

9 PM Current Affairs Weekly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination



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Features :

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

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GST 2.0

Source: The post **GST 2.0** has been created, based on the article “**GST 2.0 will empower young Indians**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **08th September 2025**.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper- 3- Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context: India has a young demographic which forms the backbone of the nation's economic growth and innovation. GST 2.0, by simplifying taxation and reducing financial burdens on households and businesses, aims to harness this demographic dividend and empower young Indians.

Importance of GST 2.0

1. Boosting Household Spending and Consumption:

- Private consumption accounts for over 60% of India's GDP. GST 2.0 reduces taxes on essentials and exempts services like insurance, easing monthly financial pressures for households.
- Increased disposable income allows young families to save and spend on education, healthcare, housing, and digital products.
- This creates a multiplier effect, translating micro-level affordability into macroeconomic growth.

2. Encouraging Financial Planning and Protection:

- Exemptions on health and life insurance premiums make financial protection more attainable for young professionals.
- This promotes a culture of savings, risk-sharing, and long-term planning, strengthening household resilience.

3. Supporting MSMEs and Entrepreneurship:

- Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) employ over 110 million people and significantly contribute to GDP.
- GST 2.0 simplifies compliance, reduces friction, and encourages formalization.
- Young entrepreneurs benefit from easier access to credit, supply chains, and growth opportunities, fostering business creation and employment.

4. Promoting Economic Predictability and Trust:

- Transparent, consistent taxation under GST 2.0 builds confidence among citizens and businesses.
- Predictability in tax compliance reduces uncertainty for young professionals and entrepreneurs planning for the future.

5. Creating a Virtuous Cycle of Growth:

- Reduced taxes increase affordability, which raises demand and encourages investment.
- Investment generates employment, which in turn fuels further consumption. This self-sustaining cycle supports youth-led economic growth.

Way Forward

GST 2.0 aligns fiscal policy with the aspirations of young Indians. To further enhance its impact, the following measures can be adopted:

1. Expand digital infrastructure for seamless GST filing, especially for small entrepreneurs.
2. Provide targeted GST incentives for start-ups and youth-led enterprises.
3. Increase awareness campaigns about tax benefits and exemptions for young households.
4. Continuously monitor and simplify compliance procedures to reduce bureaucratic hurdles.
5. Encourage financial literacy programs to complement GST reforms and strengthen household financial planning.

Question: Discuss how GST 2.0 can empower young Indians.

Building Sustainable cities in India

Source: The post Building Sustainable cities in India has been created, based on the article "Building a city of the Future" published in "Business Line" on 04th September 2025.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper- 3- Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context: Urbanization is a key driver of India's future economic growth. By 2045, India's urban population is projected to reach nearly one billion, with several megacities emerging. This rapid urban expansion necessitates the development of climate-resilient and sustainable urban infrastructure to protect citizens from extreme heat, flooding, and other climate-induced risks.

Challenges:

1. **Vulnerability of urban housing:** More than half of the housing stock needed by 2070 is yet to be built, making new housing highly susceptible to flooding, extreme heat, cyclones, landslides, and earthquakes.
2. **Infrastructure gap:** India needs to build over 144 million new homes along with robust transportation and municipal services to meet future demands.
3. **Climate risks:** Extreme heat and urban flooding pose severe threats. Rising temperatures and inadequate drainage systems exacerbate the impacts on health and productivity.
4. **Economic losses:** Without proper planning, climate-induced disasters may cost billions of dollars annually and disrupt urban economic activity.
5. **Institutional and planning challenges:** Lack of forward-looking urban planning and inadequate institutional capacity can hinder climate-resilient urban development.

Measures/Strategies:

1. **Integrated flood management:** Identify high-risk zones, improve city-wide drainage, and use nature-based solutions to absorb excess rainwater. Cities like Kolkata and Chennai are adopting city-level forecasting and stormwater management systems.
2. **Climate-resilient housing:** Plan, design, construct, and maintain new housing with compact, sustainable layouts that can withstand floods, heatwaves, and other extreme events.
3. **Transportation and urban planning:** Ensure road networks are resilient to floods; integrate public transport and alternative routes to maintain connectivity during disasters.

4. **Green infrastructure:** Increase tree cover, implement heat mitigation strategies like cool roofs, and enhance public spaces to reduce urban heat islands.
5. **Institutional and financial support:** Strengthen collaboration between government, citizens, and private sector; mobilize investment for sustainable urban development.
6. **Technology and innovation:** Use early warning systems, digital mapping, and climate-resilient construction technologies to enhance urban preparedness.

Question: Discuss the challenges posed by rapid urbanization in India and suggest measures to make Indian cities climate-resilient and sustainable.

Great Nicobar Island Project

Source: The post Great Nicobar project threatens tribes ecology and disaster safety has been created, based on the article “**The making of an ecological disaster in the Nicobar**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 8th September 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- economy- infrastructure, and environment conservation.

Context: The Great Nicobar mega-infrastructure project, costing ₹72,000 crore, is portrayed as reckless. It endangers indigenous communities, damages a rare rainforest ecosystem, and ignores disaster risks. The article says legal safeguards and deliberative processes were bypassed to push it through.

For detailed information information on **Great Nicobar Island Project** [read this article here](#)

Why is the project contested?

1. **Scale and stakes:** A ₹72,000 crore plan is called a misplaced spend. It threatens communities and ecology, and proceeds despite statutory protections.
2. **Indigenous homelands targeted:** Ancestral Nicobarese villages lie within the project area. The 2004 tsunami forced evacuation; the project means **permanent displacement**, ending hopes of return.
3. **Shompen policy ignored:** The Shompen Policy requires prioritising tribal welfare and **integrity**. Instead, reserves are denotified, forests are opened, and population inflows are enabled, cutting the Shompen off from ancestral lands and livelihoods.

How are tribal rights being undermined?

1. **Bypassing constitutional bodies:** Under **Article 338-A**, the Government should have consulted the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes. It did not. The Tribal Council Chairman's plea for Nicobarese return was ignored.
2. **Coerced consent revoked:** A Letter of No Objection from the Tribal Council was later **revoked**. The Council said it had been “**rushed**” into signing.
3. **Legal assessments evaded:** The **SIA** under the 2013 land acquisition law omitted Nicobarese and Shompen as stakeholders. **Forest Rights Act (2006)** mandates and Shompen consultations were ignored, despite their authority over forest protection.

What are the ecological and legal red flags?

1. **Massive deforestation:** About **15% of the island** may be cleared. The Ministry estimates **8.5 lakh** trees cut; independent estimates suggest **32–58 lakh**. A globally unique rainforest is imperilled.
2. **Dubious compensatory afforestation:** Afforestation is planned in **Haryana**, with a different ecology and far from the island. **A quarter of that land** has been **auctioned for mining**. Plantations cannot replace old-growth, biodiversity-rich forests.
3. **CRZ 1A concerns and secrecy:** Parts of the port site fall in **CRZ 1A**, where ports are **prohibited** due to turtle nesting sites and coral reefs. Despite evidence, a **High-Powered Committee** reclassified the site; its report and ground-truthing remain **unpublished**.

What methodological flaws are alleged?

1. **Ignored expert warnings:** Primatologists warned about impacts on the **Nicobar long-tailed macaque**. Their concerns were ignored.
2. **Flawed biodiversity surveys:** **Sea turtle nesting** was assessed **off-season**. **Drones** used for **dugongs** can assess only shallow areas, limiting accuracy.
3. **Questionable research conditions:** Evidence suggests institutes worked under **highly unusual conditions**, bordering on duress. This undermines credibility.

What are the disaster risks and moral stakes?

1. **Seismic vulnerability:** The area is earthquake-prone. The **2004 tsunami** caused about **15 feet** of permanent subsidence. A **6.2 magnitude** quake in **July 2025** shows continuing risk. Siting a massive project here jeopardises investment, infrastructure, people, and ecology.
2. **Existential threat to tribes:** The **Shompen** and **Nicobarese** face survival risks from displacement and ecological loss.

Question for practice:

Examine the major social, legal, ecological, and disaster-risk concerns raised about the Great Nicobar mega-infrastructure project.

India must prioritise quality FDI over headline inflow figures

Source: The post India must prioritise quality FDI over headline inflow figures has been created, based on the article “**A complex turn in India’s FDI story**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 8th September 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: **GS Paper3-** Indian economy and mobilisation of resources

Context: FDI powered India’s post-1991 modernisation, especially in **e-commerce** and **computer hardware/software**. Recent years show strain: inflows look strong, yet withdrawals surge, investments

skew short-term, and Indian firms invest abroad. The concern is weak capital retention, narrow sectoral depth, and a less predictable domestic climate.

For detailed information **Global FDI is falling and India faces growing challenges** [read this article here](#)

How has India's FDI story shifted?

1. **From reform-led modernisation to mixed signals:** FDI strengthened industry, innovation, and global market integration. Lately, the pattern looks complex, with rising disinvestments and outward flows tempering earlier gains.
2. **Short-term focus eclipsing long-term development:** Investments increasingly chase quick returns, including tax arbitrage and treaty routing. Durable commitments to technology and capacity creation have weakened.
3. **E-commerce and tech transformed; breadth lags:** Large inflows reshaped e-commerce and computer hardware/software. However, broader industrial deepening has not kept pace.
4. **Indian capital going out, not staying in:** Domestic firms invest heavily abroad. This questions policy predictability and the attractiveness of building capabilities at home.

What do the numbers reveal post-pandemic?

1. **Gross inflows rose, but with volatility:** Gross inflows touched \$81 billion in FY 2024-25, up 13.7% year-on-year. Flows climbed from \$46.6 billion (2011) to \$84.8 billion (2021), peaked in FY 2021-22, then slipped to \$71 billion in FY 2023-24 before a mild recovery.
2. **Divergence between inflows and repatriations:** Post-pandemic, gross inflows totalled \$308.5 billion, while \$153.9 billion was withdrawn or repatriated. Inflows grew just 0.3% annually; repatriations rose 18.9%.
3. **Net inflows eroded sharply:** After subtracting repatriations and loan repayments, net inflows fell steeply from FY 2021-22 to FY 2024-25. After adjusting for outward FDI, net retained capital shrank to \$0.4 billion.
4. **Disinvestments surged to new highs:** Disinvestments rose 51% to \$44.4 billion in FY 2023-24 and to \$51.4 billion in FY 2024-25. They now represent over 63%, marking a decisive behaviour shift.

Why are withdrawals and outflows rising?

1. **Manufacturing's shrinking share:** Manufacturing, once central to FDI, saw steep outflows. Its share fell to 12% of total FDI, curbing technology diffusion and jobs.
2. **Domestic bottlenecks deter stickiness:** Regulatory opacity, legal unpredictability, and inconsistent governance dampen confidence. Rankings improved, yet execution frictions persist.
3. **Indian firms' outward push accelerates:** Outflows grew from \$13 billion (FY 2011-12) to \$29.2 billion (FY 2024-25). Firms cite regulatory inefficiencies, infrastructure gaps, and policy uncertainty.

4. **Confidence, not capital, is the constraint:** The parallel rise of foreign withdrawals and Indian outward FDI signals systemic issues that limit long-horizon commitments.

Where is capital going—and what is missed?

1. **Tax-hub dominance and source fatigue:** Singapore and Mauritius dominate inflows, hinting at tax-driven routing. Traditional industrial sources—the U.S., Germany, and the U.K.—have scaled back.

2. **Services and rent-seeking tilt:** Financial services, energy distribution, and hospitality drew more capital. These add to GDP but lack the strong multipliers of manufacturing, infrastructure, and advanced tech.

3. **Weaker long-term resilience:** Shifts toward short-term, service-heavy flows reduce potential for capability building and durable growth.

4. **Gross figures conceal fragility:** Headline inflows look robust but mask churn, sectoral skews, and limited retention.

What are the macro risks and policy priorities?

1. **External account pressures rise:** FDI supports the balance of payments and the currency. Falling net inflows narrow policy space and complicate external management.

2. **RBI's measured caution:** The RBI notes outflows mirror broader emerging-market trends yet carry risks that require careful handling.

3. **Quality over quantity of capital:** India should prioritise durability and strategic alignment over raw inflow size. Committed capital must build domestic capabilities.

4. **Reform and human capital:** Simplify rules, ensure policy consistency, upgrade infrastructure, and expand education and skills to attract **advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and technology**.

Question for practice:

Examine how rising disinvestments and outward FDI since FY 2021–22 have reduced India's net FDI inflows and weakened long-term industrial development

Impact of GST 2.0 on health

Source: The post **Impact of GST 2.0 on health** has been created, based on the article "GST 2.0 could undermine dietary health" published in **"The Hindu"** on **09th September 2025**.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper- 3- Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context: The Government of India will simplify the GST structure from September 22, 2025, to rates of 5%, 18%, and a 40% bracket for "sinful" and ultra-luxury goods. While aimed at tax rationalization and efficiency, this raises public health concerns over its potential impact on dietary habits and non-communicable diseases.

Impact of GST 2.0 on Public Health:

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- The reduction of GST on sugar-based products such as chocolates, confectionery, jams, and fruit jellies from 12–18% to 5% lowers their market price, increasing affordability and consumption.
- This undermines efforts to tackle rising cases of obesity, diabetes, and other NCDs.
- Moreover, India lacks a comprehensive **front-of-pack labelling (FOPL)** system and clear regulatory thresholds for warning labels.
- As a result, consumers are unable to effectively distinguish between healthy and unhealthy products, further promoting poor dietary choices.

Role of Food Advertising:

- Current regulations are insufficient to restrict misleading advertising, particularly to children.
- Unlike countries such as Chile, which ban the advertisement of “high-in” sugar/salt/fat products to children, India has no uniform policy to regulate such practices across TV, print, or digital media.
- This contributes to unhealthy dietary patterns, especially among adolescents.

Policy Measures:

1. Implement mandatory FOPL warnings based on WHO-SEARO and ICMR-NIN 2024 thresholds.
2. Apply differential GST rates—18% on “high-in” unhealthy products and 5% on healthy alternatives.
3. Ban advertising of “high-in” products during peak child-viewing hours.
4. Allocate tax revenues for NCD prevention, labelling enforcement, and food reformulation.

Q. Discuss how the proposed GST 2.0 regime in India could affect public health, especially in relation to dietary habits. Also, suggest appropriate policy measures.

GST 2.0

Source: The post **GST 2.0** has been created, based on the article “A nudge to Businesses ” published in **“Indian express”** on 09th September 2025.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper- 3- Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context: Eight years post GST launch, the Government of India is implementing **GST 2.0**, aimed at simplifying tax structures, enhancing compliance, and supporting long-term revenue growth rather than short-term collection maximisation.

Objectives of GST 2.0:

1. **Simplification of Tax Structure:** Streamline GST rates into a simpler slab system (5%, 18%, and 40% for “sinful” and luxury goods).
2. **Ease of Doing Business:** Reduce compliance burden on small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
3. **Long-term Revenue Growth:** Encourage voluntary compliance and broaden the tax base instead of focusing on immediate revenue maximisation.
4. **Encourage Formalization:** Integrate more businesses into the formal economy through targeted reliefs and simplified processes.

Key Features of GST 2.0:

1. **Rate Rationalization:** Collapse multiple rates (5%, 12%, 18%, 28%) into simplified slabs of 5%, 18%, and 40% for luxury and demerit goods.
2. **Targeted Reliefs:** Special provisions for small businesses (monthly output tax liability under ₹2.5 lakh) to reduce compliance costs.
3. **Technological Integration:** Voluntary simplified registration and procedural reforms through the GST Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) to resolve disputes.
4. **Sectoral Focus:** Higher rates on tobacco, aerated drinks, and luxury goods to align public health and revenue objectives.

Potential Impact

1. **Economic:** Expected to boost compliance and revenue collection over time, reduce tax disputes, and support ease of doing business.
2. **Social:** Taxing “sinful” goods like tobacco may positively affect public health by reducing consumption.
3. **Business:** SMEs and exporters benefit from simplified compliance, faster refunds, and lower procedural hurdles.
4. **Implementation Risk:** Requires meticulous coordination; past international experiences (e.g., Malaysia) show that poorly implemented reforms can disrupt businesses.

Q. Discuss the objectives, features, and potential impact of GST 2.0 in India.

India advances technological independence through open-source mission

Source: The post India advances technological independence through open-source mission now has been created, based on the article “**The long march ahead to technological independence**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 10th September 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Science and technology

Context: On India's 79th Independence Day (August 15, 2025), the article argues that political freedom is no longer sufficient. True independence now requires technological sovereignty because daily life and national security depend on software, networks, and cloud services controlled by a few foreign companies, creating serious vulnerabilities.

Why does independence now demand technological sovereignty?

1. **Digital conflict and critical exposure:** Modern wars are fought through software, drones, and cyber operations rather than conventional weapons. The most damaging battlefield is cyberspace, where attacks can disrupt banks, trains, and power grids that run on information and communication technology.
2. **Dependence on a concentrated vendor base:** A small number of firms, largely from one country, design and control core systems. If these providers disable cloud or Artificial Intelligence services under national diktat or malice, the nation's operations can be crippled.
3. **Risk already demonstrated in practice:** Cloud services were recently cut off to a company, proving the threat is not hypothetical. The episode underscores the need to reduce single-point dependencies before a larger crisis forces action.

How can India build software sovereignty?

1. **Open-source as the practical route:** India can create trustworthy variants of Linux and Android free of backdoors. Building them is feasible for a committed professional community. The harder problem is ensuring long-term support, delivering regular updates, and cultivating a large user base to ensure viability.
2. **Collective mobilisation of talent:** The issue affects everyone, but the solution rests with IT professionals who build the digital world. No single institution can shoulder the task. A united, mission-driven effort can do so..
3. **Component strategy and product discipline:** Assemble a crack team to deliver essential client-side tools—database, email client, calendar—and server-side systems—web, email, and cloud servers—using existing open-source bases. Teams must continually update and maintain these like product groups, not one-off projects.
4. **Self-sustaining business model:** The mission must fund itself rather than rely on government or private grants. Today's climate is more receptive. Companies and individuals worry about external dependence and already pay, directly or indirectly, for “free” open source. Making costs explicit to support trusted software is a small shift.

What is the path to hardware sovereignty?

1. **Higher barriers and longer horizons:** Hardware autonomy is harder than software. Building advanced semiconductor fabs demands massive, patient national investment across chip design, manufacturing, and supply chains.
2. **Pragmatic first steps:** Focus on select hardware components and forge partnerships to grow expertise in chip design and assembly. Fabrication can initially be outsourced while domestic capabilities scale.
3. **Ethos of non-adversarial independence:** As political freedom was pursued through non-violence, technology independence should advance through open source. The goal is self-reliance, not opposition to others.

What mission architecture and societal shift are required now?

1. **From diluted movement to renewed autonomy:** Although much software is open source, effective control sits with centralised cloud and externally managed data. A social movement for autonomy in software and hardware is needed. India has talent and a clear path.
2. **Implementation over research:** Establish an implementation mission led by strong engineering and support teams. It should be coordinated by capable project management, not an academic R&D initiative.
3. **Enablement, sustainability, urgency:** The government should act as an enabler and set up a self-sustaining model early. The collective will must drive planning, development, and execution now—before a crisis compels it.

Question for practice:

Examine why technological sovereignty is vital for India and the mission-based steps proposed to achieve it.

Kerala transforms urban governance through new blueprint

Source: The post Kerala transforms urban governance through new blueprint has been created, based on the article “Lessons for India: how Kerala is tackling rapid urbanisation” published in “The Hindu” on 10th September 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1-Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Context: Kerala’s urban fabric is urbanising faster than infrastructure and governance, while climate hazards—floods, landslides, coastal erosion, erratic weather—intensify. To respond, the State created the **Kerala Urban Policy Commission (KUPC)** to craft a long-range, climate-aware urban strategy, culminating in a March 2025 report.

Why and how was KUPC formed?

- 1. Urban pressures and mounting risks:** By late 2023, urbanisation raced ahead of the national average, with projections of over 80% urban population by 2050. Simultaneously, floods, landslides, and coastal stress exposed widening gaps between crisis and planning.
- 2. A deliberate political choice:** The cabinet’s December 2023 resolution signalled a break from centralised, project-led models. Kerala sought its own compass, tailored to place, history, and climate.
- 3. Mandate and horizon:** Set up in December 2023, KUPC was tasked with a 25-year roadmap viewing cities as organic, climate-aware ecosystems, not concrete problems.
- 4. A first in India:** As India’s first State-level urban commission, it shifted policy from reactive fixes to systems thinking.

What did KUPC recommend?

- 1. Climate- and risk-aware zoning:** Urban planning must reflect hazard mapping of landslides, coastal inundation, and flood zones so that decisions are proactive rather than reactive.
- 2. A digital data observatory:** Set up a real-time data centre at the Kerala Institute of Local Administration. It should combine LIDAR, ground-penetrating radar, tide and gauge readings, satellite images, and live weather.
- 3. Green fees and climate insurance:** Charge green fees for projects in eco-sensitive zones. Use parametric insurance to ensure pre-approved payouts in disasters.
- 4. Municipal and pooled bonds:** Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, and Kozhikode, as larger cities, could issue municipal bonds, while smaller towns use pooled instruments. Bond subscriptions were even plugged into the 2024 interim Budget.
- 5. Governance overhaul:** City cabinets led by mayors should replace bureaucratic inertia. Specialist cells—climate, waste, mobility, and law—with dedicated municipal cadres are proposed, alongside a “jnanashree” programme to recruit and deploy youth tech talent.

6. Place-based economic revival: Thrissur–Kochi is identified as a FinTech hub; Thiruvananthapuram–Kollam as a knowledge corridor; Kozhikode as the city of literature; and Palakkad and Kasaragod as smart-industrial zones.

7. Commons, culture, and care: Revive wetlands, reactivate waterways, and preserve heritage zones. Create city health councils to serve migrants, students, and gig workers.

What makes the report unique?

1. Narratives fused with data: Fisherfolk's coastal recession, youth water drives, and bazaar mobility woes were structured into data systems. LIDAR maps register tidal health; municipal dashboards carry community indicators; briefings embed lived stories.

2. Climate embedded, not appended: Every pillar integrates disaster awareness, making resilience foundational across planning, finance, well-being, and identity.

3. Fiscal and institutional emancipation: Municipal bonds and green levies enhance local fiscal agency, while election-led city cabinets and youth technocrats replace passive bureaucracies.

4. A 360° urban system: The approach dismantles silos and integrates planning, finance, and governance.

What can others learn, and what lies ahead?

1. Transferable lessons. States can create time-bound commissions and pair technical data with lived experience. They can also build dialogic systems and data observatories, empower locals through levies, bonds, and risk premiums, and insert youth and specialists in governance.

2. Next steps. KUPC rewires how Kerala conceives cities by entwining climate awareness, community narrative, finance, digital governance, and identity economy. It is a beginning for Kerala, and an invitation for others to author urban transformation.

Question for practice:

Evaluate how the Kerala Urban Policy Commission's recommendations aim to make Kerala's urban system climate ready, data driven, and better governed.

Transhumanist technologies and its implication

Source: The post **Transhumanist technologies and its implication** has been created, based on the article "Longevity Debate" published in "Indian Express" on 10th September 2025.

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

Context: The rapid advancement in biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and nanotechnology has led to a new frontier in human longevity research. The concept of transhumanism envisions radically extending human life and enhancing cognitive and physical capabilities through scientific innovations such as gene editing, brain-

computer interfaces, and digital consciousness preservation. This revolutionary shift raises profound questions related to ethics, society, and governance.

Scientific and Technological Developments:

1. Transhumanist technologies include **CRISPR gene editing, neuroprosthetics, brain-machine interfaces, and digital mind uploading.**
2. These tools aim **to repair defective DNA, rejuvenate organs, restore lost brain capacities, and enable uploading of human consciousness into digital systems.**
3. Entrepreneurs like Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos are **investing heavily in these fields**, driven by the vision of overcoming biological limitations.

Social Implications:

1. **Demographic Shift:** As birth rates decline globally, extending healthy lifespans could maintain a productive workforce well into advanced age, preventing economic stagnation.
2. **Inequality:** Access to these radical technologies is unlikely to be universal. This raises the risk of a growing divide between the biologically privileged elite and the rest of society, exacerbating existing disparities of wealth and power.

Ethical Implications:

1. **Playing God:** Many religious and philosophical traditions argue against the unnatural extension of life, viewing it as an affront to divine will or natural order.
2. **Mind Uploading and Identity:** The process of uploading consciousness to a digital format raises questions about personal identity, agency, and the meaning of life and death.
3. **Eugenics Risk:** The ability to selectively enhance or alter human characteristics could lead to a resurgence of eugenic practices, with profound moral consequences.

Political Implications:

1. **Regulatory Challenges:** Governance frameworks are ill-prepared to deal with these fast-evolving technologies. The absence of clear regulations may lead to misuse or monopolization by powerful corporations and individuals.
2. **Power Dynamics:** Leaders such as Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping show interest in using such technologies for political longevity, posing risks to democratic accountability and increasing authoritarian tendencies.
3. **Global Governance:** There is a pressing need for multilateral regulations to ensure ethical research practices, prevent the creation of a super-rich biologically privileged class, and guarantee access equity.

Way Forward:

1. India, given its spiritual traditions and emerging scientific capabilities is well-positioned to take a balanced approach.
2. It must focus on establishing robust ethical and regulatory frameworks while promoting scientific research aimed at public good.
3. The emphasis should be on ensuring that technological progress benefits society as a whole and does not exacerbate inequality or ethical dilemmas.

Q. Discuss the potential social, ethical, and political implications of extending human life through transhumanist technologies.

Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) and its implication

Source: The post **Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) and its implication** has been created, based on the article "The Global Stage on our Terms" published in "**Indian Express**" on **10th September 2025**.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper- 3- Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context: Recent signing of the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) comprising Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein is a landmark development. It marks India's first comprehensive trade agreement with a group of advanced European economies, reflecting its ambition to transform into a globally integrated, self-reliant, and confident economy. The agreement has multiple economic, strategic, and diplomatic implications.

Economic Benefits:

1. **Market Access and Export Promotion:** The agreement enhances market access for Indian goods and services by eliminating or reducing tariffs on 92.2% of tariff lines, representing 99.6% of India's exports by value.
2. It facilitates duty-free treatment for non-agricultural products such as organic chemicals, textiles, gems, jewellery, and industrial goods.
3. **Investment Commitments:** The pledge to promote investment of about \$100 billion over 15 years and facilitate up to 1 million direct jobs reflects a significant boost to India's industrial and service sectors.
4. **Sub-sectoral Commitments:** India has secured commitments across 128 sub-sectors from Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein, especially in information technology, business services, and skilled workforce domains.
5. **Competitive Consumer Market:** Tariff cuts and duty-free access promise competitive prices and wider product choices for Indian consumers.

Strategic and Technological Collaboration:

1. **Access to Advanced Technologies:** TEPA provides India with access to Europe's advanced capabilities in precision engineering, pharmaceuticals, health sciences, renewable energy, and frontier technologies, aligned with India's domestic needs.
2. **Thorium Energy Potential:** With India holding nearly a quarter of the world's thorium reserves, TEPA offers opportunities for collaboration in thorium fuel irradiation, research, and scaling up India's nuclear energy program for clean and stable power generation.
3. **Support for Energy Transition:** The EU's Sustainable Finance Taxonomy enables India to tap into green transition funds, accelerating efforts toward achieving Net Zero emissions by 2070.

Diplomatic and Geopolitical Implications:

1. **Global Standing and Confidence:** The agreement symbolizes India's transition into a globally confident nation able to negotiate on equal footing with advanced economies, bolstering its image as a trusted and strategic partner.
2. **Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India Alignment:** TEPA reinforces India's vision of self-reliance by strategically integrating domestic manufacturing and innovation with global supply chains.
3. **Resilience and Diversification:** In an era of geopolitical uncertainty and supply chain disruptions, TEPA helps diversify India's economic partnerships, reducing over-reliance on any single bloc.

Challenges and Way Forward:

1. **Implementation and Capacity Building:** Translating the agreement's potential into tangible outcomes requires robust institutional mechanisms and capacity building for Indian businesses to adapt and scale advanced technologies.
2. **Equitable Growth:** Ensuring the benefits reach all sections of society and do not further exacerbate economic inequalities is crucial.
3. **Ongoing Strategic Engagement:** India should continue to negotiate and align with multilateral frameworks, ensuring that economic diplomacy supports long-term sustainable development and strategic autonomy.

Q. Analyze the significance of the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in strengthening India's global economic and strategic positioning.

India advances technological independence through open-source mission

Source: The post India advances technological independence through open-source mission now has been created, based on the article "**The long march ahead to technological independence**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 10th September 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Science and technology

Context: On India's 79th Independence Day (August 15, 2025), the article argues that political freedom is no longer sufficient. True independence now requires technological sovereignty because daily life and national security depend on software, networks, and cloud services controlled by a few foreign companies, creating serious vulnerabilities.

Why does independence now demand technological sovereignty?

1. **Digital conflict and critical exposure:** Modern wars are fought through software, drones, and cyber operations rather than conventional weapons. The most damaging battlefield is cyberspace, where attacks can disrupt banks, trains, and power grids that run on information and communication technology.
2. **Dependence on a concentrated vendor base:** A small number of firms, largely from one country, design and control core systems. If these providers disable cloud or Artificial Intelligence services under national diktat or malice, the nation's operations can be crippled.

3. Risk already demonstrated in practice: Cloud services were recently cut off to a company, proving the threat is not hypothetical. The episode underscores the need to reduce single-point dependencies before a larger crisis forces action.

How can India build software sovereignty?

1. Open-source as the practical route: India can create trustworthy variants of Linux and Android free of backdoors. Building them is feasible for a committed professional community. The harder problem is ensuring long-term support, delivering regular updates, and cultivating a large user base to ensure viability.

2. Collective mobilisation of talent: The issue affects everyone, but the solution rests with IT professionals who build the digital world. No single institution can shoulder the task. A united, mission-driven effort can do so..

3. Component strategy and product discipline: Assemble a crack team to deliver essential client-side tools—database, email client, calendar—and server-side systems—web, email, and cloud servers—using existing open-source bases. Teams must continually update and maintain these like product groups, not one-off projects.

4. Self-sustaining business model: The mission must fund itself rather than rely on government or private grants. Today's climate is more receptive. Companies and individuals worry about external dependence and already pay, directly or indirectly, for “free” open source. Making costs explicit to support trusted software is a small shift.

What is the path to hardware sovereignty?

1. Higher barriers and longer horizons: Hardware autonomy is harder than software. Building advanced semiconductor fabs demands massive, patient national investment across chip design, manufacturing, and supply chains.

2. Pragmatic first steps: Focus on select hardware components and forge partnerships to grow expertise in chip design and assembly. Fabrication can initially be outsourced while domestic capabilities scale.

3. Ethos of non-adversarial independence: As political freedom was pursued through non-violence, technology independence should advance through open source. The goal is self-reliance, not opposition to others.

What mission architecture and societal shift are required now?

1. From diluted movement to renewed autonomy: Although much software is open source, effective control sits with centralised cloud and externally managed data. A social movement for autonomy in software and hardware is needed. India has talent and a clear path.

2. Implementation over research: Establish an implementation mission led by strong engineering and support teams. It should be coordinated by capable project management, not an academic R&D initiative.

3. **Enablement, sustainability, urgency:** The government should act as an enabler and set up a self-sustaining model early. The collective will must drive planning, development, and execution now—before a crisis compels it.

Question for practice:

Examine why technological sovereignty is vital for India and the mission-based steps proposed to achieve it.

Kerala transforms urban governance through new blueprint

Source: The post Kerala transforms urban governance through new blueprint has been created, based on the article “**Lessons for India: how Kerala is tackling rapid urbanisation**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 10th September 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1-Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Context: Kerala’s urban fabric is urbanising faster than infrastructure and governance, while climate hazards—floods, landslides, coastal erosion, erratic weather—intensify. To respond, the State created the **Kerala Urban Policy Commission (KUPC)** to craft a long-range, climate-aware urban strategy, culminating in a March 2025 report.

Why and how was KUPC formed?

1. **Urban pressures and mounting risks:** By late 2023, urbanisation raced ahead of the national average, with projections of over 80% urban population by 2050. Simultaneously, floods, landslides, and coastal stress exposed widening gaps between crisis and planning.
2. **A deliberate political choice:** The cabinet’s December 2023 resolution signalled a break from centralised, project-led models. Kerala sought its own compass, tailored to place, history, and climate.
3. **Mandate and horizon:** Set up in December 2023, KUPC was tasked with a 25-year roadmap viewing cities as organic, climate-aware ecosystems, not concrete problems.
4. **A first in India:** As India’s first State-level urban commission, it shifted policy from reactive fixes to systems thinking.

What did KUPC recommend?

1. **Climate- and risk-aware zoning:** Urban planning must reflect hazard mapping of landslides, coastal inundation, and flood zones so that decisions are proactive rather than reactive.
2. **A digital data observatory:** Set up a real-time data centre at the Kerala Institute of Local Administration. It should combine LIDAR, ground-penetrating radar, tide and gauge readings, satellite images, and live weather.
3. **Green fees and climate insurance:** Charge green fees for projects in eco-sensitive zones. Use parametric insurance to ensure pre-approved payouts in disasters.

4. **Municipal and pooled bonds:** Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, and Kozhikode, as larger cities, could issue municipal bonds, while smaller towns use pooled instruments. Bond subscriptions were even plugged into the 2024 interim Budget.

5. **Governance overhaul:** City cabinets led by mayors should replace bureaucratic inertia. Specialist cells—climate, waste, mobility, and law—with dedicated municipal cadres are proposed, alongside a “jnanashree” programme to recruit and deploy youth tech talent.

6. **Place-based economic revival:** Thrissur–Kochi is identified as a FinTech hub; Thiruvananthapuram–Kollam as a knowledge corridor; Kozhikode as the city of literature; and Palakkad and Kasaragod as smart-industrial zones.

7. **Commons, culture, and care:** Revive wetlands, reactivate waterways, and preserve heritage zones. Create city health councils to serve migrants, students, and gig workers.

What makes the report unique?

1. **Narratives fused with data:** Fisherfolk’s coastal recession, youth water drives, and bazaar mobility woes were structured into data systems. LIDAR maps register tidal health; municipal dashboards carry community indicators; briefings embed lived stories.

2. **Climate embedded, not appended:** Every pillar integrates disaster awareness, making resilience foundational across planning, finance, well-being, and identity.

3. **Fiscal and institutional emancipation:** Municipal bonds and green levies enhance local fiscal agency, while election-led city cabinets and youth technocrats replace passive bureaucracies.

4. **A 360° urban system:** The approach dismantles silos and integrates planning, finance, and governance.

What can others learn, and what lies ahead?

1. **Transferable lessons.** States can create time-bound commissions and pair technical data with lived experience. They can also build dialogic systems and data observatories, empower locals through levies, bonds, and risk premiums, and insert youth and specialists in governance.

2. **Next steps.** KUPC rewires how Kerala conceives cities by entwining climate awareness, community narrative, finance, digital governance, and identity economy. It is a beginning for Kerala, and an invitation for others to author urban transformation.

Question for practice:

Evaluate how the Kerala Urban Policy Commission’s recommendations aim to make Kerala’s urban system climate ready, data driven, and better governed.

Katchatheevu dispute demand cooperative solutions

Source: The post Katchatheevu dispute demand cooperative solutions has been created, based on the article “The way forward on Katchatheevu, Palk Strait disputes” published in “The Hindu” on 11th September 2025

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

Context: India's diplomacy—rooted in Panchsheel, NAM, SAARC, and a **Neighbourhood First** outlook—faces a test with Sri Lanka. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's **April 2025 Colombo visit** refocused attention on the Palk Straits fisheries dispute and Katchatheevu. The task is to align livelihoods, ecology, and law through cooperation.

For detailed information on **Katchatheevu Island controversy** [read this article here](#)

What drives the Palk Straits conflict?

1. **Shared waters, rising disputes:** Communities from Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka's Northern Province long shared waters. Tensions rose as **Indian mechanised trawlers** entered Sri Lankan waters.
2. **Bottom trawling and legal norms:** UNCLOS couples equitable use with conservation, and the **1995 FAO Code** rejects bottom trawling. Sri Lanka **banned bottom trawling in 2017**, yet many Indian trawlers persist.
3. **Ecological damage and stock depletion:** Bottom trawling damages **coral beds and shrimp habitats**. It depletes fish stocks and intensifies competition.
4. **Intra-Tamil livelihood conflict:** Artisanal fishers using sustainable gear lose their near-shore catch. The clash pits **profit-driven trawler operators** against subsistence fishers.

How can livelihoods and conservation be balanced?

Distinguish needs and responsibilities: Policy must separate artisanal needs from trawler interests. 1. **Commercial profits cannot claim empathy** when they harm sustainability and community welfare.

2. **Humane accommodation for small fishers:** Small-boat fishers have worked here "from time immemorial." Their plight warrants **humane accommodation**.

3. **Dialogue and regulated access:** Fisher organisations can negotiate **quotas, regulated access, and limited rights** on specific days or seasons, with **Sri Lankan fishers' consent**, until Indian stocks recover.

4. **Community sensitisation and fraternity:** Sri Lankan Tamil MPs and media can highlight wartime hardships of Northern fishers. Tamil Nadu earlier sheltered refugees with compassion, and such bonds can lower tensions..

What is the Katchatheevu issue—fact versus myth?

1. **Status and treaty facts:** Katchatheevu is tiny and uninhabited, with **St. Anthony's church** visited annually under the **1974 Maritime Boundary Treaty**. The settlement placed the islet within Sri Lankan waters..

2. **Sanctity of boundary treaties:** Boundary treaties are **legally binding (pacta sunt servanda)**. Unilateral repudiation undermines stability, as contests of settled frontiers with India show.

3. **Evidence of sovereignty weighed:** Historic records showed Sri Lankan administrative control dating **back to Portuguese and Dutch rule**, and, earlier, to the Tamil kings of the kingdom of Jaffna.

4. **Precedents on administrative control:** In **Minquiers and Ecrehos (ICJ, 1953)**, the Court awarded sovereignty to the U.K. because it had exercised **administrative jurisdiction**, despite France's historical claim. The **Rann of Kutch Arbitration (1968)** applied a similar logic. Therefore, **Katchatheevu is a settled legal issue**; calls to "retrieve" it are **political rhetoric**. **Fishing rights are distinct and not linked** to sovereignty over the islet..

What do "historic waters" and UNCLOS imply?

1. Historic waters and stronger rights

Indian and Sri Lankan law recognised the **Palk Straits as historic waters**. Rights exceed ordinary territorial seas; there is **no right of innocent passage**, and third-state fishing needs consent..

2. Judicial recognition of historic rights: **Annakumar Pillai v. Muthupayal (Madras HC, 1904)** upheld traditional pearl and conch fisheries. India's 1974 acceptance aligned with precedent.

3. Obligation to cooperate in semi-enclosed seas: **UNCLOS Article 123** urges cooperation in **semi-enclosed seas** like the Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar.

What cooperative pathways fit Neighbourhood First?

1. Quota-based conservation and science: Adopt **shared quotas**, as in the **Baltic Sea Fisheries Convention**, and set up a **joint research station on Katchatheevu** to guide sustainable practices.

2. Shift pressure offshore: Promote **deep-sea fishing in India's 200-nautical-mile EEZ** to ease pressure and curb illegal crossings.

3. Multi-level engagement architecture: Use **government-to-government talks**, State/Provincial coordination with **Tamil Nadu and Northern Provincial Council**, and fisher-to-fisher dialogue.

4. From dispute to cooperation: Handled prudently, these issues can **symbolise cooperation**. The task is fair resource management that protects **artisanal livelihoods** and **ecological sustainability** while respecting legal agreements.

Question for practice:

Q. Examine how India and Sri Lanka can balance artisanal livelihoods and marine conservation in the Palk Straits under existing legal frameworks.

Road development brings peace in conflict regions

Source: The post Road development brings peace in conflict regions has been created, based on the article **"To build roads is to build peace"** published in **"The Hindu"** on 11th September 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper-Infrastructure

Context: In Maoist-affected tribal regions, **roads mark the first arrival of governance**. They connect isolated settlements to services and lawful authority, shrinking space for parallel control. The article shows how connectivity weakens extralegal power, why formal institutions matter, and which safeguards keep infrastructure inclusive and legitimate.

Why do roads matter in conflict-hit tribal regions?

1. Emissaries of the state: A road in remote forests and hills carries the **state into places marked by marginalisation and neglect**. Where formal institutions are barely visible, a new road becomes the first sign of governance.
2. Stabilising effects in the Red Corridor: Research from Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha **links rural roads with better electricity, employment, and security**. Connectivity stabilises daily life and reduces the appeal of insurgent control.
3. Reclaiming governance from isolation: Non-state actors flourish where the state is absent. Roads **reduce isolation, enable service delivery, and weaken insurgent monopolies** over order.

How do insurgents build parallel authority?

1. **Filling governance gaps:** When formal governance is undersupplied, others imitate it. Classic research on organised crime shows that withdrawal of the state invites **extralegal conflict resolution and taxation** by non-state actors.
2. **Services as strategy, not charity:** Fieldwork from 2018 and a 2009 rights report note that Naxalites sometimes provide **rudimentary health aid and welfare**. Studies of insurgent rule explain these as **tools to build legitimacy, backed by coercion**.
3. **Coercion and extralegal justice:** Jan adalats have issued summary punishments, including executions, without due process. This is justice without appeal or accountability.

What does infrastructure change in rule of law?

1. **Infrastructure as political precondition:** Infrastructure is political. A 2023 rural India study links **road connectivity with lower crime and better service access**. A 2020 international analysis finds **higher violence in poorly connected areas**.
2. **Formal institutions and accountability:** Formal institutions operate within **laws shaped by democratic consensus**. Roads enable schools, clinics, police stations, and courts to reach conflict zones with **procedures accountable to citizens**.
3. **Contrast with informal norms:** Informal justice often reflects entrenched hierarchies and patriarchal codes. It can produce vigilante action and collective punishment, including reprisals against those accused of collaborating with security forces.

What strategy and safeguards are needed?

1. **Sequencing the state's return:** In Chhattisgarh, **B.V.R. Subrahmanyam (then a senior State official, now NITI Aayog CEO)** led a strategy placing **roads first, then schools, clinics, and law enforcement**. Each road signalled that **the state had arrived and would stay**.

2. Building with the village: Infrastructure alone cannot resolve conflict. Without justice mechanisms, health access, and community consultation, **roads risk symbolising control rather than inclusion**. They must be built within the village.

3. Towards belonging and peace: Development should replace insurgent authority with **pluralistic, rights-based governance rooted in constitutional values**. As India invests in southern Chhattisgarh, the goal is **dignity, opportunity, and belonging. To build roads is to build peace**.

Question for practice:

Q. Discuss how road development in Maoist-affected tribal regions strengthens formal governance and what safeguards are needed to ensure inclusion.

India's GST reforms strengthen universal health coverage

Source: The post India's GST reforms strengthen universal health coverage has been created, based on the article "A 'health check' for the new GST health-care reforms" published in "The Hindu" on 12th September 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: **GS Paper2**-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health. And **GS paper 3**-Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth, development and employment.

Context: India's GST overhaul targets affordable, accessible health care. It realigns taxes on insurance, hospital charges, medicines, devices, diagnostics, and daily-use products. **Key premium changes start on September 22, 2025**. The goal is universal coverage and stronger preventive health.

For detailed information on **GST 2.0 reforms boost growth and simplify India's taxes** [read this article here](#)

What changed in insurance and hospital taxation?

1. Insurance relief: GST on individual health and life insurance is removed. It covers **term, ULIP, endowment, family floaters, and senior-citizen plans**, and **reinsurance**. **Premiums become 18% cheaper**. A family paying ₹50,000 earlier paid ₹9,000 as GST. Gains depend on pass-through by insurers.

2. Room charge rules: Hospital rooms below ₹5,000/day stay exempt. **Non-ICU rooms above ₹5,000/day** continue to attract **5% GST without input tax credit** (since July 2022). **ICU/CCU/ICCU/NICU** remain fully exempt regardless of tariff.

3. Treatment stays untaxed: Core services by hospitals, doctors, and paramedics remain GST-exempt. **No change from the 2022 framework**.

How do reforms affect medicines, devices, and diagnostics?

1. Drug taxes simplified: GST on **most medicines is 5%** and **life-saving drugs are zero-rated**.

2. Devices and diagnostics at 5%: Most medical devices and diagnostic products shift to a **uniform 5% slab**. For example, CT scan machines fall from 18% to 5%, easing hospital capital costs.

3. **Cheaper tests if passed on:** Laboratory services remain exempt, but inputs—kits, reagents, equipment—are taxed less. If labs pass savings on, routine tests such as blood tests, X-rays, and MRIs may become cheaper. Pharmacies and small clinics gain competitiveness.

4. **Commercial adjustments: Manufacturers and distributors** will revise pricing and contracts. **Hospitals and labs** can negotiate better terms with insurers and corporate clients.

How do reforms encourage prevention and healthier choices?

1. **Wellness services cheaper:** GST on **gyms, fitness centres, yoga studios, salons, barbers, and wellness services** falls from 18% to 5%.

2. **Personal care at 5%:** Hair oil, soap bars, shampoos, toothpaste, toothbrushes, talcum powder, face powder, shaving cream, aftershave move to 5%. A ₹100 shampoo now costs ₹105 with GST.

3. **Deterring harmful products:** Cigarettes retain 28% GST + compensation cess (effective 52%–88%). A new 40% “sin goods” slab is announced and **applies only after cess liabilities are cleared**. Sugary drinks shift to this 40% slab from 28% + cess.

What outcomes will determine success?

1. **System-wide alignment:** The reforms support the 2047 Viksit Bharat goals by lowering insurance taxes, cutting input costs, and backing preventive care.

2. Real-world tests should monitor following outcomes: **timely and affordable access to treatment, routine use of preventive and wellness services, consumer trust in the health system, reductions in misuse of antibiotics and Schedule H drugs, and lives saved..**

3. **Coverage gap addressed:** Insurance relief targets low coverage at 3.7% of GDP vs 6.8% global.

Question for practice:

Examine how the recent GST reforms reduce health-care costs and expand access through changes to insurance, medicines and devices, and preventive services.

India strengthens development partnership with Mauritius

Source: The post India strengthens development partnership with Mauritius has been created, based on the article “India and Mauritius not just partners but a family: Modi” published in “The Hindu” on 12th September 2025.

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

Context: India and Mauritius deepened ties in Varanasi after a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam. They unveiled a special economic package, seven MoUs, and projects.

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

What Was Agreed in Varanasi?

1. Package and financing: India announced a package worth \$680 million, including \$25 million as budgetary assistance. It is structured on grant and grant-cum-line of credit bases and is described as an investment in a shared future.
2. MoUs and sectors: Both sides signed seven MoUs covering science and technology, oceanographic research, the power sector, and Phase-2 small development projects.
3. Local currency trade. After UPI and RuPay launched last year, both countries will work towards enabling trade in local currencies.

How Will People Benefit?

1. Healthcare and medicines: India will support an AYUSH Centre of Excellence and a 500-bed Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital. The first Jan Aushadhi Kendra outside India operates in Mauritius to improve access to affordable medicines.
2. Education and research: IIT Madras and the Indian Institute of Plantation Management have agreements with the University of Mauritius to elevate research, education, and innovation. India will also help set up a new Directorate of Science and Technology in Mauritius.
3. Capacity building: Over 5,000 Mauritians have trained in India. Training for 500 civil servants has begun in Mussoorie, and Mission Karmayogi modules will launch in Mauritius.
4. Animal health. Plans include a Veterinary School and an Animal Hospital. These will expand services and skills.

How Are Seas and Security Addressed?

1. EEZ security and roles: India remains fully committed to strengthening Mauritius's Exclusive Economic Zone security and maritime capacity. India highlights its role as first responder and net security provider in the region.
2. Hydrography cooperation: A new agreement provides five years of joint surveys, navigation charts, and hydrographic data for Mauritius's EEZ. The EEZ expanded after a treaty with the UK established sovereignty over the Chagos archipelago.
3. Port and marine protection: In-principle accords cover redevelopment of Port Louis and development and surveillance of the Chagos Marine Protected Area. Priorities include maritime security, drug traffic, and illegal fishing.
4. Training and refit: India is refitting a Mauritius Coast Guard ship and training 120 officers. These steps lift readiness and strengthen operations.

What Will Be Built and Powered?

1. Air and road projects: The package advances an ATC Tower at SSR International Airport and expansion of highways and ring roads. This supports safer travel and better connectivity.

2. Clean energy and mobility: India will support a 17.5 MW floating solar project at Tamarind Falls and provide 100 electric buses; ten are delivered. These actions back Mauritius's energy transition.

3. Equipment and services: The package includes choppers and support for road building. Combined works generate employment and improve services.

How Do Culture and Policy Align?

1. Civilisational ties: Leaders described India and Mauritius as a family rooted in shared culture, with the Varanasi visit underscoring spiritual linkages.

2. Neighbourhood First and ocean vision: Mauritius is integral to India's Neighbourhood First policy and Vision Mahasagar. Both affirmed a free, open, secure, stable, and prosperous Indian Ocean as a shared priority.

3. Mutual appreciation and symbolism: PM Ramgoolam praised India's timely support. He expressed intent to visit Chagos, preferring an Indian vessel, reflecting trust and enduring friendship.

Question for practice:

Examine how India's special economic package and seven MoUs will support Mauritius in healthcare, infrastructure, energy, and maritime security?

Ayurveda-Future of Health

Source: The post Ayurveda Day celebrates people and planet through global collaboration has been created, based on the article "**Ayurveda for people & planet: Rooted in tradition, empowering global wellness**" published in "**Economic Times**" on 13th September 2025

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

Context: India fixed Ayurveda Day on 23 September via a 23 March 2025 Gazette Notification. The 2025 theme—"Ayurveda for People & Planet" links wellness with sustainability.

Why was Ayurveda Day 2025 fixed, and what does it signify?

1. **Policy decision and theme:** Ayurveda Day is fixed on 23 September each year. The theme "**Ayurveda for People & Planet**" presents Ayurveda as a timeless and progressive healthcare system, strengthened by education, research, and partnerships.

2. **Equinox symbolism and philosophy:** The **autumnal equinox** reflects near-equal day and night. This symbolises **harmony and balance**, mirroring Ayurveda's focus on **equilibrium of mind, body, and spirit**.

3. **From variable date to global rhythm:** This replaces the **earlier Dhanteras-based variable date**. A fixed, symbolic date supports **global resonance** and the ethos of "**One World, One Family**."

What infrastructure is shaping Ayurveda's future in India?

1. **Anchor institutions:** AIIA (New Delhi, 2017), on the AIIMS model, holds NAAC A++. ITRA (Jamnagar) is the first INI in Ayush, and NIA (Jaipur) is a Deemed-to-be University.

2. **Recent expansion at AIIA:** In 2024, AIIA added a Panchakarma hospital, sports medicine unit, Ayurvedic pharmacy, start-up incubation centre, and international guest facilities.

3. **Standards and research ecosystem:** CCRAS advances evidence-based research. PCIM&H sets quality benchmarks, creating a cohesive R&D and standards framework.

How is India globalising Ayurveda?

1. **International Cooperation Scheme outcomes:** India has 25 country-level MoUs and 52 institutional MoUs. There are 43 Ayush Information Cells in 39 countries and 15 Ayush Chairs in leading foreign universities.

2. **WHO-linked validation:** ITRA, MDNIY, and CCRAS-NIMH are WHO Collaborating Centres. This elevates standards and credibility.

3. **Diplomacy and technology:** The 2023 Group of Friends of Traditional Medicine, initiated by India, advances policy dialogue. A WHO brief on AI in Traditional Medicine highlighted India's pioneering AI applications in Ayush.

What is the economic footprint, and what lies ahead?

1. **Industry scale and growth:** Ayush has 92,000+ MSMEs and a market of USD 43.4 billion (83.6 lakh crore). Manufacturing grew nearly six-fold (2014–2020) and almost eight-fold by 2022 (projections).

2. **Detailed growth metrics:** RIS studies show manufacturing rose from 721,697 crore (USD 2.85 billion) in 2014–15 to 71,37,800 crore (USD 18.1 billion) in 2020. The services sector generated 71,66,797 crore.

3. **Exports and recognition:** India exports USD 1.54 billion (811,400 crore) in Ayush and herbal products to 150+ countries. Ayurveda is recognised in 30+ nations.

4. **Outlook:** Rooted in tradition, strengthened by science, and expanded through global collaboration, Ayurveda supports holistic, affordable, sustainable healthcare.

Question for practice:

Q. Discuss why Ayurveda Day is fixed on 23 September and how this decision supports the 2025 theme Ayurveda for People and Planet.

DPDP Act vs RTI Act

Source: The post DPDP Act undermines RTI transparency and fuels corruption risks has been created, based on the article "The RTI's shift to a 'right to deny information'" published in "The Hindu" on 13th September 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Governance

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Context: The article examines how amendments to the RTI Act via the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act threaten transparency. It explains the original balance in Section 8(1)(j) and the ambiguity around “personal information.” It also describes the chilling effect on public information officers (PIOs) and the consequences for anti-corruption, public monitoring, and democratic accountability.

For detailed information on **RTI Amendment via DPDP Act, 2023** [read this article here](#)

What was the RTI's original balance on privacy?

1. Democratic premise and default disclosure: Information held by government belongs to citizens. Representatives and bureaucracy act as custodians. The default is disclosure, with narrow, defined exemptions.

2. Original Section 8(1)(j) and the proviso: Personal information could be withheld only if unconnected to public activity or an unwarranted invasion of privacy, unless larger public interest required disclosure. A proviso set an acid test: what cannot be denied to Parliament or a State Legislature cannot be denied to any person.

3. Privacy interpretation and constitutional limits: PIOs distinguished public from private activity in context. Privacy evolves case by case, as held in *K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India*. Limits arise from Article 19(1)(2), where only “decency” or “morality” bear on privacy. If disclosure violates these, it must be denied to everyone, including Parliament.

How did the DPDP amendment change Section 8(1)(j)?

1. Six-word truncation and widened denial space: Section 8(1)(j) has been drastically shortened, making refusals easier. The key issue now is what counts as ‘personal information’.

2. Competing meanings of “person”: There are two ways to interpret “person.” One view reads “person” as a natural person. Another adopts the DPDP Bill’s expansive definition, including families, firms, companies, associations, and the State. If second view is adopted, almost everything links to some person, turning RTI into a right to deny.

3. Override plus heavy penalties drive risk-aversion: The DPDP Bill overrides other laws in conflicts and carries penalties up to ₹250 crore. With most records digital, PIOs fear errors and will default to denial.

4. RTI's primacy in transparency: The DPDP Act must not override the RTI Act. Otherwise, the mandate of transparency is hollowed out.

What are the consequences for accountability and corruption?

1. Loss of citizen monitoring: Citizens are the most effective monitors against corruption. When access to information is denied, this public monitoring mechanism is severely restricted, reducing day-to-day accountability.

2. Denial of essential records: The broadened label can block everyday documents. Even a citizen's corrected marksheet may be refused. Sharing pension beneficiary data that exposed "ghost employees" and "ghost cards" would stop. Signed official orders could be withheld. Denial can exceed 90%.

3. Space for unfettered corruption: Treating data on ghost employees or corruption charges as personal conceals wrongdoing. Wrongdoing can continue unhindered because the documentary trail that enables scrutiny is no longer available.

4. Fear-driven denial by officials: Severe penalties under the DPDP framework and its override clause create risk aversion among Public Information Officers. With most records now digital, PIOs will default to denial to avoid mistakes, undermining transparency and accountability.

5. Limits of the "larger public interest" route: Section 8(2) technically permits disclosure in larger public interest. In practice, such orders are less than 1%. The test is difficult to apply, requiring an officer to weigh individual harm against public benefit. Reliance on this clause cannot safeguard accountability after the amendment.

Why is response muted, and what must change?

1. Apathy under a data-protection veneer: The amendment is framed as data protection. It looks harmless to many citizens. People also feel their own information should never be shared, even when it is relevant. This ego-driven view weakens support. Media attention is lower than during earlier RTI changes on Commissioners' salaries and tenures..

2. Deep regression of rights: Sections 8(2) and 44(3) of the DPDP Bill are called a fundamental regression. They weaken the right to information and attack fundamental rights. The democratic promise of transparency is being compromised..

3. A focused action agenda: Four priorities matter now: widespread public discussion; demands for manifesto commitments to reverse the changes; strong public opinion with media support; and recognition that the issue warrants top national attention.

4. Democratic stakes: Silence will endanger freedom and democracy. Collective action by citizens and the media can secure a reversal. That is how the integrity of the RTI Act can be protected.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the DPDP Act's amendment to RTI Section 8(1)(j) affects the definition of "personal information" and its consequences for transparency and anti-corruption.

Emerging markets face triple shocks

Source: The post Emerging markets face triple shocks has been created, based on the article "A time to reinvent" published in "Indian Express" on 15th September 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Economy

Context: Global disruption is not only a US–China story. **Emerging markets** face a **triple shock** from **tariffs**, **trade diversion**, and **technology**. These forces threaten trade-led growth and job creation, and they demand urgent policy choices on competitiveness, reform, and protection for workers.

What is the “triple shock” for Emerging markets (EM)?

1. Tariffs are choking trade-driven growth: International trade powered EM growth for 25 years. EM growth and global trade moved together. After the financial crisis and Covid-era barriers, **US effective tariffs rose from 2.7% to almost 18%**, levels last seen in the 1930s. **Specialisation and exchange** are under threat.

2. Trade diversion risks a China Shock 2.0: Since 2017, rising US tariffs on China have **redirected Chinese exports** toward developing economies. With **US tariffs on China hiked from 10% to 42%**, and China’s **excess capacity** creating deflationary pressure, EMs must brace for **low-priced imports** that local firms struggle to match.

3. Manufacturing faces import pressure inside EMs: **Chinese import surges** have weighed on industry in **Thailand, Indonesia, and India**. With higher US tariffs, these pressures will intensify. EMs must **defend domestic manufacturing** even as protectionism limits their **export opportunities**.

4. Technology is turning labour-substituting: Rising capital–labour ratios have squeezed **blue-collar** jobs. India’s **capital intensity** in manufacturing and exports rose despite labour abundance. Rapid **AI diffusion** extends pressure to **white-collar** roles. **Job creation gets harder**, especially in youthful regions.

How does this shock threaten growth and jobs?

1. Export-reliant economies lack large domestic demand: Small, open economies cannot easily replace lost external demand. The **efficiency gains of trade** are at risk. As **economic balkanisation** rises, growth engines weaken.

2. Youth unrest is an early signal: **Youth protests in South Asia** may be a warning sign. Reinforcing shocks can **erode employment prospects** unless policy acts decisively.

3. Economic balkanisation raises systemic risk: More protectionism fragments markets. EMs face **weaker exports** while absorbing **redirected Chinese supply**, stressing firms and workers.

Why turning inward would be a mistake

1. Tariffs act like export taxes: By the **Lerner Symmetry Theorem**, an import tariff is effectively an **export tax**. **Import substitution** will not reliably deliver growth or jobs.

2. Growth history favours outward orientation: Only **13 economies** since World War II grew **7% for 25 years or more**. All shared **strong exports** and **global engagement**.

3. The global market is bigger than the US: The **US is under 15% of global imports**. There is still **scope for rules-based multilateral trade** and diversified demand.

4. India can raise its share within a static pie: India's global manufacturing share is **under 2%**. Even if trade wobbles, India can **lift its share**. External orientation boosts **productivity, scale, and R&D**.

How to bend the capital-labour ratio and protect people

1. Equip labour to compete with capital: Invest in **education, health, and skilling** to support **job creation** despite automation.

2. Reform labour laws wisely: Ensure stringent rules do not **hurt workers**. Balanced design supports **formal jobs**.

3. Fund transitions and safety nets: Invest in **reskilling and continuing education**. Build **robust safety nets** and a **tax system** to finance them.

What reforms can raise competitiveness?

1. Push foundational reforms: Competing abroad and at home requires progress on **land, labour, power, health, and education**. **GST simplification** and **committees on deregulation and next-generation reforms** are encouraging starts that should continue.

2. Compete with Chinese imports and higher barriers: Higher barriers and import pressure demand **lower costs** and **greater efficiency**. **Competitiveness** is the central lever.

3. Embrace creative destruction: Rewire economies so **capital and labour** move from **sunset** to **sunrise** sectors. Flexibility builds **resilience**.

4. Reform and reinvent, not retreat: EMDEs face reinforcing shocks. Use them to **reform and reinvent**. Turning **protectionist and inward** is tempting, **simple, and wrong**.

Question for practice:

Examine how tariffs, trade diversion (China Shock 2.0), and labour-substituting technology affect emerging markets and what reforms are needed.

India must rationalise tariffs to boost competitiveness

Source: The post India must rationalise tariffs to boost competitiveness has been created, based on the article "**Resist pressure, lower tariffs**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 15th September 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: **GS Paper3**-Economy and **GS paper 2**- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Context: US leaders label India the "tariff king" and "tariff maharaja". The article tests this claim by comparing G20 tariffs, which cover **85% of global GDP, 75% of trade, and two-thirds of population**. It examines simple and trade-weighted rates for all goods, agriculture, and non-agriculture, and proposes reforms.

For detailed information on **India's Trade Resilience Amid US Tariff Pressures** [read this article here](#)

What do G20 tariff numbers show?

- 1. Overall tariffs:** Turkey's simple average tariff is **17.3** per cent and **India's is 16.2 per cent**. On a trade-weighted basis India leads at **12** per cent. The US is at **3.3** per cent simple average and **2.2** per cent trade-weighted.
- 2. Agriculture tariffs:** India has the highest trade-weighted agricultural tariff at **64.3 per cent**. On simple average, **South Korea tops at 57 per cent** and India is at 36.7 per cent. Trade-weighted rates are 4.2 per cent for the US, 8.7 per cent for the EU, and 13.8 per cent for China.
- 3. Non-agriculture tariffs:** In non-agriculture goods, **Argentina leads on a trade-weighted basis at 11.6 per cent**. India follows at 9.2 per cent, indicating high protection outside agriculture as well.

Why does India protect agriculture?

- 1. Livelihood structure:** India has **46 per cent of its labour force in agriculture, must feed 1.45 billion people, and has average holdings near 1 hectare**. By contrast, agriculture employs 2 per cent in the US, 4 per cent in the EU, and 22 per cent in China.
- 2. Trade reality:** China is the largest net importer of agricultural products, over \$100 billion in 2024. The US is the biggest exporter at \$182.8 billion, yet also a net importer at \$59 billion. Imports can complement growth when countries focus on comparative advantage.
- 3. Negotiation backdrop:** High agricultural tariffs are contentious in talks, yet reduction is possible because the structure is inconsistent and often irrational.

Where are agri-tariffs irrational?

- 1. Under-protected essentials:** Edible oils, a third of India's agricultural imports, face 10 per cent duty. Cotton is zero, yellow peas negligible, and almonds below 15 per cent.
- 2. Over-protected items:** Walnuts and chicken legs face duties above 100 per cent. Apples carry 50 per cent, blueberries 30 per cent, skimmed milk powder 60 per cent, and food preparations such as soft drink concentrates, custard powder, and lactose syrups 150 per cent.
- 3. Contradictory cases:** India is the world's largest rice exporter, yet rice carries a 70 per cent import duty. Such dispersion cannot be justified simply as farmer protection, since farmers across commodities deserve consistent treatment.

What reform path does the article propose?

- 1. Rational tariff bands:** Cap all duties at 50 per cent. Keep raw materials at 0–10 per cent, non-sensitive goods at 10–20 per cent, sensitive goods at 20–35 per cent, and luxury items at 35–50 per cent. Use tariff rate quotas for sensitive agricultural commodities.

2. Raise productivity: Double agricultural R&D to at least 1 per cent of agri-GDP and scale precision agriculture so farmers produce more from less.

3. Reform subsidies: Rationalise fertiliser subsidy by giving direct benefit transfers to farmers and freeing fertiliser prices.

4. Value chains and strategy: Strengthen farm-to-fork value chains. Treat the US's 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods as a wake-up call. Apply GST-like rates and, over time, lower tariffs well below 10 per cent. Shift from protecting inefficiency to building competitiveness.

Question for practice:

Examine whether India deserves the “tariff king” label based on G20 tariff data.