modern medicine. Many states have used this to authorize Ayurvedic and Unani doctors to prescribe antibiotics and other drugs.

2. Supreme Court Verdict of 1998: In *Dr. Mukhtiar Chand vs State of Punjab*, the Supreme Court ruled that prescribing allopathic drugs is inseparable from practicing modern medicine—effectively barring Ayurvedic practitioners from doing so.

3. Continued Defiance by States: Despite the judgment, states continue issuing orders allowing traditional practitioners to prescribe modern medicines, often challenged in courts by the Indian Medical Association. Consumer courts have also seen cases from patients misled about their doctors' qualifications.

Expanding Practice to Surgeries and Procedures

1. Question of Legally Permitted Procedures: There is growing concern over Ayurvedic practitioners being hired in hospitals for modern procedures due to cost-cutting. Whether they can perform critical interventions like intubation remains legally unresolved.

2. 2020 Notification on Surgeries: A government notification permits post-graduate Ayurvedic doctors to perform 58 surgeries, including gallbladder and appendix removal. Its constitutionality is under court review.

3. Implications for Use of Modern Drugs: If the notification stands, it raises the issue of whether Ayurvedic practitioners can legally use anaesthetics and antibiotics, which are necessary for such surgeries—posing significant risks to public health.

Politics, Identity, and Policy

1. Hindu Pride and Pseudoscience: The debate is politically charged, with both BJP and Congress embracing Hindu pride narratives to justify unscientific claims about ancient Indian medical prowess, such as “test-tube” Kauravas and flying machines.

2. Policy Shifts under Populist Pressure: The 2024 Congress manifesto promised support for all medical systems. This bipartisan populism dilutes the focus on evidence-based healthcare and enables the blending of pseudoscience into official policy.

3. Fiscal Costs and Public Risk: The government’s move to include AYUSH treatments under Ayushman Bharat, combined with ₹20,000 crore spent on AYUSH research with negligible scientific results, reflects poor accountability. Public health risks are rising while taxpayers bear the financial burden.

Question for practice:

Examine the legal, educational, and political challenges associated with allowing Ayurvedic practitioners to prescribe and perform modern medical treatments in India.

India navigates EU sanctions and energy trade challenges effectively

Source: The post India navigates EU sanctions and energy trade challenges effectively has been created, based on the article “India’s Russian oil worries” published in “businessline” on 29th July 2025

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

Context: The European Union's 18th sanctions package (July 2025) aims to cut Russian oil revenues, triggering concerns for major buyers like India. While India continues importing discounted Russian crude, the sanctions raise compliance and financing challenges, especially for Indian refiners exporting to Europe.

For detailed information on **India-Europe Relationship – Significance & Challenges** [read this article here](#)

India’s Position on EU Sanctions

1. India Rejects Unilateral Sanctions: India reiterated that it does not subscribe to unilateral sanctions, emphasizing its legal commitments and prioritizing energy security for its citizens. The Ministry of External Affairs highlighted the need to avoid double standards in energy trade.

2. Balanced Diplomatic Stance: India's approach reflects maturity in global energy diplomacy. It continues sourcing energy from multiple partners and stresses sovereignty and legality in its engagements, including with Russian suppliers.

3. Criticism of EU Measures: Companies like Nayara Energy have condemned the EU's move as unjust and unilateral, asserting their compliance with Indian laws. They criticized the sanctions as politically motivated and lacking legal basis.

Nature and Scope of New EU Sanctions

1. Price Cap and Enforcement: The EU has lowered the price cap on Russian crude to \$47.6 per barrel, 15% below the global average. This cap will be reviewed biannually and applies to all G7 and EU countries.

2. Expanded Product Ban: The sanctions now cover refined petroleum products like diesel and petrol derived from Russian crude—even when refined outside Russia, including in India—restricting their entry into the EU from January 2026.

3. Blacklisting and Compliance Pressure: Over 100 Russian shadow fleet vessels are blacklisted. Enhanced enforcement and scrutiny on shipping routes, intermediaries, and paperwork raise compliance burdens for global oil trade.

Implications for Indian Energy and Exports

1. Impact on Private Refineries: Private players like Nayara Energy, with Russian connections, are the most affected. They face reduced exports to Europe and increased regulatory scrutiny.

2. Decline in Fuel Exports to EU: India's diesel exports to Europe have already dropped from \$19.2 billion in FY24 to \$15 billion in FY25. An additional \$5 billion in exports could be at risk due to new rules.

3. Domestic Energy Security Maintained: India continues to benefit from discounted Russian crude, cushioning inflation and meeting domestic demand. Public refineries remain largely unaffected for now.

Financing and Operational Challenges

1. Stricter Financial Restrictions: The sanctions extend to financing, insurance, and shipping services related to oil transactions exceeding the price cap. EU/G7 entities are banned from providing such services, even for non-EU destinations.

2. Loss of Access to EU Financial Systems: Russian banks, refiners, and intermediaries face full transaction bans and asset freezes, disrupting traditional finance and trade structures.

3. Compliance Risks for Indian Players: Indian firms relying on Western financial systems or shipping services may face indirect impacts or secondary sanctions. Operational disruptions may follow if enforcement tightens further.

Strategic Takeaways for India

1. Need for Financial Autonomy: India's current dependence on Western financing and logistics for oil imports is a vulnerability. The sanctions highlight the urgency of building independent trade finance mechanisms.

2. Diversification and Maturity: India's diversified energy portfolio and ability to reroute exports reflect strategic depth. Its diplomatic and trade response underscores a growing voice in global energy affairs.

3. Long-Term Risk Management: While current disruptions are limited, evolving sanctions could increase risks. Strengthening strategic reserves and alternative financing systems is vital for future resilience.

Question for practice:

Examine how the European Union's latest sanctions on Russian oil affect India's energy security, exports, and financing mechanisms.

ICJ climate ruling reshapes India's policy debate

Source: The post ICJ climate ruling reshapes India's policy debate has been created, based on the article "A compass, not a verdict" published in "Indian Express" on 29th July 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Effect

Context: On July 23, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion declaring **climate change an existential threat**. Though not legally binding, the opinion has gained attention across India—from policymakers to students. It raises urgent legal and policy issues for countries balancing development and climate responsibility.

India's Position in Global Climate Diplomacy

- 1. India's Cautious Response:** India neither supported nor opposed the ICJ case initiated by Vanuatu. This reflects India's **strategic neutrality**, shaped by its unique developmental circumstances and global climate expectations.
- 2. Development Needs vs. Climate Action:** India still strives for **universal access to electricity, healthcare, and jobs**. Its **per capita emissions remain among the world's lowest**, with many still using biomass for cooking and facing erratic power supply.
- 3. Strong Domestic Commitments:** India aims for **50% of its electricity from renewables by 2030**. Emissions intensity is falling, afforestation has grown, and **electric buses now operate in cities** like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad.
- 4. Active Global Leadership:** India leads the **International Solar Alliance** and **Mission LiFE**. As G20 president, it ensured climate finance stayed on the global agenda, showing leadership despite limited historical emissions.

Significance of the ICJ Advisory Opinion

- 1. Legal Foundation of Climate Duties:** The opinion draws from **climate treaties, human rights law, the UN Charter, and the law of the sea**. It establishes that countries must **prevent harm, reduce emissions, adapt, and cooperate globally**.
- 2. Rights-Based Obligations:** Climate change is said to **violate rights to life, health, and housing**. States must act based on science and adopt strong national plans. **Legal pressure to strengthen actions** may follow.
- 3. Challenge to Polluting Subsidies:** Subsidies for fossil fuels are now under **legal as well as fiscal scrutiny**. The opinion questions their justification and **pushes for a shift to cleaner alternatives**.
- 4. Support for Equity Principles:** The ICJ reaffirms the **principle of common but differentiated responsibilities**, giving legal weight to India's claim that major emitters must bear more responsibility.

Emerging Legal and Policy Challenges for India

- 1. Legal Readiness:** Indian courts already treat environmental health as part of the **right to life**. The ICJ ruling may spur **new litigation**—both domestic and from vulnerable neighboring nations. Anticipating these is vital.
- 2. Weak Enforcement Systems:** India's environmental laws are often poorly implemented. **Pollution control agencies lack resources**. The ICJ has stressed due diligence, requiring stronger institutional capacity.
- 3. Subsidy Reform:** Fossil fuel subsidies help the poor but **hinder clean energy adoption**. India must **reform subsidy structures** to protect the poor while promoting sustainability.

Diplomatic and Ethical Considerations

- 1. Balancing Fairness and Ambition:** India must continue ambitious climate action while defending its **development needs**. Climate justice should not result in **unfair burdens** on poorer nations.

2. A New Climate Direction: The ICJ opinion ends the era of voluntary ambition. For India, the task ahead is to align **duty with dignity and ambition with justice**.

Question for practice:

Discuss the implications of the ICJ advisory opinion on India's climate policy and legal obligations.

Prosecuting traffickers is vital to end child trafficking

Source: The post Prosecuting traffickers is vital to end child trafficking has been created, based on the article **"Bihar's dark side — the hub of girl child trafficking"** published in **"The Hindu"** on 30th July 2025

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

Context: The alarming rise in child trafficking in Bihar, particularly through orchestras and sexual exploitation, has drawn national attention. Triggered by several recent rescues and a plea to the Patna High Court, the article examines the causes, system failures, and urgent need for action to dismantle trafficking networks.

For detailed information on **Govt. to help combat child trafficking** [read this article here](#)

Widening Scope of Child Trafficking in Bihar

1. Rising Cases and Rescue Operations: In 2024, Bihar police rescued 271 girls, many trafficked into orchestras or forced into sex work. In Saran district alone, 162 girls were rescued since January. Between March and June, Just Rights for Children (JRC) helped recover 116 girls from such troupes.

2. Orchestras as a Front for Exploitation: Girls were advertised as dancers but faced severe abuse, violence, and rape. Living conditions were inhumane—crowded, unhygienic, and oppressive.

3. Global and National Dimensions: Trafficking is among the largest global crimes. The ILO and UNICEF estimated that in 2024, around 138 million children were in labour, with 54 million in hazardous jobs. Women and children are particularly vulnerable.

Why Bihar Became a Trafficking Hub

1. Geographic and Social Vulnerabilities: Bihar's porous border with Nepal and its links to trafficking-prone States like West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh enable easy trafficking. Lack of oversight and social acceptance worsen the crisis.

2. Deceptive Promises and Cultural Exploitation: Traffickers exploit aspirations around music and dance, especially in States like West Bengal. Promises of marriage, jobs, and money lure girls. In Bihar's "orchestra belt," girls as young as 12 are sold for as little as ₹10,000.

3. Systemic Normalisation of Abuse: Girls are forced to dance to vulgar songs before intoxicated men and face rape or punishment if they resist. Society often turns a blind eye.

Legal Framework vs. Ground Reality

1. Robust Laws but Poor Implementation: India has a comprehensive legal framework to combat child trafficking and exploitation, including the **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act**, the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act**, the **Juvenile Justice Act**, the **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act**, the **Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act**, and relevant provisions under the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita**. However, conviction rates remain abysmally low. Cases are often filed as kidnappings or missing reports.

2. Institutional Gaps and Jurisdictional Failures: Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) lack resources and training. Multi-State investigations collapse due to bureaucratic delays and jurisdictional confusion.

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3. Post-Rescue Gaps and Repeat Exploitation: Many rescued girls are returned to the same families who sold them. Despite multiple rescues, orchestras continue to operate unchecked.

Urgent Measures and Judicial Action

1. Judicial Recognition and Call for Ban: Just Rights for Children petitioned the Patna High Court to ban minors in orchestras. The Court acknowledged the seriousness and directed the State to act.

2. Need for Strong Preventive Ecosystem: Prevention must begin at the village and school level. Panchayats should keep migration records. School absences should trigger alerts. Parents must be made aware of risks.

3. Transport and Enforcement Oversight: RPF's railway vigilance should extend to buses and private carriers. Staff should be trained to detect trafficking. AHTUs must have trained full-time officers with cross-border coordination powers.

Towards a Prosecution-Led Strategy

1. Role of Prosecution in Ending Exploitation

A recent C-Lab report across 24 States showed prosecution as the key to justice. NGOs, in coordination with law enforcement, rescued over 53,000 children and pursued legal action in each case.

2. Zero Tolerance and Long-Term Support

Prosecution must be swift, and rehabilitation must be State-supervised. Victims should not be returned to harmful environments. Compensation and legal action must be enforced rigorously.

3. Orchestra Regulation and Accountability

Orchestra groups must be mapped, monitored, and shut. Organisers, landlords, and exploiters must face prosecution and asset seizure. Labour Departments must inspect and report abuse.

The PICKET Strategy: A Way Forward

1. Policy and Institutional Strengthening: Strong laws must be supported by monitoring, prosecution, and rehabilitation by empowered institutions.

2. Convergence and Knowledge Sharing: Digital coordination and survivor insights are essential. Community awareness must be enhanced to detect trafficking.

3. Economic and Technological Deterrence: Make trafficking unviable. Use technology—heat maps, databases, and predictive tools—to track movements. States must share data and digitise records.

4. Justice as Prevention: Justice must be proactive. Dismantling the trafficking system is essential to prevent future harm. Laws exist—the challenge lies in political and administrative will.

Question for practice:

Discuss how systemic failures enable the continuation of child trafficking and exploitation despite existing legal frameworks.

Contract labour is harming productivity in formal manufacturing sector

Source: The post Contract labour is harming productivity in formal manufacturing sector has been created, based on the article "Adopt formalisation to power productivity growth" published in "The Hindu" on 30th July 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3 - Employment

Context: India's formal manufacturing sector has seen a steep rise in the use of contract labour. While intended to boost flexibility, this shift has raised concerns about **worker exploitation** and **reduced productivity**. A study based on ASI data (1999–2000 to 2018–19) examines the **negative impacts of contractualisation**.

Rising Contractualisation in Formal Manufacturing

- 1. Sharp Increase Across Industries:** The share of contract workers grew from **20% in 1999–2000 to 40.7% in 2022–23**, spanning all industries. This reflects a wider trend of **informalisation within the formal sector**.
- 2. Driven by Cost-Cutting, Not Flexibility:** Firms claim contractualisation helps with flexible hiring and access to skilled workers. However, findings show **cost avoidance is the key motive**, not genuine skill demand.
- 3. Lack of Legal Safeguards:** Contract workers, mostly hired through third parties, are excluded from protections under the **Industrial Disputes Act**, leaving them vulnerable to **arbitrary dismissals and retrenchment**.

Wage Inequality and Exploitation

- 1. Lower Wages Across Enterprise Types:** In 2018–19, contract workers earned **14.47% less** than regular workers. The wage gap was **31% in large**, **23% in medium**, and **12% in small** enterprises.
- 2. Deep Labour Cost Gaps:** Employers paid **24% less daily** to contract workers. In nine industries, costs were **less than 50%** of those for regular workers. In some, the gap reached **78% to 85%**, showing **severe exploitation**.
- 3. Weak Bargaining Power:** With limited legal support, contract workers have **low bargaining power**, making them more prone to **wage suppression** and job insecurity.

Impact on Labour Productivity

- 1. Lower Productivity in CLI Enterprises:** Contract labour-intensive (CLI) firms had **31% lower productivity** than regular labour-intensive (RLI) firms. The gap was **36% in small**, **23% in medium**, and **42% in labour-intensive** enterprises.
- 2. Lack of Workforce Stability:** Short-term contracts cause **high turnover** and discourage **training and innovation**, weakening long-term productivity.
- 3. Misaligned Incentives:** Third-party hiring leads to **principal-agent issues**, increasing chances of **shirking and inefficiency** due to conflicting interests.
- 4. Limited Gains in High-Skill Firms:** Only **20% of CLI enterprises**, mainly **large high-skill or capital-intensive**, saw productivity gains of **5% to 20%**. Most others suffered productivity losses.

Policy Measures and Recommendations

- 1. Pending Labour Code Implementation:** The 2020 Industrial Relations Code allows direct fixed-term hiring with benefits. Labour unions fear it may still promote **informalisation and job insecurity**.
- 2. Encouraging Longer Contracts:** Policymakers can promote stable jobs by offering **incentives in social security contributions** or **access to skilling schemes**.
- 3. Revive PMRPY Scheme:** The PMRPY, which supported over **1 crore employees** until 2022, could be revived to **promote formalisation** and curb misuse of contract labour.

Question for practice:

Examine the impact of rising contractualisation on worker welfare and productivity in India's formal manufacturing sector.

NISAR satellite enhances global Earth observation efforts

Source: The post NISAR satellite enhances global Earth observation efforts has been created, based on the article "NISAR's two eyes on Earth" published in "Indian Express" on 30th July 2025

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

Context: India and the United States are set to launch a unique Earth observation satellite called NISAR. Jointly developed by ISRO and NASA after over a decade of collaboration, NISAR will become the most advanced radar satellite ever sent into orbit, capable of delivering unprecedented data across environmental and geophysical domains.

For detailed information on **NISAR Satellite** [read this article here](#)

Unique Capabilities of NISAR

- 1. A Technological Milestone:** NISAR is the first satellite to carry two Synthetic Aperture Radars (SARs) operating in L-band and S-band frequencies. This allows it to capture highly detailed images of Earth's surface features.
- 2. Record-Breaking Cost and Power:** With a budget exceeding \$1 billion, NISAR is the most expensive Earth observation satellite ever developed. It will produce high-resolution data across terrains and conditions, surpassing existing satellite capabilities.

3. **Advanced Antenna Design:** Its 12-metre diameter antenna mimics a 20-km ground-based radar, achieving exceptional resolution through advanced space-based radar technology.

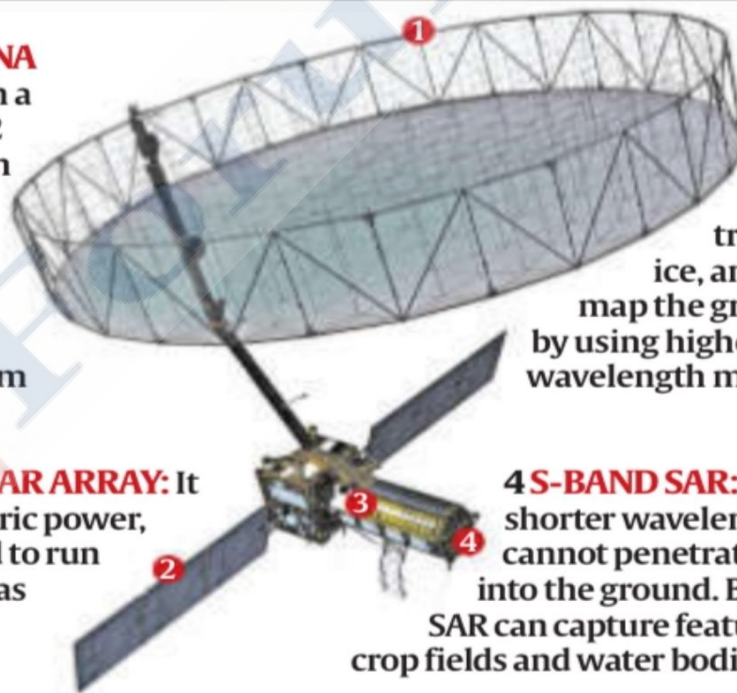


NISAR at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on July 18. AP

1 RADAR ANTENNA REFLECTOR:

With a diameter of just 12 m, the antenna can produce images whose resolution is comparable to those taken by ground-based antenna with 20 km diameter.

2 DEPLOYED SOLAR ARRAY: It will generate electric power, which will be used to run instruments such as the two synthetic aperture radars.



3 L-BAND SAR:

It can penetrate through tree cover, ice, and sand to map the ground below by using higher wavelength microwaves.

4 S-BAND SAR: As it uses shorter wavelength, it cannot penetrate very deep into the ground. But S-band SAR can capture features such as crop fields and water bodies.

Understanding Synthetic Aperture Radars (SARs)

1. **Functionality of SARs:** SARs send microwave or radio signals toward Earth and analyse reflected signals to determine object distance, movement, composition, and texture. They simulate large radars using small space-compatible equipment.

2. **Space Optimization:** Unlike bulky dish radars used on Earth, SARs use algorithms to replicate similar performance in space. This makes them ideal for satellite use.

3. **SARs in Other Missions:** ISRO has used SARs in its RISAT series, now renamed EOS, but those satellites use only one SAR. Other ISRO satellites like Cartosat and Oceansat do not use SARs.

Benefits of Dual-Band SAR Imaging

1. **Complementary Frequency Use:** The L-band SAR penetrates vegetation, ice, and sand to detect surface variations and biomass. The S-band SAR captures broader features like crops and water bodies.

2. **All-Weather, All-Time Observation:** Both SARs operate through clouds, fog, rain, and darkness. This ensures uninterrupted observation of Earth's surface in any condition.

3. **Synchronized Imaging for Accuracy:** By combining both SARs on the same satellite, NISAR captures simultaneous images of a location, avoiding time gaps that separate satellites would cause.

4. **Engineering Innovation:** Installing two SARs required customized hardware and non-interfering signal systems, resulting in extended development time and high complexity.

Significance of the NASA-ISRO Partnership

1. **Division of Roles and Investment:** NASA contributed the L-band SAR, antenna, GPS systems, and invested \$1.16 billion. ISRO provided the S-band radar, spacecraft, launch vehicle, and \$90 million.

2. **Joint Operations and Legacy:** Both agencies will operate the mission from their ground stations. Though they collaborated earlier on Chandrayaan-1, NISAR is their first jointly developed mission.

3. **Growing Strategic Cooperation:** The mission strengthens US-India space ties, supported by India's inclusion in the Artemis Accords and ongoing joint efforts in human spaceflight.

Scientific Applications and Global Relevance

1. **Mission Origins:** NISAR was envisioned after a 2007 US report recommended monitoring changes in land, ice, and vegetation. NASA initiated the mission in 2008, with ISRO joining in 2012.

2. **Diverse Research Goals:** NISAR will aid studies on climate change, surface deformation, volcanic activity, biomass, and crop cycles, delivering critical environmental insights.

3. **Global Data for Policymaking:** With unmatched imaging capabilities, NISAR will benefit global scientists and decision-makers addressing ecological and geological challenges.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the NISAR mission showcases technological innovation and international collaboration in Earth observation.

India must choose justice through law not through torture

Source: The post India must choose justice through law not through torture has been created, based on the article "India's police must get out of Dirty Harry's shadow" published in "The Hindu" on 31st July 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance- criminal Justice system,

Context: The article contrasts two policing styles—**Sherlock Holmes 'logic-driven approach** versus **Dirty Harry's violent tactics**—to examine custodial practices in India. Triggered by the **custodial death of Ajith Kumar in Tamil Nadu**, it questions whether India should uphold democratic policing or tolerate impunity. For detailed information on **Custodial Violence in India** [read this article here](#)

The Entrenched Culture of Custodial Violence

1. Grim Custodial Death Statistics: Ajith Kumar's death highlights rising custodial abuse. Between 2018–23, **687 people died in police custody**—an average of **2–3 deaths per week**. **Gujarat (81), Maharashtra (80), and Tamil Nadu (36)** reported high numbers.

2. Torture Outside Legal Oversight: Many deaths are labelled **suicides, accidents, or sudden illnesses**. Torture happens **off record**—in police vans, abandoned buildings, or even cow sheds—evading CCTV surveillance and legal checks.

3. Targeting the Marginalised: Victims are mostly **daily-wage workers, Dalits, tribals, migrants, and slum dwellers**. This reflects **systemic injustice**, where class, caste, and power hierarchies shape abuse.

4. Weak Systems and Public Apathy: **90% of the force** lacks proper training and works under **poor infrastructure** and pressure to produce quick results. **Disciplinary action is rare**; convictions rarer. **Public tolerance** has turned **impunity into unofficial policy**.

Legal Frameworks and Their Gaps

1. Supreme Court Safeguards Ignored: Despite clear safeguards in *D.K. Basu* (1996) and reaffirmation of dignity in *K.S. Puttaswamy* (2017), **torture remains unchecked**.

2. Absence of an Anti-Torture Law: The **Law Commission's 273rd Report** urged for a **standalone anti-torture law**, but it has not been enacted. India has **not ratified** the **UN Convention Against Torture**.

3. India's Global Reputation: In 2025, India was labelled a **"high-risk" country** in the **Global Torture Index**—a serious indictment of its policing culture.

Why Torture Fails: Scientific and Empirical Evidence

1. Neuroscience Disproves Effectiveness: Shane O'Mara's research shows torture **damages memory and cognition**. Victims become incoherent and **confess falsely** to stop pain.

2. Historic and Global Failures: During the **Algerian War**, the **CIA's black sites**, and U.S. wrongful convictions, **torture produced false or useless information**. In Ajith's case, his confession about hidden jewels was coerced.

3. Investigative Work Proves Superior: The **Osama bin Laden case** was solved through **surveillance and analysis**, not coercion. The **U.S. Senate report** debunked the CIA's interrogation techniques as ineffective and misleading.

Effective Alternatives to Coercion

1. The PEACE Model's Global Adoption: After the **1974 Birmingham bombings**, the UK adopted the **PEACE model**. It uses **rapport-building, open questions, and recorded interviews**, reducing false confessions and improving accuracy.

2. Success Stories from Other Countries: Norway, Canada, and New Zealand have successfully applied the model. In Norway, **Anders Breivik** confessed without threats. In the U.S., **Najibullah Zazi** cooperated when treated respectfully.

3. Evidence from the U.S. HIG Group: The FBI-CIA-led HIG group confirmed through studies that non-coercive methods outperform torture in producing accurate intelligence.

A Democratic Choice for India

1. Moral and Constitutional Responsibility: Torture is not just illegal—it's a **betrayal of democracy**. Every beating is a wound to the state's conscience.

2. Reform Is Urgent: India must **ratify the UN convention**, pass an **anti-torture law**, and adopt the **PEACE model** in police training.

3. Choose Holmes, Not Harry: Since **Holmes-style policing works**, India must **reject Dirty Harry tactics** and uphold democratic, rights-based law enforcement.

Question for practice:

Examine the impact of custodial torture on democratic policing and discuss why adopting non-coercive investigation models is essential for India.

Kamchatka quake highlights dangers along Pacific Ring

Source: The post Kamchatka quake highlights dangers along Pacific Ring has been created, based on the article "**The Kamchatka quake**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 31st July 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1- Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity.

Context: A massive 8.8 magnitude earthquake hit Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula, triggering a tsunami across the northern Pacific. Though flooding and damage were reported in multiple countries, **no casualties occurred**. The event has renewed focus on the seismic vulnerability of this region and similar global zones.

The Kamchatka Earthquake and Tsunami Impact

1. Scale and Location: The earthquake, one of the strongest globally, struck about 6,500 km east of Moscow. It was the most powerful since Japan's 2011 quake.

2. Tsunami Reach and Effects: The quake triggered a tsunami, causing waves of **3–4 metres in Kamchatka**, about five feet in Hawaii, and two feet in Japan. Several places reported **flooding and structural damage**.

3. Lack of Casualties: Despite its magnitude, **no lives were lost**, unlike the 2011 Japan event that led to a nuclear disaster at Fukushima.

Ring of Fire and Seismic Patterns

1. Location in Seismic Belt: Kamchatka lies in the **Circum-Pacific Belt**, or **Ring of Fire**, the world's most seismically active zone, encircling the Pacific.

2. Widespread Coverage: This belt includes nations such as **Russia, Japan, Indonesia, Chile, the U.S., and New Zealand**, across both sides of the Pacific.

3. High Earthquake Concentration: The Ring of Fire accounts for **over 80% of the largest earthquakes**. All **23 quakes of magnitude 8+** in the past 20 years occurred here.

4. **Active Kamchatka-Japan Stretch:** From Kamchatka to northern Japan, including the Kuril Islands, over **130** quakes of 7+ magnitude have occurred since 1900. A **9.0** quake was recorded here in 1952.

TEN STRONGEST EARTHQUAKES IN THE LAST 20 YEARS

DATE	MAGNITUDE	LOCATION*
March 11, 2011	9.1	Tohoku region, Japan
July 30, 2025	8.8	Kamchatka Peninsula, Russia
February 27, 2010	8.8	Maule, Chile
April 11, 2012	8.6	Northern Sumatra, Indonesia
September 12, 2007	8.4	Bengkulu, Indonesia
September 17, 2015	8.3	Illapel, Chile
May 24, 2013	8.3	Okhotsk Sea
November 15, 2006	8.3	Kuril Islands
July 29, 2021	8.2	Alaska Peninsula
August 19, 2018	8.2	Levuka, Fiji

*The epicentre of the quakes was near these locations

Source: USGS



Subduction as the Earthquake Trigger

1. **Basic Mechanism:** Earthquakes originate from **subduction**, where a denser tectonic plate slides beneath a lighter one, building stress that is eventually released.
2. **Land vs Oceanic Subduction:** While most subduction zones lie under oceans, some, like the **Himalayas**, occur over land. These zones are highly prone to earthquakes.
3. **Pacific Plate's Influence:** The **dense Pacific Plate** is subducting under several continental plates, making the Ring of Fire extremely active.
4. **Expert Perspective:** Geologist **Vineet Gehlot** highlights that **nowhere else on Earth** are so many subduction zones active, explaining the frequency of strong quakes here.

Comparison with Other Seismic Belts

1. **Alpide Belt Characteristics:** The **Alpide belt**, running from **Indonesia to Turkey**, contributes about **15–17%** of major quakes. It cuts through **densely populated areas**, making its quakes more deadly.
2. **Impact of Population Density:** The Kamchatka quake caused no deaths due to a **low population density (0.62/sq km)**. In contrast, Nepal's **7.6 quake in 2015** killed over **15,000 people**.
3. **Mid-Atlantic Ridge:** This underwater ridge runs through the Atlantic. It produces **moderate quakes**, but their **distance from land** limits their impact.
4. **Upper Limit of Earthquake Strength:** A **9.5 magnitude** quake is near the maximum possible. A **magnitude 10** would require a faultline spanning nearly the entire Earth—**which doesn't exist**.

Question for practice:

Discuss how subduction zones contribute to the occurrence of powerful earthquakes, with reference to the Kamchatka region and the Ring of Fire.

NITI Aayog drives India's human capital transformation

Source: The post NITI Aayog drives India's human capital transformation has been created, based on the article "NITI Aayog's human capital revolution" published in "Businessline" on 31st July 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Context: India's progress depends not just on GDP or infrastructure but on the development of **human capital** — education, health, skills, and productivity. Over the past decade, **NITI Aayog** has reshaped policies to invest in people and ensure inclusive, evidence-based, and future-ready development.

Transforming Human Capital Policy

1. Tapping the Demographic Dividend: With over **65% of the population below age 35**, India holds a unique opportunity. NITI Aayog rose as a **reformist think tank and implementation partner**, turning policymaking into a collaborative process involving states, private actors, and civil society.

2. Insights-Driven Governance: NITI Aayog shifted governance from a top-down model to **listening-based action**, using data and insights to drive real change. It focused on converting youthful energy into national growth.

Revolution in Education and Skilling

1. Reimagining Education: Playing a key role in the **National Education Policy 2020**, NITI Aayog moved the focus to **quality, equity, and flexibility**. It emphasized **early childhood education, mother-tongue instruction, and vocational integration**.

2. Fostering Innovation in Schools: The **Atal Innovation Mission** led to over **10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs**, promoting **critical thinking and creativity** in school education.

3. Career-Oriented Skilling: Over **1.5 crore youth** were trained under the **Skill India Mission**. With **industry-aligned and tech-driven programs**, it helped bridge the gap between **classroom and employment**, especially in underserved regions through the **Aspirational Districts Programme**.

Building Inclusive Health and Labour Systems

1. Labour Law Reforms: NITI Aayog supported the **rationalisation of 44 central labour laws** into **four simplified codes** — covering wages, social security, industrial relations, and safety. These reforms encouraged **formalisation** and protected **informal workers**.

2. Wellness over Treatment: was reframed as an **investment**. The **Ayushman Bharat scheme** provided **health insurance to over 50 crore people**, while **1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres** expanded access to **primary care and preventive health**.

3. Pandemic Leadership: During **COVID-19**, NITI Aayog worked with the **Health Ministry and ICMR** to model infections, allocate resources, and launch **eSanjeevani** for **telemedicine**. It later pushed for **public health management cadres and digital health systems**.

Catalyzing Innovation and Entrepreneurship

1. Supporting Start-Ups: Initiatives like **Start-Up India, Stand-Up India**, and **AIM** created a strong ecosystem for **fintech, agri-tech, EdTech, and clean energy** start-ups, turning them into **job creators and problem solvers**.

2. Data-Driven Policy Reforms: NITI Aayog promoted **AI, big data, and behavioural insights** in governance. It launched India's first **SDG Index**, guided states with performance metrics, and improved accountability.

3. **Global Recognition and Inclusion:** it engaged **civil society** and **international partners**, enabling India to rise in the **Global Innovation Index** and earn praise from the **UN, World Bank**, and **UNESCO**.

Ensuring Sustainable and Equitable Growth

1. . **Encouraging Competitive Federalism:** By ranking states and supporting cooperative efforts, NITI Aayog fostered **innovation and responsiveness** across levels.

2. **Sustainable Goals in Focus:** **clean energy** to **gender equity**, its policies aligned with the **Sustainable Development Goals**, building **inclusive and future-ready systems**.

Conclusion:

NITI Aayog has shown that **empowering people** builds a stronger nation. Its work redefined development, making it the **pulse of young India** — one that dreams, dares, and delivers.

Question for practice;

Examine how NITI Aayog has contributed to strengthening human capital and promoting inclusive development in India over the last decade.